

Next week we will be back in our series, Kingdom Kids, as we continue to go through the book of Ephesians. Today, as we all prepare to bring in a new year I wanted to leave us with an encouragement. An encouragement that I pray goes beyond simply making the same resolutions we make each year, but instead, setting for our lives a purpose to walk with Christ intimately each day.

Mark 1:29-39

29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. 35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." 38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." 39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Wake up. Eat. Drink coffee. Work. Run errands. Kids. Dinner. Maybe some free time. And then sleep. Then we do it all over again! Not to mention everything in between that grabs at our attention. There are things I probably didn't mention that are a part of your daily, weekly, and monthly schedules.

And somewhere in there, may be: Time in the Word. Prayer. Church. And we try to cultivate our relationship with Christ. Of course all of that is easier said than done.

See, even though we are the most technologically advanced generation in the history of the world... with advances that have allowed us to do things more quickly and efficiently. ...We have movies and lattes are at our fingertips... We don't have to leave home to purchase all that we need... We have Bible apps and we can quickly read devotionals we find on social media or through our email... Even with all of that, it still hasn't slowed our lives down.

Instead it has made us more distracted and time consumed. We don't use time saving advancements to loosen our schedules, but quite the opposite, we find ways to fill them to the point of overwhelming exhaustion, and it has left us wanting.

The fight for time... rest... and solitude is all too real.

Some of us may spend tomorrow making resolutions to set more time apart to rest and to be with the Lord. We will resolve to spend time with our kids, spouses, friends, and family. And unfortunately for most of us, as it is when we resolve to go to the gym and work out more this year, we will fall short of our resolutions. Even though we acknowledge our need and we know how desperate our situation is, we will fail to meet our desired goal. The chaos of life will happen and we will miss various opportunities to find the time. We will struggle to cultivate intimacy with our Father. We have forgotten, or never really acknowledged, why this is so crucial and important.

Jesus, in our passage this morning, and really through the example He set throughout His life, demonstrates to us the importance of stealing away with the Father, even in the midst of all of life's crazy demands.

And Jesus was no stranger to the demands of this life. Just a few verses before our passage He had just finished teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath. In fact He healed a man while at the synagogue. Then He moves on to the home of Simon's mother-in-law and He heals her as well. Then it says:

v. 32-34 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Jesus Finds Time

- Sundown, the Sabbath ends. And as soon as people are allowed, they come to Jesus.
- You can just picture people lining up (the whole city), gathering, waiting to see the Teacher.
- From the sick to the demon possessed... The needs of the people come upon Jesus
- And Jesus... compassion filled... heals the sick, and cast out the demons. This after all, was His call... that through these works He would demonstrate who He is and bring glory to the Father
- Jesus' authority and power is very much present
- On top of it all, it had been a full day for Jesus: Teaching in the synagogue, healing mother-in-laws, and then healing numerous sick and demon possessed people
- After a full day like that, we can excuse Jesus if He slept in... took some "self care time"... and had a slow morning
- But instead, He is up early, before the rising of the sun.

v. 35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate (or deserted) place, and there he prayed.

- Jesus goes looking for a true place of rest. He goes to the place where we truly find real care... where we find our truest self... and that is in the presence of His Father
- A place where He could find solitude. Not thinking of the demands that are up ahead
- Instead, "there He prayed"
- He wanted and needed the communion and fellowship with God. He knew that in this place of solitude and prayer is where He would hear His Father speak and He would speak to Him as well
- So He fights against being tired, and He goes to get to that place of solitude
- We don't know what Jesus prayed, but I like what David Guzik has to say on the matter

"We don't know exactly what Jesus prayed for, but as much as anything, Jesus used this time of prayer for that close, intimate communion with God the Father that He longed for, which nourished and strengthened His soul. We can also surmise that Jesus prayed for Himself. He prayed for His disciples. He prayed for those He met and ministered to the previous night. He prayed for those He would meet and minister to that coming day."

- David Guzik

- "There He prayed" ...Jesus doesn't simply rise with the morning and continue all that He was doing, back to the grind and the work of the day. Off to the sick and possessed... to preach the gospel... good and rights things....
- After all, isn't this our approach?: "Work is crazy right now." "It's just a little hectic at home." "Once things slow down... then I can get back to it."
- Instead, Jesus, in view of everything ahead of Him, intentionally seeks this important time.
- Jesus, fully God, and fully man, knows He needs to steal away to be with His Father.
- And this wasn't a one off for the Lord. This was a practice of His life. The gospels depict this:

Luke 6:12

During those days he went out to the mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer to God.

- This was a way of life
- This was important for Jesus
- All night in prayer!?

Matthew 14:23

After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone.

- Jesus looks for, and spends the time in prayer and solitude
- It begs the question, what was Christ trying to teach us?
- And He is never oblivious to what is ahead... what the demands are
- This is clear in verses 36 and 37 when His disciples approach Him

v. 36, 37 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, **"Everyone is looking for you."**

- Although there is life and its' demands ahead of Him.... Jesus seeks to do what is truly important
- A point that Peter completely misses

Peter Doesn't Understand

- Peter, does that complete "Peter thing"
- "Hey, ummm, Jesus... Don't know what you're doing over here, but everybody is looking for you." ...He doesn't get it, doesn't see it, doesn't understand the importance
- Yes, there is demand for Jesus. The crowds are looking for Him. They want to meet and speak to the man with authority. The one who has this healing touch and power.
- Peter, and those he was with, see the chaos and excitement. They see what is going on around them, and they want to focus on that. Their priorities are all out of order.
- For them, they seek to take advantage of what is going on....
- This sounds a lot like how I would react to the demands of this life

It has been a month since I stepped out of my role as the youth director here. One thing I thought would happen this month is that I would slip in to a time of rest, reflection, and spending time with the Lord. You know, Jesus and I taking romantic walks on the beach, adventuring in the wilderness, and experiencing the highest of spiritual highs.

But, I have actually struggled to find that time. I have spent time applying and testing for different law enforcement agencies, taking care of a sick puppy, and consumed by holiday events. Now these aren't bad things, except maybe the sick dog. ...But the Lord reminds me, "Come, be with me." "Do you know you need to pray? Are you truly seeking me?" "Do you truly desire to bring me glory, or is your focus elsewhere?" God is saying to me, that in His presence is where I hear Him. That in His presence is where I will truly find life and joy. That when I seek Him, when I trust in Him, when I put my life in His arms, that is the place I bring Him glory!

"God aims to exalt Himself by working for those who wait for Him. Prayer is the essential activity of waiting for God—acknowledging our helplessness and His power, calling upon Him for help, seeking His counsel. Since His purpose in the world is to be exalted for His mercy, it is evident why prayer is so often commanded by God. Prayer is the antidote for the disease of self-confidence, which opposes God's goal of getting glory by working for those who wait for Him."

- John Piper

- Jesus' example.... Pipers explanation here... they attack how I view life and all of its responsibilities and demands
- And maybe you're right there with me,... and along with Peter and the disciples
- Our focus is in the wrong place. We have forgotten what is truly important
- You create a list of to do's that are cemented on your daily schedule
- Maybe you're looking in to 2019 and you're already creating that schedule
- Maybe you're even trying really hard to resolute not to get in to that type of grind
- But we lose focus. We allow life and the world to lead us to look elsewhere
- It is all too easy to get wrapped up in the TO DO and NEED of our lives
- To shoot for the status, to achieve our place, and the "I'm just trying to do right for myself and my family"
- But God reminds us that His presence is where we find true life.
- In His presence we find the way of life and blessing
- As David says in Psalm 16

Psalm 16:11

You reveal the path of life to me; in **your** presence is abundant joy; at **your** right hand are eternal pleasures.

- All too often we miss and forget this glorious truth
- God is the One who leads us
- In God's presence is true joy. He holds the true, never fading, eternal pleasures
- Where is our true affection?
- Peter, he saw the crowds, and all the attention that Jesus garnered
- We, we see and are distracted by this life and its demands
- He missed... we miss... what Jesus was demonstrating, the importance of time with God
- We fail to see what is truly important
- But how do we do this?

We Fail To See What Is Important

1.Our Knowledge is Not Enough

- We become confident in what we know.
- We think that our knowledge of God is enough
- We may spend time in our word, and even fellowship with the saints
- But we trust in our knowledge OF God to get us by relationally WITH God
- We spend our lives developing the habit in knowing about God, but not truly knowing God
- Jesus spoke on this when He addressed the religious leaders of the time

John 5:39,40

You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.

- We may know the Scriptures, but we fail to understand what they point to
- Biblical knowledge should fuel our intimacy with God, it should not fuel our pride in our knowledge of Him!
- Another reason we fail to see why this is important is because we forget that our life is His... and that He is ours!

2. Our Life is His and He Is Ours

- Our affections are not for God, instead they're for self
- We live to achieve what is good for us and in turn, fill ourselves with false pleasures
- We don't live for God... our lives are not lived like they're His
- Paul reminds us in Romans 14 of the correct view

Romans 14:8

If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

- How good is that truth? We belong to the King!
- And when we remember that we are His, and He is ours, then we seek intimacy
- No desire or pleasure will satisfy like God!

Psalms 107:9

For he has satisfied the thirsty and filled the hungry with good things.

- God is our portion... and He satisfies every need
- In Him we taste and see... and He is good!
- As we enjoy Him, we glorify Him
- This is what fail to see as well

3. We Were Made to Glorify Him

- We were made to glorify God
- In seeking Him, we bring glory to Him

Psalms 50:15

Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.

- God makes His name known through the love and care of His people
- When we seek intimacy with God we bring Him glory
- When we desire God, trust God, hope in God, we bring honor to His name!
- Our trust, dependence, and even His service towards us brings HIM glory
- When we pray, we admit that we can't do it without Christ

- When we ask God to take the lead, to do His will, we bring Him glory
- Then we begin to understand why intimacy with Christ is so beautiful
- We see why it is important to not just seek out knowledge of God
- We see why it is important that we are His and He is ours
- Our lives will begin to glorify Him!

Jesus Knows What Is Important

- Jesus knew what was important
- When Peter came proclaiming, "everybody is looking for you"
- He didn't head back in to Capernaum to receive the attention
- He didn't lose sight of what He was called to
- His response was

v. 38

And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

- Unlike Peter, and all of those who were following, the Lord knew who He was and where He was going
- He knew why He had come

John 6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. "

- Jesus doesn't miss His purpose, even in light of all that He is doing
- Because He has constantly been in communion... in fellowship... in relationship with God.. He knows that He is called to do the will of the Father
- We live this life in confusion and in doubt
- Our anxieties and worries overtake us
- We lack peace and comfort
- Why?
- Because in our lack of intimacy, unlike Jesus, we have forgotten what is important
- Scripture calls us to come to Him in prayer when we experience anxiety
- Scripture calls us to trust in Him and lean not on OUR understanding
- It is HE who gives TRUE peace!
- Jesus knew what was important... He knew the path, it is why He proclaimed:

John 14: 6,7

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him

- What we must do then is follow Christ in to an intimate relationship with the Father!
- He IS the way!
- We find truth in Him

- We find life
- Jesus was compassionate to those He met and healed
- His love and mercy was displayed in every word He spoke and every miracle that He preformed

We Follow Jesus Into Intimacy

- Jesus' ultimate compassion... His ultimate demonstration of mercy... would be seen in His end goal.... the cross.
- He showed true compassion for those around Him not by staying with them, but by continuing towards the cross.
- That was the true mission. That mission, in its' victory, would bring forth a historical and eternal change.
- Now, for all those who put their faith in Him, are called children of God.
- Children that can now have communion with the Father. Children who can go to the places of solitude and be intimate with their Father.
- Children who gather together to bring Him glory
- Jesus did not lose sight of what the Father had called Him to
- He knew the end goal
- In John 17 He prayed it:

John 17:1-3

Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, **2** since you gave him authority over all flesh, so that he may give eternal life to everyone you have given him. **3** This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent – Jesus Christ.

- Jesus would bring salvation and eternal life
- An eternal life that would me us knowing God
- Experiencing and enjoying the importance of intimacy
- Experiencing and enjoying fulness of joy in His presence
- This morning I can end with an abundance of applicable instructions on how to seek God
- The myriad of ways we can adjust our schedules to make sure we "spend time with God"
- How we can spend time in the Word, in prayer, and not neglecting to gather with one another
- But more than that, what we are called to do... is ask God to change our affections
- What is that we desire above all else?
- Is intimacy with our Lord more important?
- That we would be the people who call out as the Psalmist does in:

Psalm 73:25, 26

Who do I have in heaven but you? And I desire nothing on earth but you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever.

- This morning let's ask the Lord that He would change our affections
- Let us ask our God, our Father, that He would, by the power of His Spirit, draw us closer and deeper
- And when may we endeavor, as we wake each morning, as the old English preacher Charles Spurgeon said to,

"Look no man in the face till thou hast seen the face of God. Speak thou with none till thou hast had speech with the Most High." - Charles Spurgeon