

SERIES: **The Jesus Journey**

RECAP: Synagogue teaching, unclean spirit; Peter's house, healings and driving out demons well into the night

TEXT: **Mark 1:35-38**

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. ³⁶Simon and his companions searched for him, ³⁷and when they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸And he said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come."

TITLE: **The Necessity of Nearness**

((PRAY))



Fav animal as kid- **Sperm Whales** dive deep, 7,000 feet deep! They fight giant squid.

But there is another whale that dives even deeper!



The **Cuvier's beaked whale** can dive up to 10,000 feet! (Over 3 kilometers)
(For perspective, the wreck of the titanic sits at about 12,00 feet)

What both these amazing animals have in common, is that they are *mammals*, which means... they **must** come up to the surface for air or die.

Though they move and live in the depths, they rely on what is from above.

Regarding this thought, **DL Moody** wrote-

"And something like what is imposed on them by physical necessity, the Christian has to do by a spiritual one. It is by ever and anon (always and frequently) ascending up to God, by rising through prayer into a loftier, purer region for supplies of divine grace, that he maintains his spiritual life. Prevent these animals from rising to the surface and they die for want of breath. Prevent the Christian from rising to God, and he dies for want of prayer."

I submit to you that **Most of our frustrations in life, come as a result of not abiding with God, in proximity through prayer**

I want to highlight 3 takeaways from our text, regarding the *necessity of nearness*

Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying.

We need to cherish closeness with the Father

Really value proximity to God as if your very life is dependent upon this

Jesus (being the Son of God Himself) prized being in communion with the Father; longed for it

Context- previous day: demanding, early start/ late finish

'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark' = TIME

'he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place' = SPACE

'there he was praying' = ACTIVITY

One scholar defined Prayer as, “*the appeal of the soul to God*”

Prayer is the means by which we draw near to God and share with Him-

We share with Him our burdens, and He shares with us His heart

We share with Him our weakness, and He shares with us His strength

We share with Him our failures, and He shares with us His triumph

Psalm 42:1-2 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.

²I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God ?

3 words of caution:

1. Closeness ≠ attaining more knowledge

John 5:39–40 You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. ⁴⁰But you are not willing to come to me so that you may have life.

2. Closeness ≠ creating the right environment

Jon Bloom, “Some pursue this in high liturgical environments designed to inspire an experience of transcendence and mystery. Others pursue it in contemporary worship events designed to inspire an experience of immanence. Others chase revivals, thinking that proximity to God’s power will result in proximity to God. If we truly trust God, such environments can encourage our intimacy with God. But none of them inherently possesses the power to conjure God’s nearness to us.”

i.e. romantic expensive getaway will not help a recently broken marriage

3. Closeness ≠ prioritizing the practice

You can have all the right rhythms and routines... but if they are not the *end* in themselves, rather they are a *means* to the end, which is God Himself

We prioritize the presence (God Himself), not the practice

Mark 1:36-37 Simon and his companions searched for him, ³⁷and when they found him they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

We need to *protect intimacy* with Christ

In the same way in which Jesus protected His intimacy with the Father, we must as fervently protect our intimacy with Christ

Life is filled with a multitude of distractions and demands

Hebrews 12:1-2 ... let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, ²keeping our eyes on Jesus...

Simon and his companions conclude Jesus is in the wrong place doing the wrong thing

‘searched for him’ (Grk lit. ‘hunt him down’)

They urgently want him back to the crowds to meet their needs

Jesus will not give in to what is **urgent**, and sacrifice what is **necessary**

Jesus saw their real need (salvation);

While the disciples were distracted with prioritizing secondary needs

Our greatest need is intimacy with the Lord

Starting with the new birth, and continuing walking with Him everyday

Q: Do you allow what is urgent to get in the way of what is most necessary?

Let me tell you why you must protect your intimacy with Christ-

You enjoy as much of God as you are allowing yourself

No one else can foster intimacy for you- others can help, but you need your own hunger

J. Oswald Sanders- "Both Scripture and experience teach that it is we, not God, who determine the degree of intimacy with Him that we enjoy. We are at this moment as close to God as we really choose to be."

Let me show you in scripture how this plays out:

Foundation principle= God loved us first

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

Functional Promise= He moves towards us in-as-much as we move towards Him

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you...

Mark 1:38 And he said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come."

We cherish closeness with the Father, protect intimacy with Christ, and

We need to pour out from what the Holy Spirit has poured into us

Jesus knows they want **from** him, but not **of** him

He came to save, not to just to heal; what good is healing if they still go to hell?

He understands the mission before Him will be demanding and will wear on Him, but He cherishes and protects His relationship with the Father and the Spirit

He gives because He has a wealth from which to draw from

What is cultivated in intimacy fuels what is demanded in ministry

We all have a ministry, may not be an official title, but we all do.

Moms, Working dads, witnesses in workplace, caregiver, etc.

Giving from deficit is life-taking

JC Ryle- "Seeking little, they cannot be surprised if they possess little. It will always be found that when prayers are few, then grace, strength, peace, and hope are small."

Jesus knew that if he was going to meet with men, he must first meet with God.

The question for us is-

Q: If prayer was this necessary for Jesus, why do we treat it as optional for us?

Ravenhill- *"to be much for God we must be much with God"*

Every single person has a necessity of nearness of God

2 Corinthians 13:13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**MAIN POINT: We have a necessity for nearness because God has created us
for intimate friendship with himself — both now and forever.**

****CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

- The Cuvier Beaked Whale can hold its breath for 3 hours- but it still needs to ascend to remain alive
- Jesus set the pattern for us to follow- abide in Him, go away to be with God as He did, that you might find breath for another day

Call to Action-

- Create Rhythms of renewal
- Revival Night

Old Hymn my dad would sing:

*I am weak but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.*

*Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

BULPEN-

One of our 3 values: **Deepen Devotion-** *A humble awareness of our own internal poverty that births a hunger for more of God's indwelling*

Parallel-

Luke 4:42-44 When it was day, he went out and made his way to a deserted place. But the crowds were searching for him. They came to him and tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said to them, "It is necessary for me to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose." ⁴⁴And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jeremiah 33:3 Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and incomprehensible things you do not know.

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth to show himself strong for those who are wholeheartedly devoted to him. You have been foolish in this matter. Therefore, you will have wars from now on."

Revelation 3:20 See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Not salvation, but relation

John 15:4-8 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.

Jesus prays three times in the book of Mark: here at the beginning of his ministry, in the middle of it, in chapter 6, and right before the end, in chapter 14; always alone, always at night, and at times of tension

Geographically, the description is inappropriate for the land around Capernaum during this time period, for it was well cultivated. The intention is to say a place of solitude.

How should we pray? A good approach is to go UP to God, Expose our filth before him asking Him to cleanse, and then making requests made known. IOW- Reverence, Repentance, Requests

V37- 'looking for'- the verb (zeto) is always used in a negative sense in the book of Mark.

The seekers are always wrong, either looking for the wrong thing or with wrong motives

David E Garland writes "*Jesus's family is **looking for** him to take him back home because they think he is beside himself (3:32). The Pharisees **ask for** a sign from him, which is what only an evil generation would do (8:11-12). The high priests and elders **began looking for** how to destroy him (11:18; cf. 12:12; 14:1) and later **were looking for** false witnesses against him (14:55). Judas was watching for a good time to betray him (14:11). The women were **looking for** a dead body at the tomb (16:6).*"

v.38- There is application for us here- His intentions for you may not always line up with your requests of him, but trust that He knows your needs better than even you do

To seek for Jesus without seeking to turn away from our sin, is to seek wrongly

Dallas Willard- “God has created us for intimate friendship with himself — both now and forever.”

Spurgeon- “We shall never see much change for the better in our church in general till the prayer meeting occupies a higher place in the esteem of Christians.”

Ravenhill- “The prayer chamber is a mirror reflecting our spiritual condition. Is this why the prayer chamber is so unpopular? Do we fear self-exposure, exposure of ourselves to ourselves? Are we afraid of discovering spiritual deformity within us? The prayer chamber is the place to check up on spiritual health. Do we shun the prayer chamber lest we discover the cancer of carnality within? The prayer chamber is a balance where we find out whether or not we are losing weight in the spiritual life. I am not thinking here of the matter of saying prayers but of those saints who not only “stay to pray” but who stay to listen to what God has to say to them (as well as expect God to listen to what they have to say to Him).