

Theme: 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.

I. Intro - Tyranny of the Urgent

- A. Describes how urgent situations can dominate life
- B. This will overwhelm if one does not determine priorities and let that guide life rather than emergencies
- C. Even more important in our non-stop, media-saturated age where the things crying out for our attention are endless
- D. Today we get a glimpse of the priorities and practices of Jesus
- E. Remember disciples not only learn from the teaching of the Master but also character & life rhythm/practices

II. A Day In the Life of Jesus

- A. Mark 1:21-34 covers a single day in Jesus' life
 - 1. Jesus gathers with God's people for public worship on the Sabbath
 - 2. Jesus powerfully proclaims God's Word
 - 3. Jesus drives out a demon that manifests during the public worship
 - 4. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law
 - 5. After the Sabbath ends at sunset crowds flock to the house and Jesus heals many and drives out many demons
 - 6. This was a full, exhausting day!

- B. Much of this is Jesus responding to immediate needs
 - 1. The demon manifests - so He must deal with it
 - 2. Peter's mother-in-law is sick so He heals her
 - 3. The sick and demonized throng to the house so He heals them and drives out the demons
 - 4. These are real needs, and Jesus meets them with compassion
 - 5. But in Mark 1:35-45 we see Jesus' own priorities and practices

III. The Priorities and Practices of Jesus

- A. Jesus makes a high priority of prayer

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. Mark 1:35

 - 1. It had been an exhausting long day of ministry - but Jesus gets up 'very early in the morning'
 - 2. 'very early in the darkness' - stresses how early
 - 3. Jesus will not let crowds gather again and thus determine His day, so He gets up before anyone else to get time alone with God.
 - 4. He also gets far away from everyone, going out to the ἔρημος - a solitary place; a deserted place
 - 5. Jesus makes it a priority to begin His day with quiet, unhurried time with His Father in prayer.
 - 6. Once again, Mark is recording this to let us know not just that it happened once but that it was the regular practice of Jesus.

7. Once again, Luke spells it out for us
But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Luke 5:16
8. Disciples of Jesus must learn from His example the priority of prayer, for apart from regular times of communing with our Father, we will be impotent to fulfill our callings.

B. Jesus makes a high priority of the practice of the Word
Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and 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 have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Mark 1:36–39

1. Peter and the disciples are viewing things from a worldly point of view - their priorities are not those of Jesus.
2. The word for 'search for' (καταδιώκω) usually means to pursue in a hostile sense - their 'seeking' of Jesus here is not good, for their priorities are not his.
3. The crowd is "seeking" Jesus - but this word is almost always negative in Mark (the Pharisees 'seek' a sign; the chief priests and scribes 'seek' for a way to kill Jesus, etc)
4. Jesus is not driven by the agenda of the crowds or the disciples - He knows the priority!
5. Jesus is concerned about preaching the Word - this is why He was sent.
6. Jesus is so committed to this that He will leave the crowds in Capernaum to travel to other areas where He can proclaim the Word of God.

7. Healing and driving out demons is very important to Jesus, for He is filled with compassion for the suffering. But even these pale in comparison to the proclamation of the Word of God.

8. This is because the greatest need humans have is to hear and receive God's Word - it is more necessary than our daily bread!

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. Job 23:12

9. Jesus is not concerned with simply gatherings crowds or letting crowds determine His priorities - He has come to proclaim the Word of God and nothing must be allowed to interfere with that.
10. NOTE: This text does not directly say that Jesus studied the Word personally, but obviously personal study and receiving of the Word must precede any teaching of the Word.
11. This has huge implications for local churches, families, and individuals - the Word of God must be central, or every other attempt to help others will be of little value.

C. Jesus makes a high priority of corporate worship
They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach... ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Mark 1:21, 39

1. Jesus goes to synagogues to preach the Word

2. Mark 1:21 already explained this happened on the Sabbath, the day of corporate worship for the people of God.
3. I spoke some about this last week so I will not belabor it here, but Jesus' regular rhythm/practice was to gather with God's people each week for public, corporate worship - and disciples will follow their Master in the rhythm and practice.

D. Jesus' ministry is an overflow of His priorities and practices

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."
⁴¹Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. Mark 1:40-42

1. Mark then relates Jesus healing a leper
2. The rabbis said healing a leper was as hard as raising the dead!
3. Once again note Jesus' power - He touches a leper and heals him immediately!
4. Also, note Jesus' compassion which is seen in Him touching the leper who was an outcast from human society. (After Hours - more on this episode and the manuscript reading of Jesus being angry).
5. Once again we see the Sovereignty of Jesus - touching a leper does not make Jesus unclean or ill, but rather cleanses and heals the leper!
6. But note that this compassion and power flow from Jesus' priorities of prayer and the Word. This is always the order in Jesus' life - and it must be so in the life of His disciples as well!

The work of the Son of God is both an inward and an outward work. Jesus cannot extend himself outward in compassion without first attending to the source of his mission and purpose with the Father; and, conversely, his oneness with the Father compels him outward in mission. (James R. Edwards, Pillar Commentary)

7. This also explains why Jesus sternly warns the man to not tell anyone but to fulfill the Mosaic Law
 Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "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." ⁴⁵ 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 1:43-45
 - a. Jesus is not at all impressed by crowds of people - His priorities of prayer and Word are what is essential.
 - b. Jesus knows many will reverse the priorities, preferring temporal blessing to eternal reality, and physical healing to salvation, so He does not want word of the miracle spreading.
 - c. He commands the man to fulfill the Mosaic Law
 - d. But the man disobeys - and Jesus can not go into the villages anymore and is forced to live as an exile.
 - e. Irony - the leper is returned to society and Jesus is now exiled from society!
 - f. This was what Jesus was trying to avoid!

8. We will see this repeated many times in the Gospel - Jesus' compassion and power will draw crowds - and they will want to change the very priorities that allowed the compassion and power to flow!
9. Every local church will also find this happening in their own life - but we must not compromise for the sake of crowds and acclaim!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do my priorities and practices imitate those of Jesus or of the world?

1. Disciples/followers/apprentices imitate the life rhythms and practices of Jesus
2. This text shows us Jesus' priorities and practices - and how He was pressured by the world around Him to alter these.
3. We all face pressures to let the world set our agenda, our priorities, and our practices.
4. Often this does not even involve overt evil - the people wanted Jesus to heal them, to drive out demons, to be with them - all good things!
5. The world clamors for all the things our kids must be involved in, that we must do to be successful, that we must have for the 'good life' - and most of these are not bad in themselves!
6. But we must set clear boundaries that reflect the priority of disciples - the rhythms and practices of Jesus - and never allow other things to interfere.
7. Do I see the three key priorities Jesus displays in this passage - times of solitude and prayer, the study and ministry of the Word, and gathering with God's people for worship?

8. Does my life reflect these priorities and practices of Jesus?

- a. Do I daily/regularly set aside a time of solitude and prayer?
- b. Do I regularly receive and minister God's Word to those around me?
- c. How often do I gather with God's people for corporate worship?

9. We must recognize our practices show our actual priorities - no matter what I say my priorities are, my practices and life rhythm shows my actual priorities.

10. This is NOT for guilt and condemnation - but it is for an accurate assessment so we can let the Spirit form and shape us in this area.

B. Do I see my ability to fulfill my vocation flows from these life rhythms, priorities, and practices?

1. Jesus' vocation was to be the Savior of the world - but He knew He could not fulfill these apart from these life rhythms, priorities, and practices
2. We each have vocations - work, family, church, community
3. Do I see my ability to be used by God in those vocations depends upon me following the life rhythms of Jesus - prayer, Word, corporate worship?
4. As we head into Advent and the New Year, let the Spirit help you to establish this life rhythm so that God can work through you to minister to others in each of your vocations!

C. The Table of Cleansing and Restoration

1. This Table is a Table of cleansing and restoration
2. Jesus did not draw back from the unclean leper - He touched Him, made Him clean, and restored Him
3. Perhaps the Lord has convicted you today - do not think He will draw back from you!
4. Come to Him like the leper - and be cleansed and restored!
5. Come and let the Spirit speak and work powerfully in you today at the Table of cleansing and restoration!

The Priorities and Practices of the King

Mark 1:35-45
November 20, 2022
Communion
Ephesians 1:17-19

Teaching keywords: Sabbath and rest; worship; prayer; Word of God; healing; mercy and mercy ministry

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, ¹⁸ so that you may know him better having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Go forth, filled with His blessing to walk with Him and be a blessing!

Ephesians 1:17-19

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