

# Pray and Be Alone with God

*HeartCry 2006 Conference*

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**Bible Text:** Luke 11:1-13

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Well let's open up our Bibles to Luke chapter 11 and verse one.

“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.’”<sup>1</sup>

I want you to notice some things that are very, very important here. I believe with all my heart it was a fearful thing to watch Jesus pray, that it was an awesome event, higher than any other thing he did, because if you notice here it says, “It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished...”<sup>2</sup>

No one dared touch that ark. When he was bowed on his knees, when he was calling out to this Father it was like no other thing anyone had ever seen on the face of the earth.

And then he goes on and it says, “One of his disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray.”<sup>3</sup>

Now I find this a most amazing statement and I find it a statement that is very, very overlooked among those who study this text. If you will notice something very, very important, a disciple never came to Jesus and said, “Teach us to preach.” A disciple never came to Jesus and said, “Teach us to walk on water.” A disciple never came to Jesus and said, “Teach us to raise the dead.” A disciple never came to Jesus and said, “Teach us to cast out demons.”

Now if you were to want to know how to play basketball, you probably wouldn't come to me because I know so little about basketball. You would try to find out what my expertise truly was and then you would ask me about that. You ask a man about his expertise. You ask a man about the thing which most impresses you about that man.

I believe that without a doubt, the greatest demonstration of divine power was seen not when Jesus Christ raised the dead and not when he walked on water, but when he prayed. And I believe that when the disciples saw Jesus praying, they could not believe their

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 11:1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

eyes. They could not believe even what their ears were telling them. Jesus was a man of prayer.

Now let me ask you a question. When people hear you pray do they hear someone who knows God? Do they hear the rhythm of the religion? Do they hear words that have been taught to you by other men? Do they hear form? Do they hear intellect? Or do they hear a man or a woman or a child who spends much time in the presence of God?

Has anyone ever come to you and said, “Teach me to preach like you preach”? Well, that may be something to boast about, but not before God.

Has anyone ever come to you and said, “Teach me to administrate like you administrate”? Has anyone ever come to you and said, “Teach me to pray”?

I am not much of a man, but I have had the privilege in my life to be in the presence of many men used by God. And the one thing that I noticed. They had very little in common except one thing. When they bowed their knee, something unusual happened.

There is a saying. When someone achieves a certain thing he may look over and with a twinkle in his eye say, “You can’t learn that. You have got to be born with that.”

You can’t fake prayer.

Jesus was a man of prayer and when he prayed people saw the difference.

Now I want to look for a moment at the idea that Jesus was a man of prayer. And I have just scribbled down here a bunch of verses and I am going to kind of read a hodge podge of verses that you might come to understand the importance of prayer in the life of Jesus Christ and then come to understand that if prayer was so important to the incarnate Son of the living God, then how much more important should prayer be to us? How much more should we depend upon prayer?

Jesus lived a life of prayer. That is the first thing I want you to see. In Luke 5:16 it says, “But Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.”<sup>4</sup>

You know, often times when we find something that we greatly enjoy as opposed to what we grudgingly must do, we try to slip away to it. A man might want to avoid his yard duty by slipping away to watch a ball game. A man may come in to work early so he can slip away to go hunting. A wife may want to slip away to go to the mall. They slip away to the things that they most enjoy.

Isn’t it a crime that Jesus Christ and the labor of the kingdom seems almost to be work that we want to slip away from?

I heard tell of a story. Evangelist, he came... he got off the plane and was received by the

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 5:16.

pastors and immediately they took him out to play golf. I don't have much of a problem with that. I never played golf myself. But they took him out to the golf course and that is a fine thing. I guess the saw that he needed to rest. And as they were going out there across whatever you cross to do whatever you do when you play golf, the evangelist just happened to mention, he said, "Well, you know, the Lord is so good. The other day he was just..."

And the preacher stopped him and says, "Let's not talk shop out here. This is the place where we are going to rest."

The only place you will ever rest is in Jesus Christ. And you know when you are walking with God, when? When you slip away to him, when you say, "There is so much I have to do, so much grudging work, so much labor. I just wish that I could slip away to him for a moment because he is the one to whom I escape. He is the place I rest."

When prayer becomes a labor we are not like the Christ, we are not like Jesus. It says he would slip away into the wilderness and pray.

Notice he would go into the wilderness. My friend, the world, even the Church is just so filled up with noise that every once in a while—especially those of you who are pastors—you have got to slip away and you have got to go to a wilderness where no one can find you and seek your God. And be very careful that sometimes you don't take along all those books with you, because to many Jesus Christ can just become proper exegesis, proper hermeneutic, a thing to be studied instead of a person to be loved.

Jesus would slip away. In Matthew 14:23 it says, "After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone."<sup>5</sup>

Someone said, "Why did Jesus need to pray so much? He was the incarnate Son of God."

We are going to talk about that. But let me show you just the foolishness of that question. Could it just be possible that he always wanted to slip away and be alone with God simply because he loved him?

It says in Luke 6:12-13:

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 14:23.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 6:12-13.

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever made a... have you ever had to make a really tough decision? Did you ever pass the entire night in prayer to do so. If you say no, I say to you, "Behold, we have found a man stronger than Jesus."

Isn't it amazing that the Christ would slip away and spend the entire night in prayer to discern the Father's voice, to pick the men that had to be picked.

But we have got the upper hand on that. That is not so much needed anymore.

He goes on.

Matthew 26:36.

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.'"<sup>7</sup>

Who could forget Gethsemane? Who could forget a war that was fought in that place?

My friend, when he got up off his knees, the battle was over. The war was fought there. How many things do we have to fight with? How many Philistines do we have to put up with that stay in the land and they are like thorns to us? Why? Because we do not take the matter by the horns. We do not go to the Lord and wrestle until the victory is won.

Jesus Christ overcame in that garden and he overcame by struggling through it in prayer and gaining the victory.

That passage, "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting,"<sup>8</sup> that just doesn't have to do with demons, my dear friend. There are so many mountains in your life, so many obstacles in your life, so many things in your life that seek to derail you, to stop you. And they are going to stay there because some of those things just don't go away by counseling. They go away by falling on your face before God until he delivers you.

Jesus was a man of prayer. He showed it in every aspect of his life.

And he goes on. Jesus taught in prayer.

The Scriptures are so filled with the teachings of Jesus Christ on prayer that there is just nothing we can do with that tonight. There is two passages that I want to point out and they are both found in Luke 18.

In verse one he says, "Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 26:36.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 17:21.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 18:1.

That is Jesus Christ right there. If you want to sum up everything he taught about prayer, we ought to pray at all times.

Now for you young men here, let me just teach you something that will help you. I hear so many young men today saying, “Well, I don’t have a really a specific time in which I pray. I am more, you know, throughout my day I just kind of practice the presence of God, but I don’t really have that secret place I go to.”

Let me tell you something, young man. There is no way you can learn to practice the presence of God if you do not spend much time in secret prayer. The power to practice the presence of God, the power to live a life of prayer to always be speaking with the Father, that is born out of secret time with the Lord, segment of time with the Lord in prayer.

And he said we ought to be praying always and not to lose heart. The initiating of prayer is never a problem. Do you realize that? You have initiated so many petitions before the throne. The question is: Have you wrestled them through? Have you pressed on in to lay hold? Have you kept going? Are there petitions in your heart, in your mind, down on pieces of paper that possibly have been there for 15 years? But you say to the Lord, “I will not let you go.”

It is so easy to initiate prayer. But to persevere in that praying...

So he said we ought to pray and we shouldn’t lose heart because losing heart is the very end of all praying.

And then he says in 18:8 what I consider to be one of the most... one of the saddest verses in the entire Bible. It is this in 18:8. “I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”<sup>10</sup>

Now, why is that so sad?

Jesus has just given them a parable to demonstrate to them why they should always pray and not lose heart. It is almost as though Christ is going, “Listen. My Father is faithful. My Word is true. He is willing to do far more than anything you could ever ask or think. I am telling you, ‘Ask and you will receive, knock and it will be opened to you. Seek, you will find.’”

And then the Lord stops and goes, “But, then again, when I return, will I find anybody believing this? Is anyone going to take me at my word?”

We cast so much doubt, not just upon the infallible Word of God, we cast so much doubt on the character of God when we do not avail ourself, boldly, of the promises. Either we have no passion for the advancement of his kingdom or we feel that someone it can be

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 18:8.

advanced through the power of the flesh, the power of the intellect, the power of ecclesiastical structure.

Now he goes on. He taught on prayer.

Now I want to point out something to you, why it was necessary that Christ pray. And I mentioned already his love for the Father. Love for God will cause you to desire to talk to God and to hear from God.

There was another reason. I want to read a text. It is in Acts 2:22.

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man...”<sup>11</sup>

And let me read that again.

“Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”<sup>12</sup>

You mark my words. Whenever a cult attacks Christianity the first place they are going to go is they are going to attack the deity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Is that not true? They are going to attack his deity.

Throughout 2000 years of Christian history we have had to build walls to keep them out. We have had to fight. We have had to amass arms. We have had to do apologetics. We have had to do it all. We... it is our purpose and our responsibility to proclaim that Jesus Christ is God.

But one of the things that we have done is not so much forgotten, but we no longer comprehend what it means that this God became flesh. In his humiliation, in his kenosis, in his incarnation, the Son of God, although he did not stop being what he always was, he became something he never was. He continued to be the fullness of deity, but that fullness of deity took on human flesh and he walked on this earth as a man. And one of the things—and it is a fine line here, but it is very important—one of the things we have done is we have relegated every work, every action of Jesus to deity.

Well, he did that. How did he do that? Well, he is God.

And that is true, but what we need to see is that the emphasis placed in the Scripture is that Jesus Christ walked on this earth as a man and the things he taught and the miracles he performed he performed as a man totally and completely submitted to the will of the Father and totally and completely dependent upon the Holy Spirit. And in recognizing that what happened?

Jesus Christ, our elder brother becomes also our model. He becomes our model.

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<sup>11</sup> Acts 2:22.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

I believe it was MacMillan who wrote the book *Power Without Measure*, excellent book if you can get a hold of it. And what I want us to see is that in his humiliation, in his incarnation, God becoming man. Yes, very God, but at the same time very and completely man. And as a man he lived a perfect life. He taught the perfect Word. He did miracles without number. He wrought redemption with his own two hands, completed submitted to the will of God and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now I want us to just look at some things for a moment I believe will help us. First of all, I want us to look at Jesus Christ the man, totally and completely submitted to the will of the Father.

He says in John 4:34, "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."<sup>13</sup>

I can't say that.

Do you know what most bothered me back there in the back while we were praying? Would I be praying so zealously and would I be so concerned about these meetings if they weren't ours, if they weren't sponsored by heart cry and if I was not preaching?

I do so much for me. So much of my food stinks. It is fodder. I would be a hypocrite to stand before you and say those words of mine, but Jesus could always say, "My food, my sustenance, the thing I live for is to do the will of my Father."

That is why how much a man prays will tell you a lot more about him than how much a man preaches.

You can preach for a lot of reasons, but to pray in secret is to do the will of the Father and to eat of pure food of the Lord's Table.

One of our greatest problems—and we learn this, we say this. But listen to what we are saying—one of our greatest problems is, yes, we really are not like Jesus.

We are as much in the reformed movement talking about the law. Men will be judged by the law. And there is truth in that. Men will be judged by the law. But it is a small thing for me to be judged by the law.

You put Paul Washer in the scale. You put the law on the other side of the scale. That is one thing. Yes, I will fail. But do you know something that is a harder measure? Put Paul Washer in one side of the scale and put the perfect man Jesus Christ on the other side of the scale to be compared to him. That is our goal.

It could be said that is our only need, to be like Jesus.

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<sup>13</sup> John 4:34.

The most dangerous prayer a human being could ever pray, “Lord, make me like Christ. I don’t care if you have to dethrone me. I don’t care if you have to tear apart my ministry. I don’t care if you have to destroy me. I don’t care what happens. Make me like Jesus Christ.”

It is practically calling a death sentence upon yourself. But then, again, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”<sup>14</sup>

His will was to do the will of his Father.

It also... it says in John 5:19, “Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.’”<sup>15</sup>

A Chinese Christian after visiting the United States and seeing all our churches and everything, do you know what he said? He said, “I am absolutely amazed all that you people can do without God. It is absolutely astounding what you can achieve.”

But Jesus said, “I can do nothing apart from him.”

We marvel at the Declaration of Independence. What we need is a declaration of dependence, absolute dependence. It is so hard for those of us raised in a democracy to understand absolute sovereignty, to understand that he is Lord. And we are not to run behind him and we are not to run ahead of him. But we are to walk beside him.

Hopefully, as a young man grows in his ministry, usually a young man his ministry is marked by activity, just activity everywhere. And when all the sawdust finally hits the floor, well, there is just nothing but sawdust. But as he grows older there is less activity so that he would even be labeled as not quite as zealous as before, but much more is done because he is seeking only to do what the Father would have him to do.

Now, also in John 5:30, one of my favorite texts in the Bible, it says this. “I can do nothing on My own initiative.”<sup>16</sup>

How much do we do on our own initiative? Is it not the great sin to take the matter into our own hands? And we have been taught that even in our culture. A man needs a car, doesn’t have money for it. What does he do? Well, he goes to the bank, takes the matter into his own hands by his own initiative and he gets the job done and he is in bondage to it instead of a man saying, “I need a car. I have no money. Father. I need a house. I have no money. Father. I want to do this thing in the name of Jesus Christ and in the ministry, but, Father, I will initiate nothing. Show me. Lead me. Guide me.” Absolute surrender to him, absolute surrender.

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<sup>14</sup> John 12:24.

<sup>15</sup> John 5:19.

<sup>16</sup> John 5:30.

It is not something I am giving testimony about with regards to myself, but it is something I am telling you about with regard to Jesus Christ. I want you to see him, yes, as God in the flesh. But I want you to see him as a man totally submitted to the will of God. And I want you to see that that is what you are called to. Prayer is a little thing unless this giant is first slain. It is the end of self will and submitting ourselves to Jesus Christ.

There ought to be a way in which we can answer every question like this.

Someone says, “Well, why did you go there or why did you do this?”

The answer, “Because I believed it to be God’s will.”

Well, that is an absolutely great opportunity that is open to you.

No, I have no opportunity except the doing of God’s will.

If all the doors in all of creation fly open and God says, “Stop,” then you bring glory to God by stopping and you will save yourself from a whole lot of peril.

And not only that—and this is the part that I really want us to look at—in the absolute submission of Jesus Christ to the will of the Father, he was absolutely dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ. You see, in his humiliation, in his incarnation, laying aside his robes of glory, yes, still God, but yet walking on this earth as man, he did what he did in the power of the Holy Spirit, submitted to the will of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit and therefore, again, our elder brother is our example.

We can’t simply write him off as, well, I will never be like my elder brother because he was God. Well, there is a great deal of truth in that. Your elder brother was God. No, you will never be like him. But you should learn from this. Your elder brother who was God became a man and as a man he walked perfectly submitted to the will of the Father and absolutely dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit. And that is something.

We do not strive for deity. But we do strive to be like him, to be submitted to the will of the Father and to be empowered, dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now I want to read a few passages that are eye openers.

Luke 4:1. “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness.”<sup>17</sup>

Do you see that? It is a forceful word. He was cast out into the wilderness by the Spirit Matthew tells us. He was led around in the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. Here we have

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<sup>17</sup> Luke 4:1.

God incarnate and yet being sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. How much more must we?

In Peru there is this illustration that they always use. It is like this. It is when a man is not walking in a godly way they tell him, "You are like a drunken man going down the Amazon which is fraught with many a peril. You are like a drunken man going down the Amazon blindfolded at night in a speedboat with your family seated in the boat and the boat filled with dynamite."

My dear friend, the Christian not seeking to be led of the Holy Spirit is in greater peril, greater peril.

And I want to tell you something. There are two extremes in this and both of them are just that, extremes. There are men over here who have no knowledge of the Word whatsoever and they claim to be led of the Spirit. And the spirit that is leading them contradicts the Word. We know that is false.

But then there are men who say, "We will have nothing of that." And everything is just a proposition and a figuring out and correct exegesis and that is all. And they know nothing of being led and directed by the Spirit of God who will sometimes make men do unusual things to accomplish his end, never things that contradict Scripture, but nonetheless unusual things.

We must be in the Word and grounded in the Word. We must also cry out for the Spirit to reveal God's will through his Word, but we must be sensitive in all things to follow him, not only to start our journey into the wilderness, but to be led throughout the wilderness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:14. "And Jesus returned to Galilee."<sup>18</sup> Look at this. He returned from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit. Now he returns to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:14.

Luke 4:18. He speaks about his ministry and the Scriptures speak about his ministry.

**"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED."**<sup>19</sup>

The ministry of Jesus Christ was a Spirit empowered ministry, a ministry sensitive to the Holy Spirit. How much more do we need the same?

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 4:14.

<sup>19</sup> Luke 4:18.

My dear friend, many people treat the Word of God and the new covenant as though it were the law written on tablets of stone. There they are. Now obey them in the power of the flesh.

It is impossible. We read this Scripture. We see these commands. We know it.

How many husbands have declared, “I know this is right, but I can’t make it work. I know I am supposed to love my wife this way, but I just don’t have the strength.”

Of course you don’t. You have the strength to do nothing. So when you open that book and you see those commands, you must realize that the only way you are going to be brought through this wilderness is through the power of the Holy Spirit crying out as you read this commands, “Oh, God, fill me. Fill me. Fill me. Fill me.” The constant cry of the believer, “Fill me.”

And will not God give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

You say, “Well, brother Paul, we have it.”

Yes. What that text means, though, and Spurgeon took it this way, meant that although we are born again and the Holy Spirit indwells in us, we should constantly be crying out for greater and greater manifestations of his power so that we might fulfill the commandment of God and live a godly life in constant dependence upon the work of the Holy Spirit.

One of the things that I noticed as a young man, I... after I was converted an old brother Pitman was his name came to me with a stack of books and he said, “Read these books.”

And they were the autobiography of Hudson Taylor, of George Mueller, the spiritual secret of Hudson Taylor and every book Leonard Ravenhill ever wrote.

I began to go from there and look at a lot of different men down through history, those on this side, those on that side, those of different places and denominations and time and I found so little in common with those men and women who had served God so mightily except this. Their prayer life and they acknowledging their greatest need of being filled with the Holy Spirit, that they could do absolutely nothing apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, that they could initiate nothing apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

It says in Luke 5:17, “One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.”<sup>20</sup> Now listen to this. “And the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.”<sup>21</sup>

And I want you to look at that. The Holy Spirit was present so that Jesus might heal.

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<sup>20</sup> Luke 5:17.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

And, my dear friend, let's go back again another stop. This Jesus was God. This Nazarene, this God of Nazareth, he was God in the flesh, but in his humiliation to walk before God as the one true servant of Yahweh, the one true man of God. He humbled himself, laid aside his robes of glory, took on the form of a man and he walked in the power of the Holy Spirit and he did what he did because he was submitted to the will of God and he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

How much greater is our need? How much greater is our need? Baptists are so reactionary. We see all this false stuff going on and about 95 percent of it is false, things being done supposedly in the name of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit that contradict Scripture. But we, as Baptists, often times what we do instead of going back to center, we run to the other extreme. We have a constant need to be filled and to be crying out for greater filling.

It says in Luke 6:19, "And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all."<sup>22</sup>

It is amazing.

Luke 8:46. "But Jesus said, 'Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.'"<sup>23</sup>

I believe the King James has here "virtue had gone out of me."

Jesus was a man enflamed, filled with the Holy Spirit and the works that he did he did in the power of the Holy Spirit. And when a work was done, the power of the Holy Spirit came out of him.

Sometimes I equate this to preaching in this way. It is a small, small similarity, but there is one. I have noticed that when men preach and they are exercising their gifts of preaching and they are doing so in the power of the Holy Spirit, after the event is over they are absolutely worn out. Virtue has gone out from them. The Spirit has so lifted them up and so empowered them that when it is all over the man...

It is like a woman who knows her child is trapped in a car and with mighty adrenaline she grabs the door and rips it off its hinges and later her arms are swollen and tired because of the force that has gone through her. In the same way preaching, the power of the Holy Spirit, when a man is doing it according to his gifts and according to Scripture and God is in it, it will wear him to the bone. It will wear him to the bone.

He goes on.

Prayer was essential to Jesus Christ. And I want to read a few things.

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<sup>22</sup> Luke 6:19.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 8:46.

There is one commentator. I don't even know who he is. He said this. "Jesus is the dependent man and this is just where we fail. He withdraws himself into the wilderness and prays ever the dependent as the obedient and victorious man."

Let's listen to what he says. He is saying that it is Jesus' dependence upon God that wrought the obedience and victory.

Now, Matthew Poole writes this. "We meet with Christ often, commending to us the duty of secret prayer by his own example."

That is so convicting because I am commending you to secret prayer by my word. But would I by my example?

It is a sobering thing to preach.

It says, "We meet Christ often, compelling us to the duty of secret prayer by his own example as he had done by his precept and always choosing for it the most private and retired places to teach us to go and to do likewise, often to pray to our Father which seeth in secret and his example more presses us because we have much more business with God in prayer than he had."

Do you know what he means by that? Matthew Poole is saying we have more business to do with God in prayer than Jesus. Why? He says, "For this reason. Jesus had no sins to confess, nor to beg pardon for, no need to ask for any sanctifying habits of grace. Jesus lived a life of prayer and frequently it was his custom to participate in hidden prayer with his Father. And yet he had nothing of the need that we have. He had no need of confessing sin. He had no pardon to beg. He had no need to cry out for grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy like we do."

Now I want to finish with an example from Jesus in Mark chapter one verse 29. I am just going to be being to read.

And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them. When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city had gathered at the door. And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. 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. Simon and his companions searched for Him; they found Him, and

said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." He said to them, "Let us go somewhere else."<sup>24</sup>

Now briefly what I want to put before you is first of all what is going on here. He was teaching in the synagogue. He was dealing with the demonic. He comes in from there and Mark is fond of using this word "immediately, immediately, immediately." The book of Mark, if you read it properly when you are done you should be wore out because it is like snap shots of Jesus Christ and his activity. And there is no rest in it. Immediately, immediately.

And so he says immediately after they came out of the synagogue they went to the house of Simon and Simon's mother-in-law was sick and he healed her, more virtue going out of him.

Then when evening came after the sun had set they began bringing to him all who were ill, demon possessed. The whole city had gathered.

Now let me explain to you. So when evening had come they did this. Why? It was the sabbath.

I am reminded when they were giving out free land in Oklahoma in the west how they put everyone on a line and there were literally hundreds of men on horseback and carriages and all such because the moment the gun went off they were all going to race to try to find their land. Now people died in the stampede. I want you to know that there on the sabbath thousands of people are waiting for the night to fall to make a sabbath day journey, to make a journey to him, to get to him. And the moment it was proper, the moment it was time the gun went off and the race began.

Now to give you an idea what this was like, one time in the mountains of Santa Rosa in near the [?] it is in the Andes Mountains the people found out that I had brought a doctor with me. There were about 1500 people there gathered for the Bible conference and they discovered that I had brought a physician. Even though the physician had no medicine and they knew it, even though the physician had no tools to work with and even if he had he couldn't have done anything in that filthy place, you have never seen such a war break out in all your life. Not because they were evil people or bad people, they were desperate people. No physician had ever been there before. They were poor. They were broken. They had children who were dying and sick. Men with tuberculosis, other men suffered. People who had cuts and wounds and it just turned into a nightmare.

They stormed the door of the hut. We moved up to the second floor. I had to stop preaching. For three days I translated for the doctor.

And I want you to realize what is going on here. You may think that Jesus is in a quiet little village and a few people come to him to be healed. No, thousands of people. And they are violent and they are angry and they are pressing and they are wanting to get in

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<sup>24</sup> Mark 1:29-38.

and they are wanting to be healed and he is working and they are angry and they are distraught and they are afraid that their time is going to come and pass and they are not going to see him and there is a battle ground going on out there. It is a horrid scene. And if anyone has ever ministered, they would know that this type of thing will absolutely wear you out.

Now, it says here in this passage, it says that when evening came after the sun had set they began bringing them to Jesus.

Now, look at verse 35. “In the early morning, while it was still dark...”<sup>25</sup>

There is not a lot of time in between the two. There is not a lot of time.

I would imagine that people were camped out all around the house. I would imagine that when Jesus went out of the house, he had to make his way. As he made his way through angry crowds at times that wanted to kill him or wanted to make him king, I believe he had to make his way through that crowd. Be very careful not to wake them up.

Now here is a man who has poured himself out. Did he grab any sleep at all it seems? And then he arises to do what? To pray.

Now I have to be careful here because there is a great need for ministers to rest. There is a great need for ministers not to work themselves to the bone or to be involved in activities that will take them away from their proper activity of prayer and reading the Word and preaching. But I want you to see something here about the life of Jesus Christ.

If any man had a reason to say, “I have done enough. I mean, I have given absolutely everything I can give,” it was Jesus. If there ever was a man who had a reason to say, “Lord, I can’t pray now, there’s just too many hurting people that I still haven’t touched. There’s too much ministry to do. I don’t have time to pray.” If anyone ever had the right to say that at that moment, it was Jesus Christ.

I love what Martin Luther said one time. He said, “I have so much work, activity to do today, I must pray at least three hours or I will never get done.”

That is the direct opposite of us, isn’t it? I have so much to do today, I have no time to pray.

Look what we are saying. We are saying with that declaration, “I am going to go out and accomplish things in the power of my own.”

Now Jesus goes out and look at this. I think... I may be reading into this a bit, but I think what we have got going on here is a guilt trip by Simon.

Verse 36.

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<sup>25</sup> Mark 1:35.

Simon and his companions searched for Him; they found Him, and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."<sup>26</sup>

“What are you doing out here? Don’t you realize there is all these people? What are you doing out here in the dark praying? Don’t you know that everyone is looking for you? There are people out here that are hurting and they need you.”

Jesus never bought in to that. He knew his priority was to be in the presence of his God, to seek the face of his God, to follow his God and that the greatest thing he could do for humanity is the greatest thing you can do for humanity, to seek your God.

Those of you who are in churches, maybe some pastors here, sometimes I am asked to go to churches and preach to churches that are looking for a pastor. I do a special thing on the way you should approach it. And I will always sit down. I will ask them to put a chalkboard or a whiteboard out in the front of the church and I say, “Ok, what do you want your pastor to do?”

And they will come up with all sorts and manner of things that that man should be doing. And when they are all finished and we have got about 68 hours of work each day lined out on that whiteboard I say, “Now, how much time do you want that man in the Word? The souls of your children may depend on how he preaches. How much time do you want that man in the Word? Now, next question. How much time do you want that man interceding, seeking the face of God so that he knows him?”

The greatest need... I don’t know about you, but I see the greatest need seeking the Lord as Jesus sought him and being in his presence and being empowered by him. What cannot be overcome in prayer? Answer me. What cannot be done by the hand of the almighty? Answer me. What can be done by your feeble arms? Answer me. He can take down the iron curtain in a day. He can convert a nation in an hour. Call upon him. Believe him.

Let’s pray.

*Father, I come before you and... very kind to me tonight and I greatly appreciate it, Lord. You have been a help and you have been merciful. Lord, I pray for your people. I pray for your people, your dear saints here. Pour out on them the Spirit of prayer and supplication. Let them see, Lord, pressing in and pressing on is where the battle is won and that the feeblest, the least gifted among us, the smallest man of the smallest tribe of Zion can gather more victories than the greatest warrior in 12 tribes by praying, by seeking your face, by glorying in your power and putting no confidence in the flesh. God, help us in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

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<sup>26</sup> Mark 1:36-37.