

The Privilege & Priority of Prayer

Introduction:

A // Good morning Fellowship – what a privilege it is for me to be here today to share with you on the topic of prayer

- i. **Image** - E.g. **Sponges** – one keeps being soaked, so can keep being squeezed all day long. The other says I don't have time to be soaked, just squeeze me all day long. What's going to happen? Will get dry, hard, become useless.
- ii. **Need - Which one are you?** If these sponges represent 2 types of Christians, and this bowl represents the intimate presence of God through prayer – which one are you? I see a lot of people pouring themselves out, stretched & squeezed, saying I don't have time for this. And over time – **ACTIVITY FOR JESUS REPLACES INTIMACY WITH JESUS.**
- iii. **Need** – I was reflecting this week – what is it that stops me going there?
 - a. **Busyness // Impoverished Africans** say – you friends in the west have watches but we have time! // full time job, part time studies, full time dad – so busy – prayer life has become 'Lord, please help me today.' // **Perhaps that's you as individual:** So busy = prayer choked out; or **church** – transitional moment all hands
 - b. **Belief** – Somehow bought into very subtle lie, subconsciously, **I really don't need this** // E.g. **Corrie Ten Boom** – our steering wheel of prayer has become our spare wheel – only turn to it when our journey breaks down
- iv. **Subject** – Today I want to call you back // **COME BE SOAKED IN THE INTIMATE PRESENCE OF YOUR FATHER GOD THROUGH PRAYER.** And I want to **show you that in the life & ministry of Jesus, prayer was a privilege & priority.** That even in the midst of incredible busyness, as he poured himself out as a servant, he had this deep belief prayer was a privilege which he was desperate to pursue and a priority which was desperately important to maintain.
- v. **Text – Mark 1:21-34.**
- vi. **Preview** – Watch out for how busy Jesus is pouring Himself out as a Servant, then Comes to be Soaked in the Intimate Presence of His Father through prayer

Read Mark 1:21-34

- **Most action packed day in the life of Jesus, look at all the ways Jesus is busy pouring himself out**

I. Jesus Pours Himself Out As a Servant in Preaching & Driving out Demons (1:21-22, 23-27)

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

- **As soon** as it was the Sabbath - Euthuus – **Immediately** he went into the synagogue and began to teach
- **Amazed** – Struck with Shock and Awe
- **Authority** – (a) Experts (b) Enlightened (c) Explain (d) Elevated – **nothing on JC**

²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

- **Immediately** Euthuus – The presence of Jesus and the preaching of Jesus stir up demonic kickback
- **Unclean spirit** – Mark uses the terms unclean / **evil** / demonic spirit interchangeably – synonymously
- **Hebrew Idiom** - What do we have to do with one another – Why you meddling with us? You're on our patch!
- **Be muzzled** – muzzles that thing like a barking dog – E.g. **How many of you love dogs?** More than your kids?
- **Drives him out and sets this man free** – With 1 command he silences the demon, with another he drives it out – with **supernatural authority and stunning servanthood** he sets man free
- **This kind of lifestyle** – pouring yourself out – greatest privilege on planet but can push you to limit - exhausting
- E.g. **Me preaching** – passionate, pace, pour everything out, tears, put yourself in place of direct sp warfare
- E.g. **Me middle of night**
- **MTR** = If that's you, **keep serving**, but **in order to stand you're going to need strength**

II. Jesus Pours Himself Out as a Servant Healing the Sick, Suffering & those with Strongholds (1:29-31)

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

- **As soon as / Immediately** – house of Simon Peter only a **stone's throw from the synagogue** (e.g. Stage - Back)
- **Sick** – Fever, **Luke tells us in ch 4 - it was a high fever**
- **Slammed** on her bed [**Matthew in ch 8 uses the word for 'to throw / to hurl'**]
- **SHE CAN'T GET TO HIM / HE GETS TO HER**
- Servant draws near to her, touches her [NET bible – gently touches her], heals her of her sickness

[And as if the day can't get any longer ...]

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

- **AFTER SUNSET** – Why did they wait? **Sabbath** – **sunset Fri – Sat** – no travel / work! As soon as they can get to him!
- **All the sick & Demon possessed** – literally – all who were **miserably ill / suffering**
- **Whole town** gathered at the door – why at the door? Couldn't get in – maybe 5,6,7,8 rows deep – perhaps 1000's
- **This kind of lifestyle** – pouring yourself out – greatest privilege on planet but can push you to limit / be exhausting
- **MTR** = If that's you – **keep serving**, but **in order to maintain this ministry you're going to need strength**
- **[[E.g. Dad – middle of night – phone rings – I'll be there – next morning exhausted falling into arms of Father]]**

III. **I'm Sure He was Tired – notice what happens next – He is Desperate to Run into the Place Where He is Soaked in the Intimate Presence of His Father through Prayer (1:35)**

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

- **Very Early in the Morning** – NET = 4th watch of the night from 3am-6am
- **While it was still Dark** – while it was still exceedingly nocturnal – closer to 3am
- **Jesus Got Up** – [to rise, sometimes to rise to meet someone]
- Left the House & Went Off to a **Solitary Place** – wilderness place, same word used for temptation, same type
- **Where he prayed** – **PROS-WHO-OH-MY – to praise & petition God in prayer – Communion with the Creator**

IV. **Why? For Jesus - Prayer is a Privilege Place to Which He Loves to Run & In Which He Longs to Remain (1:36-38, 39)**

- **E.g. Superbowl Sun** – 2 months ago 2 tickets - 50 yd line - **\$44,000 USD!! Access, Benefits – Privilege, Count down**
- **This is how JC treats prayer** – greatest privilege of his life
- **E.g. Hannah** – running into her Daddy's arms
- And **Jesus knows the greatness of the Father, glory, goodness, grace** he finds there.
- **MTR** = If you are **bored, soul not stirred – your view of God too small** – because this is an open invitation to **commune with the creator, appointment with almighty, sit with your savior, rest in presence of ruler**
- Sit at his feet, listen to his voice, to return to his will, rest in his promises, to be reinvigorated by his strength
- Spiritual Posture – **DESPERATE DESIRE** – For JC - a phys. place he went to, more import. sp. posture he adopted

V. **For Jesus - Prayer is a Prioritized Practice which Focuses Him on His Father's Will & Fills Him with His Father's Strength (1:36-38, 39)**

³⁶ Simon & his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ & when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I've come."

- **Theology of Withdrawal** – JC withdraws 3 times in Mark to the place of prayer & each time he is under pressure
- **Here v 36 – Simon comes** - "Everyone is looking for you!" **let's enjoy a day filled with fame and public acclaim**
- **Jesus = I'm not here to live for fame or public acclaim but for the glory of my Father's name**
- In midst of **temptation** you need to stay **true / flesh v follow / pressures of world v purposes and will.**
- **E.g. Dad's prayer**
- Spiritual Posture – **FULL SURRENDER** – For JC – he adopted this. sp. posture of full surrender in prayer – focused

³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

- Having poured out his all as a servant, physically exhausted, he goes to prayer and he **rises filled with strength**
- Spiritual Posture – **TOTAL DEPENDENCE** – For JC – he adopted this. sp. posture of total dependence – filled
- **E.g. Tony Evans** – 2 lumber jacks entered a tree cutting contest.

*****HP - COME BE SOAKED IN THE INTIMATE PRESENCE OF YOUR FATHER GOD THROUGH PRAYER****

- With a posture of desperate desire, full surrender & total dependence **COME**, knowing Prayer = privilege & must once again become our greatest priority
- I know your leaders calling you to 40 days of prayer on Feb 26th, prayer in Life groups, prayer on Sundays