

Fellowship with God (In Prayer)

Introduction:

Fellowship with God in prayer (being with God) is absolutely fundamental if you are to stay fully awake & focused in the Christian life, fight the flesh, & stay faithful right to the end, even if it means walking through a fiery trial of satanic warfare & suffering.

- Have you ever realized, you don't realize you are asleep when you are asleep?
- E.g. I once fell asleep on a date with Carrie!
- Do you know how many Christians have fallen asleep and they don't realize they are asleep?

RT Kendell – 'A sleeping Church':

"Here are some signs we are asleep at the present time:

The absence of conviction of sin

A lack of the fear of God

Little sense of outrage over the godlessness of society

Watching pornography and feeling ok about it

Greed and lack of financial integrity"

"No sense of outrage over the Church's lack of credibility in the world

Little or no concern about people going to hell

Little concern about the lack of knowledge of God's word"

"Indifference to the biblical view of marriage

Indifference to holding grudges and unforgiveness

Indifference to talking to people about Christ"

"Little or no time spent in prayer for a mighty work of God.

We are asleep. We don't realize it. We may sincerely believe we are wide awake when we are in fact asleep. I would even say: in a deep sleep – like at 2am. Furthermore, we don't want to be disturbed."

- Are you asleep? Is there some area of your Christian life where you have grown lethargic, slumber-some, are asleep?

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I see this truth emerge in the prayer life & ministry of Jesus within Mark's gospel

Turn with me to: Mark 1:35-39 // Mark 6:45-48a // Mark 14:32-42

(1) Mark Notes 3 Distinct Occasions when Jesus Withdraws to Pray & Each Time It is to Stay Focused, Fully Awake & Faithful Right to the End

- Start / Middle / End - Jesus prays at the start (ch. 1), middle (ch. 6) & end (ch. 14) of his ministry – he's praying all the time!
- Surrounded by Pressure:

Mark 1 – Very early, still dark, got up, wilderness place, prays – why? Public acclaim v glory of Father's name!

Mark 6 – Mountain to pray, Meets with Maker, 9 hours (6pm-3am) – why? John 6:14 – King by Force v Father's timing/will.

Mark 14 – Storm of suffering & satanic warfare - Going a little further, he fell to the ground & prayed – why? Focus!

- J Grassmick: "Mark selectively portrayed Jesus at prayer on 3 crucial occasions, each in a setting of darkness & aloneness: near the beginning of his account (v. 35), near the middle (6:46), and near the end (14:32-42). All 3 were occasions when He was faced with the possibility of achieving His messianic mission in a more attractive, less costly way. But in each case He gained strength and focus through prayer."

- E.g. Pilot from East Coast to West Coast – Seeing clearly is crucial for the journey
- E.g. JFK Jr. 1999 – storm clouds gathered, thick fog, no visibility, spatial disorientation – ignored directional compass – crashed
- Jesus runs to the place of prayer, as the storm clouds gather, to focus on His father's direction & will

(2) On the 3rd Occasion Jesus Prays, Mark Contrasts Peter's Fleshliness with Christ's Faithfulness & Notes Prayer is the Key

- Mark notes a time stamp (Mark 13:32-37):
 - Comes @ end of Olivet Discourse
 - Commands 12 to WATCH OUT, STAY ALERT, KEEP WATCH (x3)
 - Calls Them to This Through the Night – 4 watches = 6-9pm (eve), 9pm-12 (midnight), 12-3am (rooster), 3-6am (morn)
 - Contrasts Peter's Fleshliness v Christ's Faithfulness through the night

- Peter is Battling Flesh, Fiery Darts & Falling Asleep: E.g. Train Tracks – Flesh = Corrupted Capacity to Go Autonomous from God
 - Fleshly Self-Confidence (Mark 14:27-31)
 - Fiery Darts of Enemy (Luke 22:31)
 - Falls Asleep (Mark 14:37)
 - Under Influence of the Flesh (Mark 14:38b)
 - Jesus tells Peter – You Must Fight the Flesh through Prayer (14:38a)

 - E.g. Dad = Pericarditis
 - E.g. "God's operating theatre is prayer, his X Ray machine is the Word & his world-class surgeon is the Holy Spirit"
 - John Coe – "Prayer isn't the place to be a good boy, but to be real"
 - R. Robinson – "Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. Here's my heart Lord, take & seal it, seal it for Thy courts above."

- Jesus Runs to Prayer, To Stay Faithful to End:
 - Fiery Trial -
 - Troubled & Distressed (Mark 14:33)
 - Soul Deeply Grieved to point of Death (Mark 14:34)
 - Hour & Cup (Mark 14:35-36)

 - Falls on Face -
 - Reminds Himself His God = Abba (Mark 14:36)
 - Runs into His Omnipotence
 - Rests in His Omniscience

 - Finds Strength - 'Rise' = Military Term to go to Battle (Mark 14:42)

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Conclusion:

A Fellowship Prayer:

"Oh Lord, Abba father, here I am.
Awaken me from my slumber,
From my lethargy, slothfulness & sleep.
Keep me on my knees, intimate with you this day & every day.

By your Holy Spirit – from start, middle, to end – may my life be soaked & saturated by your presence through prayer.
When I am under pressure may I focus on you through prayer.
When I am fighting the flesh may I daily offer my heart to your most magnificent surgeon, the Holy Spirit, through prayer.
When my faithfulness is being tested amidst suffering & satanic attack, may I fall on my face in full surrender before you.
May I remember that you are my Abba, run into your omnipotence, & rest in your omniscience,
Knowing that there & there alone I will find strength to follow you right to the end.

Oh Lord, Abba father, here I am.
The deepest cry of my heart is this: Here's my heart Lord, take & seal it, seal it for thy courts above."