



## The Priorities and Practices of the King

### Key idea:

Disciples must imitate the priorities and practices of Jesus - personal prayer, the study and proclamation of God's Word, and gathering with God's people for public worship. Any helpful ministry can only come by attending to these priorities and practices first.

### Key text:

Mark 1:21–34

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.<sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him,<sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."<sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.<sup>40</sup> A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."<sup>41</sup> Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"<sup>42</sup> Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.<sup>43</sup> Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:<sup>44</sup> "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."<sup>45</sup> Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere. Mark 1:35–45

### Key points:

1. Jesus' ministry of healing and casting out demons threatened to overwhelm His priorities and practices, so He was proactive to prevent this from happening.
2. Prayer was such a high priority for Jesus that He regularly withdrew from the crowds to be by Himself so that He could spend time with His Father.
3. Although Jesus had compassion for people, healing their diseases and driving out demons, He declared that these were subordinate to His proclamation of the Word of God.
4. Gathering with God's people for corporate worship was such a high priority for Jesus that He did it throughout His life, even in the face of opposition.

5. Jesus' ministry of healing, casting out demons, and meeting the temporal needs of people flow from His priorities of personal prayer and study, the proclamation of the Word, and gathering with God's people for worship.

**Questions for discussion/application:**

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. When I think about discipleship, do I tend to focus on learning from Jesus' teaching, emulating His character, or following His life rhythms and practices? Which do I tend to give the least attention to? How can I grow in this area?
3. Why does Mark indicate that Jesus got up while it was still dark and went off to a deserted place (which would have required going a distance outside of the village)? What does he want me as a disciple to learn from this?
4. Why does Jesus pray before the day begins? Given what we learned about a single day in Mark 1:21-24, what would likely have happened if He had not prayed before the day began? What can I learn from this?
5. What do Peter and the other disciples seem to have as a priority? Why are they surprised to find Jesus outside of the village? What do they seem to think He should do?
6. Why does Jesus place such a high priority on proclaiming the Word? What is so important about proclaiming the Word that Jesus says "that is why I was sent"?
7. Why doesn't Jesus stay in Capernaum to proclaim the Word? Why does He command the former leper to not tell anyone about the healing? Why does He avoid other villages when the crowds are thronging to Him for healing? What concerns Him about the priorities of the crowds? Can I think of other times in Jesus' ministry where He exhibits this same concern?
8. How do I think a modern marketer or consultant would respond to Jesus' actions in this passage? What advice would they give Him? How do I think He would respond?
9. What temptations do I face to compromise on the priorities of personal prayer, the study and proclamation of God's Word, and gathering with God's people for public worship? How can I follow Jesus by proactively making sure that these priorities form my life rhythm rather than other things?
10. Who will I call or see to invite to gather with the church this week?