

## Introduction

One of the things that I really love about preaching through the various books of the Bible is that I have the opportunity to cover so many different subjects. We get to preach the whole counsel of God when we preach through the Bible. When I left off last month, Jesus had just fed the multitude of five thousand men. It was probably a group of 25,000 to 30,000 people. It was his largest public miracle. More people personally experienced this miracle than any other miracle that Jesus performed. Twenty-five thousand people ate a miraculously provided meal that came from five loaves and two fish. Jesus had fed the multitude spiritually and then He fed them physically. He is the Good Shepherd and He was teaching His disciples about shepherding.

This week, as we continue through the book Mark, we are covering Mark 6:45-46. I originally was going to cover verses forty-five through fifty-six, but I could not bundle it together. I wrestled with it for several weeks and finally decided to break it apart and cover just these two verses this morning. I have titled the message, Three Characteristics of Jesus' Prayer Life. I am excited to share about prayer. We will look at the Pressing Need for Prayer, the Priority of Prayer, and the Plan for Prayer.

### Three Characteristics of Jesus' Prayer Life (Mark 6:45-46)

1. The Pressing Need for Prayer
2. The Priority of Prayer
3. The Plan for Prayer

In The early church was devoted to prayer. In Acts 1, we find the apostles, along with Mary and Jesus' brothers continually devoting themselves to prayer. In Acts 2:42, after Pentecost, where three thousand people had received Christ, the church was continually devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and PRAYER. These three thousand believers picked up on the priority of prayer and devoted themselves to it. Our church, the Connection Church, uses the early church as our model. We devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

(Acts 1:14) "These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."

(Acts 2:42) "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

As the church grew, and it was now close to forty or fifty thousand people, they continued to be devoted to prayer. Their leaders were devoted to prayer. In Acts 6:2-5, there was a complaint given because some of the Greek widows were being overlooked in the serving of food. Notice what the apostles did. They summoned the congregation and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The apostles were devoted to prayer. It was clearly a priority for them and they were not going to allow anything to keep them from being devoted to prayer. I also want you to notice the response of the congregation. Luke records that "the statement found approval with the whole congregation." These forty to fifty thousand people in the church in Jerusalem understood the priority of prayer and they fully supported the apostles' decision to prioritize prayer and the ministry of the word.

(Acts 6:2-5) "So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. {3} "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. {4} "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." {5} The statement found approval with the whole congregation..."

Where did the disciples learn to have this kind of devotion to prayer? Well, it did not take long for the apostles to learn that Jesus was devoted to prayer. Right after Jesus called them to follow Him, they learned what he did. In Mark 1:35, we read that "in the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there." Jesus prioritized prayer. Jesus knew the importance of prayer and He got up in the wee hours and went and prayed.

(Mark 1:35) "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."

The disciples took all of this in. They traveled and accompanied Him for three years. They knew everything He did. They knew He got up early and prayed. They knew He was devoted to prayer. They knew it was a priority to them. They were eager to learn and so they asked Jesus in Luke 11 to teach them to pray, just as John taught his disciples. Jesus taught them the Lord's Prayer or the Model Prayer. It is really just a prayer plan. It gives an outline for spending time in prayer.

(Luke 11:1) "It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

This morning we have another glimpse of Jesus' prayer life. Our text does not include His actual prayers. Instead, we learn three characteristics of Jesus' prayer life. Let's read our text together.

(Mark 6:45-46) "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. {46} After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray."

## 1. The Pressing Need for Prayer

Our text begins with the word, immediately. The Greek word is *euthus* or *eutheos*. In KJV (G2112), it is used 80 times. It is translated 35x as immediately, 32 times as straightway, 7 times as forthwith. In NASB (G2117), it is translated 1x as early, 52x as immediately, 1x as just then, 2x as right, 6x as straight. Mark uses the word forty-one times. Mark's use of the word immediately implies there is a pressing need or urgency to do the things that Jesus did. There was no time to waste. Jesus needed time with the Father. Jesus was not going to let things drag out. He was going to send the multitude away. He was going to send the disciples away. He was not going to let things drag on. It was urgent that he pray.

In Matthew 4:20-22, the disciples immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. There was no second thoughts or compromise. They made a decision and they were committed to that decision. They left without a second thought about it. They were going to follow Jesus and become His disciples. In our text today, Jesus has made a decision about spending some time in prayer. There is no second thought about it. This is what He is determined to do.

(Matt 4:19-22) "And He \*said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." {20} Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. {21} Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. {22} Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."

Sometimes we have something that we will pray about, but it is not a pressing need. I have people frequently ask me if I will pray about something for them. They are not asking me to stop what I am doing and pray immediately. They just want me to pray over the matter when I am praying. Oftentimes I will go ahead and pray right then for the matter, and I will continue to pray over it later on.

There have been other times when there is an urgency to pray immediately. For example, Karen has occasionally come under a spiritual attack at night. That is not something to put off until later. There is an immediate need to pray right then and there. I will immediately begin to pray over her, and will rebuke any unclean spirit in the name of Jesus. When your wife or anyone else is under a spiritual attack, you should pray immediately. Don't put it in your "to do" file, pray immediately. There were some things that Jesus needed to pray about immediately.

What could some of those pressing needs have been that Jesus needed to immediately leave to spend time in prayer? Jesus had taught the multitudes and healed many of them (Luke 9:10-11). Then, He fed the multitude. Jesus had just miraculously fed 25,000 to 30,000 people. In John's account we find out that after feeding the multitudes, Jesus perceived that the crowd wanted to take Him by force and make Him king. The crowds were so moved by this that they wanted him to be their king. Jesus wanted nothing to do with this revolt. He is the Messianic King, but His kingdom is not of this earth or realm. Jesus was building a spiritual kingdom, and He wanted nothing to do with what the mob was intending to do. The zealous crowd wanted to take Jesus by force and make Him king. This was a desperate situation that needed immediate attention.

(John 6:13-16) "So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. {14} Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." {15} So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone. {16} Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,"

Another thing that was pressing on Jesus' mind was the spiritual development of His disciples. We will find in our text next week that the disciples had not gained any insight from His feeding of the five thousand. I believe that Jesus knew that His disciples had not learned everything that they were supposed to learn. Jesus was all about making disciples, not creating a food ministry. His disciples had not learned the current lesson, and He urgently wanted them to learn from the incident. Some scholars say that this is about two years into their three years together, so Jesus does not have a lot more time with them. So, I believe that the apostles' growth plan was a pressing need.

(Mark 6:51-52) "Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly astonished, {52} for they had not gained any insight from the *incident of the loaves*, but their heart was hardened."

In addition to the twelve apostles, there were thousands of people following Jesus for the food He provided, or to see more of His miracles. They were not true disciples; they were thrill seekers. In John's account, after they crossed over to the other side, Jesus addressed this. He said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." He told them not to work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life.

(John 6:26-27) "Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. {27} "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

Then, Jesus preached that He is the Bread of Life. This was difficult for them to accept and as a result of this statement, many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus then asked the twelve if they were also going to go away. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." Jesus saw the hearts of the multitudes. He knew that many of them were not true believers; they were there for the miracles and for the food. Jesus wanted His own true disciples to fully embrace His deity, that He is the Holy One of God. All these things were pressing on Jesus after He fed the multitudes. Jesus' next actions and His next message were things that He wanted to spend time praying about. These were pressing things.

(John 6:35-69) "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. {36} "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.... {66} As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. {67} So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" {68} Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. {69} "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

One night this past week I spent much of the night in prayer and meditation on this message. I was not comfortable with the passage. Karen knew that I was struggling with the message and she took time to pray for me one morning. But, I spent most of one night seeking the Lord about the message. Jesus was preaching all the time, and He may have felt that He needed to pray over that message about the Bread of Life. We do not know what He was praying, only that it was a pressing need that needed immediate attention.

## **2. The Priority of Prayer**

It has been a long day for Jesus. He had preached and then healed a lot of people. Then, He fed the multitudes. It was now in the evening and He was tired. But, spending time in prayer was a priority to Him. He was not going to let anything get in the way of His prayer time. So, Jesus, like the apostles in Acts 6, dealt with the distractions so that His time of prayer was not squeezed.

(Mark 6:45-46) "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away. {46} After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray."

While it was evening when Jesus went to the mountain to pray, He often went in the early morning (Mark 1:35). He prayed before doing anything else. It came prior to doing anything else; it was a priority.

People have said that you can tell what is important to a man by looking at two things, his check book and his day timer. How a person spends his money and his time show the real priorities in a person's life. Jesus spent a lot of time in prayer, so we know that this was a priority to Him.

I have had a lot of people tell me that corporate prayer is not something to do on a Sunday morning. They say that it should be done in small group or on a Wednesday night, but it is not a Sunday morning activity. The early church was devoted to prayer and I don't think that they waited until a week night. I think the church came together and prayed. I think prayer should be part of every thing that we do. Prayer has been a priority to me and to every church that I have pastored. It was Jesus that said that His house shall be called a house of prayer.

### 3. The Plan for Prayer

Our text today begins with Jesus immediately forcing his disciples to get into the boat and cross over to the other side. He was going to deal with the crowd Himself. He was also going to spend some solitary time in prayer. Jesus planned to spend time in prayer. We saw that immediately means without delay, as in something that is urgent. However, euthus (immediately) is also translated a number of times as straight. For example, in Luke 3:4-5, John quoted Isaiah 40:3-4 when he was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The Greek word that is translated as straight is euthus. In this case, it means there is no deviation in our paths or lifestyle or in regards to righteous living. If we think in terms of Mark 6:45, where Jesus immediately forces the disciples to get into the boat and sends away the crowds, He was not going to deviate from His plan. He planned to spend time in prayer, and nothing was going to cause Him to deviate from His plan to pray. He was going to dismiss the apostles. He was going to dismiss the crowds. He was not going to allow any outside things to interrupt His plan to spend time in prayer. We need to be as tenacious as Jesus was at protecting His prayer time. We need to be careful about letting other things interfere with the time we set aside to pray.

(Luke 3:4-5) "as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. {5} 'every ravine will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be brought low; the crooked will become straight, and the rough roads smooth;"

The apostles in Acts 6 were this way. In the Introduction I shared how the Greek widows were being overlooked. The apostles were not going to allow this to interfere with their time to pray. Their solution was to have other men raised up to serve tables so that they could devote themselves to prayer. They were not going to deviate from the priority and devotion to prayer. In this sense, they were immediate in their prayer life.

When the apostles asked Jesus to teach them to pray, His message to them is recorded in Luke 11:1-4 and in Matthew 6:9-13. We call it the Lord's Prayer or the Model Prayer. It is simply a prayer plan or an outline of prayer topics to pray. There are other outlines, like CAST (Confession, Adoration, Supplication, Thanksgiving), or ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). I have no problem with people using these different models, but I like the one that the Lord gives the best.

(Matt 6:9-13) "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. {10} 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. {11} 'Give us this day our daily bread. {12} 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. {13} 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"

### **Lord's Prayer (Model Prayer)**

1. Hallowing God's Name
2. God's Kingdom and Will
3. God's Provision
4. Forgiveness
5. God's Protection (Temptation and evil)
6. Praise and Adoration

**Hallowing God's Name** When I begin my prayer time, I start by hallowing God's name. I spend time in giving thanks to Him and praising His name and attributes. Sometimes, more than 50% of Karen and my prayer time is used in this first part of the prayer plan. When I am by myself, I often think alphabetically. God is the Alpha and Omega. He is Adonai (Lord). He is the Anointed One or Christ. He is the Chief Apostle. He is the Beginning and the End. He is the Baptizer of the Holy Spirit. He is the Bread of Life. He is the Christ. He is Compassionate. He is caring. He is the Door. He is our Deliverer.

Sometimes I will focus on a specific name or characteristic. If I am praising Him for being my Shepherd, I will thank Him for leading me beside still waters and for His peace. I will thank Him for making me lie down in green pastures and for feeding me. I will thank Him for His protection and His discipline in my life. I will thank Him for being with me in the valleys and in the good times. I will thank Him for laying down His life for me. I will focus my praises and thanksgivings on that one aspect of who God is. The Lord is my shepherd. Sometimes, I will use a particular passage, as Psalm 23, when thinking about Jesus being my Shepherd.

**Thy Kingdom Come** The second part of the plan is to pray about God's kingdom and His will being done. The kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God in our lives, and in the people that we know. Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, and it is also something that we should pray about. When we pray for God's will to be done, there is the general or universal will of God that applies to everyone. Some people call this God's moral will. Then, there is the specific will of God that He has for each of us. We need to be praying about His general will to be done in our lives and also for His specific will. Here are some examples of His general will.

#### **God's Will For Everyone**

1. God's will is for us to be conformed to His image. (Rom 8:26-30)
2. God's will is for us to have a godly sorrow that leads us to repentance. (2 Cor 7:9-11)
3. God's will is for us to submit to those in authority. (1 Pet 2:13-15, 2 Cor 8:1-5, Eph 6:5-8)
4. God's will is for us to be sanctified (made holy). (1 Thess 4:3-7)
5. God's will is for us to be in right relationship with one another. (1 Thess 5:11-18)
6. God's will is for us to rejoice always. (1 Thess 5:16)
7. God's will is for us to pray without ceasing. (1 Thess 5:17)
8. God's will is for us to give thanks in everything. (1 Thess 5:18)

**God's Provision** The third part is about praying for God's provision for our lives. I pray for spiritual provision, not just physical bread.

**Forgiveness** The fourth part is about praying for forgiveness. It includes asking God for forgiveness for our sins and forgiving others that have sinned against us.

**Protection and Temptations** The fifth part is about dealing with temptations and sin.

**Praise and Adoration** The sixth and final part of the prayer plan is to give God praise and adoration. It begins with praise and thanksgiving and it ends with praise.

Jesus' plan also included a place to pray. Often He went into the wilderness to pray. He also liked to go to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. He also went to the mountain to pray. Jesus had a number of places that He liked to pray in. I encourage you to find a place where you can be alone with the Father and pray. If you journal while you pray, make sure you have your notebook or laptop with you.

(Mark 6:46) "After bidding them farewell, He left for the mountain to pray."

(Luke 5:16) "But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray."

(Luke 6:12) "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God."

Jesus' plan also included a time. I cannot find a consistent pattern in Jesus' prayer life. He got up early in the morning and prayed. In our text today, it was in the evening that He went to the mountain to pray. I think Jesus prayed often and at different times. Most of us do better with a consistent schedule, and have a scheduled time to pray can be very helpful.

### **Conclusion and Applications**

We have seen this morning that Jesus had an urgency to pray. Immediately he forced the disciples into the boat and dismissed the crowd so that He could go to the mountain and pray. There were things pressing on His mind that He wanted to pray about. These things could not be put off until later; they needed immediate attention.

How about you? Are there some pressing needs in your life right now that need immediate attention and prayers? Let me encourage you to do what Jesus did and send away the distractions and/or activities that would prevent you from spending time in prayer. In 1 Peter 5:7, we are told to cast all our cares and anxieties on Him. Are these pressing needs in your life causing anxiety? I encourage you to go to the mountain, to a place where you can meet with the Lord, and cast those cares upon the Lord. Casting was a fishing term and it often required several men to cast a heavy net out into the water. If you need someone to pray with you, I encourage you to ask a friend to pray with you. You can ask Karen or I to pray with you. We would be happy to pray with you. There are others that can pray with you. It does not always have to be the pastor praying with you. But, humble yourself and ask for someone to pray with you if you have a burden that is pressing on your heart.

Jesus prioritized prayer. The apostles prioritized prayer. Is prayer a priority in your life? Do you make sure that you do this before other things? If God looked at your day timer, would He agree with you that prayer is a priority in your life? If the answer is no, then I encourage you to make it a priority. Put it prior to doing anything else each day.

Jesus had a plan and used a plan in His prayer time. Do you have a plan for your prayer time? Do you plan out when and where you are going to pray? Do plan the things you are going to pray about. Most of us need a reading plan and a prayer plan. If you do not have a plan for praying, let me encourage you to use the Lord's Prayer or one of the other ones that I mentioned today and use it. God has called His people, the church, to be a house of prayer. May we be a house full of saints who are devoted to prayer.



**Introduction** (Mark 6:45-46, Acts 1:14, 2:42, 6:2-5, Mark 1:35, Luke 11:1, Mark 6:45-46)

1. **The Pressing Need for Prayer** (Matt 4:20-22, John 6:13-16, Mark 6:51-52, John 6:26-27, 6:35-69)
  
2. **The Priority of Prayer** (Mark 6:45-46, 1:35)
  
3. **The Plan for Prayer** (Luke 3:4-5, Isa 40:3-4, Luke 11:1-4, Matt 6:9-13, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16, 6:12)

**Conclusion and Applications**