

## JESUS PRAYED

Mark 1:35-39 (Key Verse 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.”*

In today’s passage we will learn from Jesus Christ the Lord, who woke up early in the morning while it was still dark and went into a solitary place to pray. From last week’s passage we have learnt how Jesus had been so busy, starting from the morning, teaching the gospel in the Synagogue with authority, driving out demons, healing Simon’s mother, healing many people till very late at night. And in today’s passage we see Jesus waking up early the following morning to pray. How could Jesus do this after a busy and tiring night? Through today’s passage we will learn how and why he woke up early in the morning? Why he went into a solitary place? Why it was important for Jesus to pray, what it means to pray? Finally, we will learn what was the result of Jesus prayer.

I pray that God may have mercy on us today, to receive one word, be transformed into the likeness of Jesus by having a sincere prayer life like Jesus Christ even in the midst of a busy life.

The passage today begins on a morning after Jesus had a very long, busy, and very successful day. In the previous day Jesus went into the synagogue for it was Sabbath and preaching the gospel, leaving many people amazed for he taught with authority. With one word he drove out a demon from man who was among the people in the synagogue, something that the teachers of the law and Jewish elders could not do. He went on to heal many who were sick, and demon possessed until very late at night, including Simon’s mother who was in bed with a fever. Through this day, Jesus gained so much popularity, many people were drawn to him because of his authority and concern for them. Jesus’ ministry had taken off, on a very good start.

After this very long, busy, and successful day, one would expect Jesus will have a good meal and take some good rest and continue his work the following day in the late mornings after being refreshed with a good rest. However, from today’s passage we see Jesus doing something different. Let us look at our **key verse 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.”* Jesus woke up early in the morning while it was still dark to pray. Why did Jesus wake up this early to go and pray? Taking a good rest through good sleep is very important, but to Jesus what was even more important was prayer time, spending time with the Lord and so he woke up early before the day gets busy.

Furthermore, Jesus went to a solitary where he began to pray? Why did Jesus go to a solitary place? Jesus wanted to have a personal prayer time with God, a time where it is just him and God, a time where he could pour out himself to the Lord. Both waking up early and going to solitary place shows us how much Jesus valued spending time with God, it showed how precious it was for Jesus to spend time with God. Jesus is God, however he valued prayer time so much that he even sacrificed his resting time to spend time with God through prayer.

Why was it so important for Jesus to have this prayer time with God, to such an extent that he even sacrificed his resting time, waking up while it’s still dark to a solitary place? Jesus did this to strengthen his relationship with God, his source of strength and power to do the work that the Lord has given him. Through spending time with the Lord, Jesus could receive wisdom and guidance from the Lord himself, he could be transformed to see things from God’s point of view. Through prayer, Jesus could give thanks to God, he could reflect on what the Lord has done and give thanks to God. Because Jesus was so busy, surrounded by many people who one way or the other would want to interact with him, he woke up early and went into a solitary place to be with God without distractions.

Today as well, we are so busy with so many things, starting from ministry work, having to prepare for Bible studies and testimony writing, while at same time we have to manage demands from studies, or pressures from work, having to manage taking care of our family and children. In the midst of this busy life, it is very easy to lose track of our prayer life, however from today’s passage we can learn from Jesus that prayer life is so important. Jesus was so busy, and things were going well, he just had a very successful day in his ministry, moving the people’s hearts with his words filled with authority, healing the sick and driving out demons. Jesus did not have an immediate burning issues or challenge that he needed to bring to God in prayer it seemed. But yet, he woke up early in the morning, sacrificing his

much-needed resting time to pray to God. So, prayer is not just for times when we need something from God, or when we have challenge in our lives, but it something we need to do daily, even in the midst of our busy life.

We need to have daily prayer time, intimate prayer time with God in a solitary place where we can experience God personally, have a deep relationship with and pour our hearts unto him. A prayer time where we allow God to guide us and lead us, allow God to enter our hearts and minds to transform us to see things from his point of view. Time to give thanks to God daily, experience God's conviction and correction. Prayer is not an optional thing we can do when we feel like it, or only when we need it, rather prayer is fellowship with the father, spending time with the father. As you can already tell and have experienced, prayer is not easy, because we are so busy, we need to intentionally pray daily, wake up us early in the morning, sacrifice our sleeping time, go to a solitary place and pray.

Furthermore, prayer means to really spend time with God, it is not a just a 5-minute thing we can do quickly in the morning before we head to our classes or to work. In **verse 36** it says: "*Simon and his companions went to look for him,*" The disciples went to look for Jesus, meaning it had been long since Jesus left to a solitary place for prayer. Jesus spent time in prayer, he spent time with the father. To have a deep relationship with the father, to be led by him and guided by him, to be strengthened by him, we need to spend time with him. We need to have quality time with God in prayer, this also says a lot about our love relationship. I once listened to a sermon by this minister who made mention that if you love someone, you show the love by spending quality time with them. And so we must exercise our love for God by spending time with him in prayer.

Now what happened when the disciples went out to look for Jesus? Let us look at **verse 37**: "*and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"*" The disciples having spent much time with Jesus knew where to look for him, they knew Jesus' prayer life, they knew that he must have gone to a solitary place to pray. However, when they found him, they exclaimed: *Everyone is looking for you.* The author here emphasized that they *exclaimed*, meaning with strong emotion they urged him, they cried out with desperation for him to finish praying for everyone was looking for him. To them the ministry had kicked off in the right direction, people are amazed, and they want to see more of Jesus. They were expecting Jesus to finish praying quickly and take care of business. They were excited that their leader Jesus is finally popular, they saw this as a great opportunity for Jesus' ministry so they did not want him to mess it up by neglecting the people who were looking for him to be healed and have demons driven out of them.

But how did Jesus respond when the disciples exclaimed in this way? Did he stop with his prayer and hurry to take care of the people who were looking for him? Let us look at **verse 38**: "*Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."* Jesus did not hurry to go take care of the people who were looking for him. Unlike the disciples, Jesus was not swayed by what the people wanted such as healing, he was not swayed by popularity, he was not swayed by the demands of the disciples. Instead, Jesus was focused on the mission that God had given him, to preach the gospel. Jesus did not come to achieve glory, fame or fortune, he came to preach the gospel. Jesus came into Capernaum, he spent time with the people, preaching the gospel with authority in their synagogue, planting his words in their hearts, leaving them amazed. This is what he came for and he has fulfilled it. And now, he said: "*Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.*"

Through deep prayer, early morning in a solitary place, Jesus could remain focused on God and his will for him. He could remain focused on serving the mission of God and not doing what the people expected him to do. Saying no to the disciples who requested Jesus to go take care of the people must have been a difficult thing for they left everything to follow him, also not going to help the crowd of people must have seem like he is rejecting them when they so desperately needed his help. Today as well, serving God's mission might seem like we are rejecting or disappointing other people, such that we might even think it is the wrong thing to do. But if we sincerely pray to God, early morning prayer in a solitary place, God is able to firm up what we need to do such that we are not shaken and swayed because it is an unpopular thing.

To serve God's ministry we need to have a prayer life, we cannot serve God's ministry relying on our own thinking and emotions, we need prayer. When Jesus prayed, he could confidently say to his disciples: "*Let us go somewhere else—*

*to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”* And so together with the disciples he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching the gospel in their synagogues and driving out demons.

During the week (even yesterday) as I meditated on this passage, preparing to start writing the message I felt extremely challenged by Jesus' prayer life in the midst of a very busy life. I was challenged because for long time I have been having a very poor prayer life, because of my busy schedule. First, since Ona was born it has been really busy to do things in the house, also at work I have been given more responsibilities, every time when I wake up, my mind is already thinking about work. Also, I find myself having very busy evenings if not doing Bible studies, I would be tired from a long day at work or having to entertain Ona. All this resulted in me having quick prayer times only when I remember even. This year I also planned not to join Bible reading in the morning anymore, to at least make some time to pray, especially together with my family. But still every time I wake up, I find myself still busy consumed by my busy schedule at work.

Jesus was busy, way more busy than I could ever be, but he made time to pray. He woke up early in the morning and went to a solitary place. Jesus could wake up, sacrificing his much-needed resting time, to spend time with God, to have fellowship with him, to be led by him and guided by him. To Jesus' prayer was the most valuable thing, it was his lifeblood. And indeed, when he made time to pray, he could have focus and be effectively used by God to preach the gospel, he could have clear purpose and mission.

From Jesus I have learnt that, indeed without prayer I can do nothing, I cannot serve God's ministry, I cannot live a fulfilling life. I also learnt that I need to value prayer more than anything else, I need to value prayer more than doing the work. For it is through prayer where I can discover the will of God, get wisdom and to see things from God's point of view. And be used for the glory of God. Jesus was so busy, but when he prayed God filled him with great energy to serve his ministry, such that he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching the gospel in their synagogues and driving out demons. It is really God's grace that God could give me this word today, I pray that I may receive it deeply in my heart, be changed and wake up early in the morning and pray in a solitary place.

Next week, we have our Easter Bible Conference, may God have mercy on us not to be overcome by being busy planning and preparing for the conference. May God help us to come to him with early morning prayer in solitary place, to hear from him and be guided by him as we prepare for the conference. Early morning prayer in a solitary place is the best preparation we can do for the Easter Bible Conference.

Amen, Key Verse.