

## THE SERVANT SAVIOR'S HEART

Thursday, July 13

Reading: Mark 1:35-45

**Mark 1:35** *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed.*

The last two incidents recorded in Mark 1 show us a little of the heart of Jesus – what was important to Him. The first is a concentration on PRAYER (1:35-29). After a long evening of healing, Jesus got up early to pray. To avoid the crowds, He goes to a “solitary place” where He can have uninterrupted communication with His Father in heaven. When Peter and the other disciples finally find Him they plead with Jesus to return to Capernaum for “everyone is looking for You.” Their thoughts were on maintaining the popularity Jesus had generated. But Jesus’ concern was with preaching the gospel and not the acclaim of the crowd. He leaves the clamoring crowds to preach the word in other cities.

The next episode brings a leper to fall at Jesus’ feet. Leprosy in Jesus’ day was a most dreaded disease. It was believed to be very contagious and made a person permanently defiled. To come into contact with a leper was to bring defilement on yourself. Thus lepers were ostracized from the community and avoided by all the people.

The crowds around Jesus quickly parted as this leper approached. His statement shows his great faith. He did not doubt that Jesus had the power to heal him, but he did not assume that Jesus would. Jesus’ response is described by a Greek word that means to show strong emotion. In this context it is unlikely that Jesus showed “indignation” as the NIV translates it. Upon seeing the suffering of this leper and realizing his faith, Jesus was “moved with compassion” (as every other translation states).

Then Jesus does the unthinkable – He reaches out and touches the leper! The crowds would have been shocked that Jesus would defile Himself in this way. However, Jesus’ COMPASSION reached out to this man who probably had not felt physical contact in years. Jesus lovingly tells the leper, “I am willing. Be clean.”

Jesus told the cleansed leper to report to the priests as the law required (see Leviticus 14) but not to spread the word about his healing. The reasons for this command become obvious. Because the man told everyone about his healing, Jesus could no longer enter a city without being mobbed by those seeking to be healed.

### POINTS TO PONDER:

1. “Went to a Solitary Place Where He Prayed.” Amidst the crush of His ministry, Jesus often got away to spend time in prayer. He needed this time to commune with His Father and be strengthened for the ministry ahead. If this was true of Jesus, how much more is it true for us! Does the busyness of your day make you neglect your time with God? What are the results when you do this?
2. “He Touched the Man.” Jesus’ compassion cost Him something. By touching the leper, He would be considered “unclean” for a day by many of the Jews. Does your compassion for people cost you anything? Are you willing to reach out with the love of Christ even if it takes time, energy, resources, or the negative opinions of others?