

Introduction: A Question for us today. Was Jesus an effective leader? Consider some things that he did. As we will see soon, when he developed a large following, he fled. At another point, when he has developed a large following, he intentionally gives a message that sends many away. He used illustrations and stories that kept people from understanding his message, and he refused to be king when the people called for him to assume such a position. He intentionally insulted the current leaders who held political and religious power, and he supported the authority of the very unpopular occupying army. He thoroughly trained 12 men, although the men gave up after his death—which came as a result of one of his own men betraying him. At the time of his death, none of the men stood up to resume his mission. Further, none of the men seemed to have grasped his mission fully enough to keep it going anyway. Jesus was a leader—and he will one day reign perfectly. However, during his time on earth, his goal was not to lead as many expected, but to serve as God the Father intended. As we open up to Mark 1 this morning, let's consider the ministry of the One that John the Baptist announced.

Theme: Consider the ministry of the One who has come! – see Mark 1:7

Trans: Consider 3 aspects of Jesus' ministry from Mark 1:35-45.

1. Dependent Ministry – v. 35

- a. The Setting: Busy Sabbath (21-34) involving teaching, casting out demons, and healing until late into the night
 - i. Much ministry after dark (32-33)
 - ii. Take a moment to try to understand what the day had been like for Jesus
 1. Taught at the synagogue – to the amazement of many
 2. Confronted and cast out demons
 3. Healed many
 4. It seems apparent that he served others for the majority of the day
 5. When you work a long day, in whatever occupation you have, serving others and facing difficult challenges, what is your condition by the end of the day?
- b. The Choice: Jesus got up to pray when it was still dark and went to a secluded place to pray
 - i. Perhaps he was restless, concerned, depleted, overwhelmed, fighting any number of sins like pride, selfishness, etc.
- c. The Ramifications: This is another example in chapter 1 of how his ministry is directly tied to his relationship with his Father (c.f. his baptism). Also, by this action Jesus shows the necessity and value of prayer—more than rest even at an extremely demanding time.

Consider the Ministry of the One who has come!

Dependent Ministry
Focused Ministry
Sacrificial Ministry

“Most of our people have no idea what two or three new messages a week cost us in terms of intellectual and spiritual drain. Not to mention the depletions of family pain, church decisions, and imponderable theological and moral dilemmas. I, for one, am not a self-replenishing spring. My bucket leaks, even when it is not pouring. My spirit does not revive on the run. Without time of unhurried reading and reflection, beyond the press of sermon preparation, my soul shrinks, and the specter of ministerial death rises. Few things frighten me more than the beginnings of barrenness that come from frenzied activity with little spiritual food and meditation.¹

d. The Habit: Prayer was an important part of Jesus’ life. Aside from getting away to pray, he also prayed at times like these...

- i. Baptism: Luke 3:21
- ii. Before choosing disciples: Luke 6:12
- iii. The Feeding of the 5000: Mark 6:41, 46
- iv. While training the disciples: Luke 9:18
- v. Before his transfiguration: Luke 9:28
- vi. Before teaching his disciples how to pray: Luke 11:1
- vii. At Lazarus’ tomb: John 11:41-42
- viii. Before Peter’s denial: Luke 22:32
- ix. For his disciples and future believers: John 17
- x. Before his arrest: Mark 14:32ff
- xi. On the cross: Mark 15:34
- xii. After his resurrection: Luke 24:30

e. The Application:

- i. Personal findings: having been convicted by Jesus example here and my anemic prayer life, in the last couple days I have “hidden away” to pray—especially with today looming. As I have considered my time spent in this way, I have one overwhelming thought: “Why have I not done this more?!” [two further impressions following...]
 1. Nothing can be compared to pouring out my needy soul to the God who sees, and hears, and cares, and acts! To the God who is working all things in my life for good—for my transformation into the image of Christ!!
 2. While I regret other ways that I have used my time in the last few days, I would never use the word “regret” to describe my time in prayer with God! If there is anything that I look back on with joy and thankfulness and would never depart with, it is my time seeking God’s face in prayer and in his Word.
- ii. So, for us today, let us consider the example of Christ
 1. We desperately need men who, like Christ, are caught praying!
 2. We need followers of Christ who heed his warning and watch and pray so that we do not fall into temptation.

¹ John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 65-66.

3. We need believers who, in the midst of a crazy day at work, quickly deal with other matters during their lunch breaks so that they can spend some few quiet moments with God and prepare for the rest of their hours at work.
4. We need mothers who flee to God in prayer in the precious few moments they have so that they can keep a sane mind the rest of the day.
5. We need grandparents who are known for disappearing for segments of time even with family visiting because they cannot change their routine prayer times
6. We need a church that is known for praying, like Christ, in the midst of busy schedules and activities
7. We should fear, terribly, our vulnerability when we do not follow Christ's example here

f. The Continuing Ministry of Christ: Hebrews 4:14-16

Trans: The example that Jesus sets by being dependent upon His Father should challenge the way we live. But he did not only have a ministry that was dependent upon God—he also had a ministry that was focused.

2. Focused Ministry – v. 36-39

- a. The Disciples are driven by the crowd – v. 36-37 “Everyone is looking for you”
 - There is no evident concern from the disciples (Simon and his companions) that they interrupted Jesus.
 - Nor is there any indication that they thought he was doing something important
 - They evidently were very caught up in the demands of the people
- b. Jesus is driven by his purpose – v. 38-39

“Let us go...so that I may preach...that is what I came for”

 - This hearkens back to 1:14-15
 - This statement indicates his purpose—preaching the good news—is more important than the healings and cleansings (of unclean spirits) he had been doing
- c. Application: the centrality of the message should still dictate choices today
 - We would be wise to consider Jesus' example here. To heed the need of these people would have detracted from his purpose, which was proclaiming the gospel in nearby places
 - The good news of Jesus Christ provides the direction that we need when considering ministry and purpose.
 - Illustration of learning to drive in Minneapolis. Starting in the middle of winter. I lived 15 minutes from downtown when the 35W bridge collapsed, but had no idea at the time where that bridge was. Now I was starting to drive all over this massive metropolitan area. I hated my job during training. Then, one day another driver filled in as my coach and started talking about how much he loved his GPS. He convinced me to try using one. While using the GPS took time, all of the sudden I could see the big picture of the cities with a couple of taps while also being able to zoom in on my specific location. Now, I knew where I was going, and my view of the job started to change.

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- Trying to serve people based on what they need or want can be like trying to drive in a city you do not know. Without the gospel providing clear direction to what we should be doing, our ministry individually and as a church will soon lose sight of what is important.
- Jesus stayed with his mission from God of preaching the good news.

Trans: So we have seen that Jesus had a dependent ministry and a focused ministry. Last, we will consider Jesus' interaction with a leper, which shows how he conducted sacrificial ministry. How his ministry towards the leper in Mark 1:40-45 was sacrificial might not be apparent at first, but let's dig in.

3. Sacrificial Ministry – v. 40-45

a. Compassionate, Powerful Healing – v. 40-42

“a leper came...beseeching Him...falling on his knees before Him...”

- parallel passage with Mark 1:40-45 is Matthew 8:1-4, so the leper came to Jesus after he gave the sermon on the Mount!
- too close!! Current law of the day dictated that lepers keep their distance.
 - Leviticus 13:45-46 shows that lepers were condemned in multiple ways for their disease
 - Called by some “the living dead” [see Edwards, Pillar, pg 69]
 - Luke 5:12 says this man was “covered with leprosy” showing the case was advanced
- notice this need is in line with Jesus' ministry to the demon-possessed (1:23 unclean spirit)

“Moved with compassion, he touched him and said”

- Jesus greatly cared for the people – see parallel passage Matthew 8:14-17
- Consider how often the gospels refer to Jesus' touch
 - the tongue of a deaf man in Mark 7:33
 - Jesus touched the hand of Peter's mother-in-law and healed her, Matt 8:15
 - He touched the eyes of blind men in Matt 9:29
 - He touched Peter, James, and John when they were terrified after the transfiguration and encouraged them to get up and not fear, Matt 17:7
 - He touched the coffin of a dead man and brought him back to life, Luke 7:14
- Consider, the very one who can touch and bring physical cleansing is the one who, in the next section of Mark (2:1-12), is able to forgive sins.
 - Application: Have you thought that you are too sinful to receive God's forgiveness? Jesus' healing touch has cleansed a man full of leprosy, brought sight to blind men, healing to Peter's mother-in-law, life to a dead man, and comfort to terrified men. Yes, all of our sins are terrible and bring shame and guilt and separation from God. But Jesus brought with him life!! He was later to die so that others might live. I submit to you that if you have yet to receive Christ as your Savior from sin, it is not the wickedness of your sin that is keeping you right now from salvation, it is the absence of faith. Then, to all of us, to what better place can we run than to the arms of Jesus Christ! Rather than being repulsed by the leper, he had compassion and touched him, bringing healing. He can bring healing to you today too.

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- b. Stern Warning – v. 43-44 “Say nothing to anyone”
 - Jesus tried to tell the man clearly what he was to do

 - “go, show...offer”
 - such was prescribed by the OT Law according to Leviticus 14

- c. Unsanctioned Preaching – v. 45 “he...began to proclaim it freely...”
 - instead of obeying, the man began proclaiming
 - same root word as that used in 1:38-39 to refer to Jesus
 - note that Jesus would not permit the demons to speak, since they knew who he was (1:34)
 - this man proclaimed Christ “freely” which seems to be against what Jesus wanted
 - The Result: Jesus had to stay in unpopulated areas
 - The leper believed that Jesus **was able** to heal him. Later, Jesus **was unable** to enter cities publicly
 - The Comparison: the outcast was cleansed; the cleanser became outcast by necessity

Conclusion: Review of main points and theme. Applications throughout sermon rather than at end.