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“Pray Like Jesus”

Mark 1

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Prayer is a conversation, communication, and communion with God. Sometimes it involves speaking, sometimes listening, and sometimes just being silent and still before him. Prayer is also a gift that connects us to our Heavenly Father. And yet, most people would say they don't utilize this gift as often as they should. In today's study, Pastor Gary teaches about Jesus' prayer life, how he got up before sunrise to pray, despite the fact that the day and night before had been extremely demanding. There is much we can learn from Jesus' example that will help us discipline our lives to pray like Jesus.

Historical Background

1. Mark
 - a. Mark was not one of Jesus' twelve disciples.
 - b. Mark was about twelve years old at the time of Jesus' crucifixion.
 - c. Mark was surnamed John Mark.
 - d. Mark would later be part of the missionary team with Paul and Barnabas.
 - e. Mark would prove to be a source of division between Paul and Barnabas, who was Mark's cousin.
 - i. Paul thought that Mark was too young and unreliable.
 - ii. Barnabas thought Mark would be helpful in the ministry.
2. The Gospel of Mark
 - a. Mark's Gospel, written circa AD 63, is considered to be the earliest of the four Gospels.
 - b. Mark's Gospel is the shortest of the four Gospels.
 - c. Mark's Gospel was written primarily for a Roman audience; we know this because Mark took time to explain many details about Jewish traditions.
 - d. Mark's Gospel was written through the eyes of the apostle Peter, who was an

eyewitness to Jesus' life and ministry.

i. **1 Peter 5:13** – "... *Mark my son [in the faith].*"

e. Mark's Gospel emphasizes Jesus as the lowly servant.

i. Each Gospel account emphasizes a particular aspect of Jesus' life and ministry, and early Church fathers used different symbolic images to explain Jesus' identity.

1. Matthew – Jesus, the King of the Jews (Lion)

2. Mark – Jesus, the lowly servant (Ox)

3. Luke – Jesus, the Son of Man (Man)

4. John – Jesus, the Son of God (Eagle)

ii. The symbolism corresponds to Ezekiel's vision of the four cherubim attending the throne of God.

1. **Ezekiel 1:10** – "*As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.*"

f. Mark's Gospel includes the word "immediately" thirty-six times and the words "at once" four times.

g. Mark's Gospel bypasses Jesus' early years and begins when Jesus was an adult, the years of his public ministry.

3. A day in the life of Jesus

a. **Mark 1:21-28**

i. Jesus arrived in Capernaum, the town that would become his ministry headquarters, so to speak.

1. Capernaum is located along what was a major trade route known as the Via Maris, which ran along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

ii. Jesus went to the synagogue to teach, and it was then that he encountered a demon-possessed man.

iii. Jesus delivered the man by casting out the demon.

b. **Mark 1:29-31**

i. The home of Simon and Andrew was a short distance from the synagogue.

ii. Jesus went to minister to Peter's mother-in-law, who was sick with a fever.

iii. Jesus "*took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her.*"

c. **Mark 1:32-34**

i. The entire population of Capernaum came, presumably to Peter's home, to not only see what was going on, but also to bring all who were sick of various diseases or possessed by demons.

1. Pastor Gary said that some Bible scholars believe there may have been several thousand people gathered at Peter's home.
- ii. Mark wrote that Jesus healed many who were sick and demon possessed.
- iii. Jesus was involved in ministering to others throughout the night!

4. Prayer

- a. Private prayer was a priority for Jesus, no matter how mentally, emotionally, or physically drained he was from all of the events of the previous day and night.
 - i. **Mark 1:35** - *"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."*
- b. Pastor Gary said, "None of us would ever say that we pray enough. ... All of us have room to improve, and most of us are not praying enough. So, I don't want to guilt any of us... I just want to encourage us to pray like Jesus.
- c. The three C's of prayer include conversation, communication, and communion with God.
- d. Prayer includes speaking, listening, and sometimes just being silent and still before the Lord.
 - i. **Luke 11:2** - *"So [Jesus] said to them, 'When you pray, **say...**'"* (Emphasis added)
 - ii. **Isaiah 28:23** - *"Give ear and **hear** my voice, **listen** and hear my speech."* (Emphasis added)
 - iii. **Psalms 46:10** - *"**Be still**, and know that I am God..."* (Emphasis added)
- e. Prayer is not the convenient thing; it's the necessary thing for your mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing.
- f. Prayer is not something you have to do; it's something you get to do.
- g. Prayer is not informing God about anything; it's inviting God into everything.
- h. Prayer is less about moving God's hand and more about moving our heart.

5. Pray like Jesus

- a. Prayer takes discipline
 - i. **Mark 1:35a** - *"... having risen a long while before daylight..."*
 - ii. Jesus may have had as little as just a few hours of sleep before he got up and went to a place of prayer.
 - iii. Pastor Gary said, "I don't want to be legalistic... about prayer in terms of when one should pray because you can pray at any time of the day or night... But there is something to be said about starting your day with prayer. There's something to be said about praying in the morning to gather your thoughts and to get your heart in the right place. ... At some point [you] have to decide; out of twenty-four hours, where [are

you] going to carve out time to meet with God? ... You can't afford not to pray! ... Time is the enemy of prayer. All of us can make the excuse [about not having enough time to pray]. ... [We] have time to do what we want to do."

1. **Psalm 5:3** - *"Listen to my voice in the morning, LORD. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly."* (New Living Translation NLT)
2. **Psalm 88:13** - *"But to You I have cried out, O LORD, and in the morning my prayer comes before You."*

b. Prayer is getting alone with God

- i. **Mark 1:35b** - *"... He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."*
- ii. Pastor Gary said, "Jesus [modeled] the necessity to separate ourselves from everyone else and everything else and go to a solitary, quiet place where we can pray."
 1. **Matthew 6:5-6** - *"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."*

c. Prayer gives us resolve

- i. **Mark 1:38** - *"But He said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.' "*
- ii. Prayer gives us a determination to face the day.
- iii. Pastor Gary said, "[We] need prayer to strengthen our resolve. Whatever you are facing, you need God's strength, and it comes through prayer. Whatever weakness you think you have, pray. Whatever discouragement you are facing, pray. Whatever odds might be stacked against you, pray. Be strengthened with resolve to face whatever you are facing."

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Mark 1:35-39** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Provide an overview of the historical background that Pastor Gary shared. (See #1 and #2 above)

3. Read and briefly discuss each of Jesus' ministry situations as recorded in [Mark 1:21-35](#). (See #3 above)
4. Ask the people in the group about what they make of the fact that Jesus was no doubt mentally, emotionally, and physically tired, and yet the priority he placed on personal prayer was evidenced by the fact that he got up long before daylight to go to a private place of prayer. (See #4a above)
5. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the ways they have grown in the area of personal prayer.
6. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about the "Three C's" of prayer. (See #4c above)
7. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared that help us understand the different aspects of prayer. (See #4d above)
8. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's statements about prayer. (See #4e through #4h above)
9. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's comments about the personal discipline that's required to pray like Jesus. (See #5a-iii above)
10. Ask the people to share about the decisions they need to make to bring about the personal discipline of prayer, as well as setting up the time and place to be alone with God.
11. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the benefits of personal prayer and the way we will see our resolve strengthened for daily living. (See #5c-iii above)
12. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)