

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ Priorities of Jesus

Last time (in Capernaum): the Authority and Power of Jesus Christ

- Truth: the Word of God vs words of men
- Spiritual realm: over unclean spirits/demons
- Physical realm: over sicknesses and disease

This time (on teaching tour of Galilee): the Priorities of Jesus Christ
We will be in the Gospels of Mark and Luke...starting in Mark 1

Mark 1:35-45

v35 in the morning...prayed:

The first stop on Jesus' teaching tour of the Galilee with His disciples is...
in heaven.

Very early

before daybreak...between 3am and 6am (Mark 13:35)

the time of the priest who had the management of the affairs of the temple
would come into the Temple

on Sunday morning

day after the Sabbath, Saturday

Jesus starts His day and the Tour of Galilee

- alone
- in prayer
 - fellowship with His Father
 - tending to the matters of the True Sanctuary in heaven
 - being strengthened
 - from the previous day
 - for the coming day

Ministering unto the needs of people is very draining work...

physically, emotionally, spiritually

Having slept (Ps 127:2) to be refreshed physically and emotionally,

Jesus goes to the Father first thing to be refreshed spiritually

Note: Jesus, 100% man, needed sleep and did sleep, even in boats caught
in violent storms

But He did not oversleep and waste time because time was short.

Let's take note of this in our day

Rather than the relentless pressures and busy-ness of ministry separating Him from the Father, Jesus makes sure to

- “take care of business”
- “First Things First”

Priority 1: Prayer

If Jesus needed quiet time alone with the Father, how much more do we?!

v36-37 followed after Him...All men seek thee:

Jesus got “up and at ‘em” before His disciples...professional fishermen who worked very early in the morning

When they found Jesus, they essentially said,

“Come back to Capernaum...there is more work (v32-34) to be done.”

More work of treating the symptoms (physical), not the problem (spiritual)

v38-39 next towns...I may preach:

Jesus re-directs His disciples from the work they see to the work He was sent to do – preach Good News and treat the problem (spiritual)

Priority 2: Preach the Gospel, the Word of God, the power of God unto salvation

With so many

- people clamoring for Him
- symptoms ravaging His people
- things to do...more than there is time to do them

Jesus must keep His priorities straight

Jesus is focused

Jesus knows what He was sent to do and is not going to be distracted from it

He will not return to Capernaum to treat symptoms

He will press on to other towns to preach v15

And so He did, doing some “spiritual street cleaning” as He went

btw...what towns did Jesus and His disciples go to on this Tour of Galilee

Does not say

But could it be the nearby towns of Bethsaida (Peter/Andrew home town)

and Chorazin?

Matt 11:20-24

What would His disciples learn...and what must we learn?

- Jesus Christ's unshakeable focus on His Priorities
 1. Prayer...His life in fellowship with His Father...
spiritual refreshment and strength of the inner man
 2. Preach the Word....what the God Who will be known sent
His Son to say
- Following Jesus is much more than miracles

And so they would learn

- Priorities: [Luke 10:38-42](#), [Acts 6:1-4](#)
- Inner man (His power): Eph 3:3-19
- Not about miracles (evidence of His power): John 4:48, Matt 16:4,
John 20:29, Luke 10:17-20, Acts 8:5-23

Will we learn?

In a noisy and busy world with more things to do than time in which to do them, we will not do what MUST be done without focus on the proper priorities

1. Prayer...time with our Maker is Top Priority
We cannot give to others if we do not have the strength to give
2. Preach the Word....time in The Word (read/meditate/study)
We cannot give to others what we have not received

We preach the Word (in words AND action) to

1. Spouse (if have one)
2. Children (if have them)
3. Neighbors
4. Co-workers/classmates
5. All others

btw...we DO preach.

Is it Jesus or Self or the devil?

A heartbreaking, cardiac-arresting moment in my walk with the Lord

- lied to and kept in bondage by Christian religion for 34 years
- revelation of God's love and grace, Truth that set me free
- insatiable hunger and thirst for the Truth
- growing beyond the milk and to the meat
- spoke with the pastor about a Men's Bible Study
(there was none...most important)
- starving at church on Sunday (topical, superficial)
- "With all the things I have to do, I don't have time to study the Bible."
- speechless at the loss of focus on the priorities and the neglect of the
need of the inner man...well intentions aside
- started an exit that took some time

We MUST stay focused on the proper priorities within the confines of time

Jesus is focused on His Priorities...

to pray and to preach the Word of God
to treat man's problem, not merely the symptoms

What is the problem?

v40 a leper:

The problem Jesus came to treat is...sin, the very nature of man
Leprosy is a type for sin

Leprosy was a hideous, horrible disease
A skin disease...yet a deep-seated malady

- nerve damage, causing a loss of sensation in the extremities of pain,
touch, and heat or cold
- destroyed the flesh...skin and bone

- uncontrollable
- contagious
- incurable

The effects of leprosy were devastating

1. Physical

- raw flesh was exposed
- oozing sores
- hair fell out
- fingers and toes would decay and fall off
- gums would decay and teeth would fall out
- nose, eyes, and tongue were consumed...
- disfiguration and mutilation
- terrible suffering until death

2. Emotional/social

- socially rejected/banished...all contact with the living/clean was forbidden
- isolated and separated (outside the city)
- had to keep their distance...“Unclean! Unclean!”
 - 6 feet of separation from the clean
 - 100 feet if coming from the direction of the wind
- forbidden from washing their face lest they defile a water source
- abject emotional misery and shame
- helplessness and hopelessness

Who would not fear and hate such a disease?

Leprosy is used by the Word of God as a picture of sin...

spiritual effects as those manifested physically and emotionally (Is 59:1-2)

It is easy to see why God hates sin...for its devastation on His beloved creature

God hates sin...because He loves sinners

And only He can heal a sinner

OT healings: only by God

- Moses (Ex 4:6-7)
- Miriam (Num 12)
- Naaman (2 Kings 5:6-7, Luke 4:27)

Note: Curse on Gehazi (2 Kings 5:27)

Now, Jesus' work on leprosy/sin began where the Rabbis and priests ended
The Rabbis, the religious leaders/teachers, had no cure for leprosy.
Only a priest of the line of Aaron could declare someone/something
clean or unclean (Lev 13)...they were simply the Dept of Health
that did health inspections.

Both had the condemning heart of Job's friends (and of all religions)

- the presence of leprosy was due to a person's sin
- the healing of leprosy was out of their hands, a function of
 - the leper's repentance
 - God's forgiveness and healing
- Rabbinical M.O. was Matt 23:1-7, 23
- Rabbi Meir: would not eat an egg purchased on a street where there was a leper (thinking himself holier than others)
- Rabbis threw stones at lepers to keep them away or ran and hid from them

With that backdrop, let's consider this scene involving a leper and Jesus Christ...
and take note of the contrast between Jesus Christ the Messiah and the
religious leadership and priesthood

Matt 23:8-12

This leper

- cried out not "Unclean, unclean" but pleaded "Help me!"
- did not flee in fear of being stoned or humiliated, but drew close...
very close
- kept not his distance but, in abject submission, knelt down at Jesus' feet
- was not hopeless...he knew Jesus could heal Him...if He wanted to
- makes a remarkable profession of faith in Jesus Christ
(the man with an unclean spirit did not)
 - knew man could not heal him
 - knew the God of AI&J could heal him
 - knew Jesus could heal him
 - therefore, Jesus Christ Who had the power and authority over diseases/sicknesses and unclean spirits is...

v41-42 Jesus...compassion...touched...said:

Jesus Christ

- did not despise, loathe, or condemn but had compassion on the leper (compassion is an attribute of a soft, loving heart)
imagine the leper's comfort in the Presence of Jesus!!
- did not avoid, run and hide from the leper but reached out and literally touched him...imagine the leper's surprise!!
- wanted to heal him...imagine the leper's joy!!!
- spoke..."Be clean!"

And immediately the leper was healed and cleansed!

Leprosy was vanquished by God's touch and Word

The pure God was not made unclean, the pure God made the unclean clean

God humbled Himself for the benefit of unclean man

v43-44 say nothing to any man...show thyself to the priest:

Having done what only God can do, Jesus Christ instructs the clean man to

- not say a word of this to anyone
- do as commanded in the Law
 - only a priest of the order of Aaron could
 - examine him
 - declare him clean
 - offer the sacrifice for the cleansing
 - Lev 14

v1-3 present himself to the priest for examination

v4-7 the cleansing

- 2 birds
- 1 killed in an earthen vessel (body) over running (living) water
- other dipped in the blood of the slain bird
- he cleansed of leprosy is sprinkled 7 times
- living bird is released

a picture of death and resurrection of One who pronounces as clean a leper (Mark 1:41)

v8-9 washing and shaving

v10-13 the offering

- 2 male lambs + 1 female lamb + flour
- The cleansed leper is presented to the LORD
Offerings: Trespass, Wave, Sin, Burnt

v14-18 Blood and oil (Holy Spirit) applied by the priest (Jesus)

v19-32 Atonement made by the priest (Jesus)

Why did Jesus tell the healed man to be mum?

- His work must testify of His Identity, not the testimony of man
 - to the priest
 - to the people
- He is so much more than a miracle worker...the miracles merely declare/bear witness/testify of His Identity and His Word
 - “I AM” vs “Miracle Worker”
 - In keeping with His priorities, Priority 2: Preach the Gospel
 - The Word of God
 - The power of God unto salvation (from wages of sin)
 - NOT a social gospel, which is a false gospel
 - works to benefit needy man, devoid of the Word/Cross
 - touches people’s bodies but not their souls
 - that fills so many churches these days
- Highlight the healing of
 - the problem (sin, the lethal disease of man’s eternal soul)
 - not the symptom (leprosy, the lethal diseases of man’s temporal body)...which is to play out in the next 2 years

Why did Jesus direct the man to the priest?

- To keep the Law (Matt 5:17-18)
- To restore this man to society
- To testify to the priesthood, that does not believe in Him and will now grow increasingly hostile to Him, of His
 - power and authority
 - Identity
 - loving, compassionate heart vs their self-righteous, condemning hearts
 - relationship with the Father vs their religion
 - humility vs their pride
- To lay the foundation for a revelation of God
 - Priesthood (Ps 110:1-4, Heb 7:11-19)
 - fulfilling the Law (Rom 13:10b)

v45 began to publish...blaze abroad:

Did the cleansed man do as Jesus instructed?

Yes...presented himself to the priest, to be restored to society

No...was not mum, instead, setting a wildfire of publicity for Jesus

He could not help himself, he could not contain his joy and his praise

As a result, no house or synagogue was big enough to contain the “disciples” of Jesus

His ministry was “forced” into the wide open spaces of the countryside

Luke 4:42-44

v42-44 the people sought him...I must preach:

Luke's account of "First Things First" for the teaching tour of Galilee

Mark 1 tells us that the 4 disciples came seeking for Jesus, who was alone being refreshed by His Father

Here, it is the people that came seeking

Contradiction?

No

Why did the 4 disciples come seeking Him?

Because the people came seeking Him

They wanted more of Jesus

They wanted to detain Jesus...

as did the Samaritans but for different reasons

They wanted to "hoard" Jesus for themselves

But Jesus was sent to preach the Kingdom of God to all the lost sheep of Israel, not just those in Capernaum

Priority 2: Preach the Gospel...God's Gospel, not a man-centered gospel

Now Luke's account of the leper

Luke 5:12-16

v12 full of leprosy...fell on his face:

What additional details does Dr Luke give us?

- This man has an advanced stage of leprosy..."full of"
- The leper spotted Jesus
 - Do you think Jesus went to a solitary place for 2 appointments?
 - His Father
 - this leper
 - Do you think this was coincidence or happenstance?
- The leper fell on his face before Jesus
 - The position of every man in the Bible who comes into the presence of God
 - In Matt 8:2..."worshipped"
 - Who alone is to be worshipped, as the Jews have well learned by this time?

- The leper calls Jesus “Lord”
 - God
 - Supreme Authority

As in Mark 1, we read of this man’s desperate yet confident words of faith...
he was absolutely sure that Jesus could absolutely heal him

v13-15 touched...tell no man...show yourself...great multitudes:

This account is very much like the one in Mark

Thinking from “Dr Luke’s” perspective, Jesus Christ was not grossed out or revolted by the sight of this horrifying “Stage 4” leper
He was more than willing to touch and heal this man He loved

Thinking from both “Mark’s and Luke’s” perspective, Jesus was willing to minister to even just one man
He did not need a great crowd to work...He cared for even one

And this account is different than the one on Mark

Jesus has a great following...a great multitude from everywhere
But how many are followers vs part of the following?

- Concerned/grieved about the lethal disease of their eternal souls or their temporal bodies?
- Following Jesus for God’s healing of their eternal souls or their temporal bodies?
- Excited about the miracles of the Miracle Worker or about the ear-tingling Truth of “I AM”?

What does Jesus do after healing the leper?

v16 withdrew...prayed:

Unlike

- a prosperity gospel Televangelist looking to fleece the flock of God
- a social gospel preacher whose self-worth is determined by the size of his congregation

Jesus Christ

- withdrew from the great multitude swarming Him
- kept His priorities

Priority 1: prayer, fellowship with His Father in heaven
He finished as He started – with prayer

Who is Jesus Christ of the Bible?

God, the Living Word of God

The compassionate High Priest of the order of Mel, not a condemning and false priest

Who are we according to the Bible?

- Lepers...uncleansed sinners
- Cleansed children of God

What does the Father in heaven want from the lepers?

- Faith in His Son, His Lamb (Heb 11:6)
- Worship (Matt 4:10b)
- Acknowledging of the Truth to receive the gift of repentance
(2 Tim 2:25, 1 John 5:11-13)

What does God want from His children who have been cleansed by His Son?

- a reasonable sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2)
- to not be ashamed of His Son (Rom 1:16-17)
- to keep His Son's Priorities
 - Priority 1: prayer, fellowship with Him
(He wants our first and our best of all things)
 - Priority 2: Preach the Word
- to be a doer, not just a hearer, of the Word (James 1:22)

Priority 1: How is our fellowship with our Father in heaven?

Only when we are in trouble?

With vain repetitions...rote prayer...like the heathen who think they are heard for their many words? (Matt 6:7)

Prayer beads used in: RC, Eastern Orthodox, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikh
For meditation (empty mind), protection from "negative energy"
Roots go back to Babylon
Final Authority does not teach...so we don't

With unfamiliarity because we do not know Him?

With fear as if He were an angry, unapproachable boss?

With the ease and comfort as if He were a Best Friend?

Passionate with "Daddy"?

"Daddy, help me!"

An ongoing conversation throughout the day? (mostly listening!)

Jesus placed the highest priority on prayer...do we?

Jesus needed prayer...do we?

Jesus went to undisturbed places to pray...do we?

Prov 15:8b the prayer of the upright *is* His delight.