

## Jesus Wow! Series Part 8

### Jesus Takes Time to Pray

Pastor Andrew Neville 31/5/20

Mark 1:35

#### Sermon Summary

Prayer is difficult! Many folk feel guilty at their inadequacy to pray even though the importance of it is recognized. Expressing content sincerely is challenging, whether such prayer is made in private or in public.

But, the inescapable truth of its importance lies in the divine example: Jesus prayed. Because He prayed, we pray. Because Jesus found it worthwhile, so should we, no matter how we feel at any one moment. Jesus prioritized prayer; so should we.

Why did Jesus **need** to pray? If He is the creator of the universe, what is the purpose of His prayer?

As God's **Son**, Jesus needed the fellowship with His Father and the Holy Spirit that He had had throughout eternity. To Jesus, prayer was about closeness and intimacy with The Trinity. And that is the way prayer ought to be with us. Jesus was the **Servant** of His Father, and therefore needed to know constantly what God wanted Him to say and do at any one moment. He obeyed His Father and was led by the Holy Spirit.

We too are the 'sons and daughters' and servants of the Lord God. As children of God it is a privilege to communicate with our heavenly Father. And therefore we should enjoy our moments in prayer. We should not be ashamed or feel guilty asking:

1. Lord, how shall I live?
2. Lord, help me understand.
3. Lord, tell me what to do.

Prayer is about making requests for guidance – and more. If the prayers concern you personally, requiring healing for private hurts in all its many forms, then do as Jesus commands, "When you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your father who is unseen" (Matthew 6:6).

Jesus' prayer life invariably began early in the morning, before daybreak. It is one of those rare times that we can call it our own, and Jesus used it to be alone with God. A busy day in the life of Jesus is described in Mark 1: 21-34. He begins the day with authoritative teaching and a demon exorcism, follows that with a house-call to heal a woman with a fever, and ends the day with a massive healing meeting. Early the following morning, Jesus is away by himself deep in communing with the Father when his disciples come looking for him because a crowd has gathered to see Him. Jesus decides He must go elsewhere. He has a ministry to fulfill. Phew! It's a busy lifestyle He has.

Despite the pressure, Jesus realizes he must find time to be alone; He made time to pray. “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16). So to us, the intimation is obvious. We must make time, at least once a day, to communicate with God. Alone, we can say anything to the Lord. We give our doubts and our disappointments, our hopes and our requests to The Lord. Don’t carry them alone. Jesus has offered to carry them for you. “Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall” (Psalm 55:22). Our times alone with the Lord are invaluable.

Prayer is **not** one size fits all. It is not formulaic. Our very individual personalities make prayer different for everyone. Some people require detailed prayer lists to keep them focused; others require spontaneity. While regular praying is necessary, it doesn’t have to fall into a certain time slot each and every day; it doesn’t have to follow a certain style; it is not bound by someone else’s formula. You may enjoy a certain way of praying, but be prepared to change occasionally.

A reason why we must **NOT** omit prayer from our daily activities can be found in James 4:3: “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” If you have given up on regular praying, because you feel as if nothing ever changes, then examine your motives as James suggests. Yet if the personal prayer is meaningful to you, and the motive is right, then that prayer is essential.

The accounts leading to Jesus’ betrayal contain powerful statements about prayer. In Luke 22:31, Jesus tells Peter that Satan has asked for permission to sift Peter as wheat is sifted. But Jesus comforts Peter by saying that He has prayed to the Father that his faith would not fail. Peter had previously said he would never fail Jesus – but of course he did. Remember when Jesus left the disciples to watch and pray that they not fall into temptation; meanwhile, he went away himself to pray (Matthew 26:41). They all fell asleep! Had Jesus not prayed for Peter it is quite possible that Peter would never have become the leader of Christ’s new church.

Perhaps, some of our spiritual failures – like Peter’s denial of Christ – could have been avoided had we prayed. The spiritual blessings we desire for ourselves and our families will simply not happen if our prayer life has ceased. Prayer does work; it does reach God.

### Questions

1. **We are children of God and servants of God. Do our prayers reflect that truth? How?**
2. **We have differing personalities. How is our private prayer life going? In what ways can it be developed?**