



# The Savior in Prayer

## Story Elements

- **Text:** Mark 1:35-39 (also Matt. 4:23-25 and Luke 4:42-44)
- **Setting:** circa AD 27 in Capernaum, Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, and his disciples
- **Plot:** Amidst thronging crowds and a busy ministry, Jesus finds precious time to be alone in prayer.
- **Key word(s):** “\_\_\_\_\_ place” – As the Christ, Jesus’ power in healing and preaching drew large crowds to the city, but as a man, he needed time alone with his heavenly Father – away from the bustling multitude and busy ministry.
- **Climax:** **Mark 1:37** *And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. Nazareth had violently rejected him; Capernaum had enthusiastically embraced him. The desire of the multitude was for Jesus to stay in Capernaum. Would he choose to prefer the crowd whom he knew accepted him, or will he continue to risk rejection in other cities?*

## Jesus Seeks Solitude

1. **REVIEW:** Having preached in the Capernaum synagogue on the sabbath and having delivered a demonized man from an unclean spirit, the fame of the Savior spread throughout Capernaum. After sunset, the entire city came to Peter’s family’s house to hear Jesus preach and be healed of their afflictions. (vv 32-34)
2. (v 35) Having ministered to the multitudes after sunset (and certainly well into the night), instead of prioritizing physical rest Jesus prefers \_\_\_\_\_ refreshing.
  - (a) Jesus rises a *great while before day* (or *morning*). The night was divided into four watches (cf. Mark 13:35): 6 P.M. – 9 P.M. (even), 9 P.M. – 12 A.M. (midnight), 12 A.M. – 3 A.M. (cock-crowing), and 3 A.M. – 6 A.M. (morning). Consequently, we understand that Jesus rose to pray (on this day) between 3 A.M. and 6 A.M.<sup>1</sup>

**APPLICATION** → Before any other person could ask for the of the Savior’s time, he gives his early hours to his Father. Matthew Henry reminds us that, “He that is *first* and *best* ought to have the *first* and *best*.”<sup>2</sup>

**APPLICATION** → The Savior prayed committedly and slept conveniently, that is, it seemed he purposed to pray but slept when it was \_\_\_\_\_. See in our passage how Jesus steals away in the night to a mountain to be alone with his Father, but he sleeps in the back of the boat while a storm rages (Matt. 8:24) and he rests at Sychar’s well while the disciples go into town to fetch supplies (John 4:6-8). **Though not all Christians will be called into a hectic ministry life like the Savior’s, we should all emulate his prioritizing prayer over all other activities.**

- (b) The Savior *departed into a solitary place*. Luke calls it a *desert place* (Luke 4:42). The Savior sought solitude after being surrounded by multitudes. Corporate prayer is a sanctifying grace (Acts 2:42), but private prayer is a \_\_\_\_\_ duty (Matt. 6:6).
- (c) In quiet solitude, he *prayed*.

**APPLICATION** → To the unbeliever, it may seem strange that the One we pray to was One who prayed. But to the believer, it is a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_. “Though as God he was *prayed to*, as man he *prayed*.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971) 491

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary, VOL V, Matthew to John* (Iowa Falls: Riverside Book and Bible House, N.D.) 457. Emphasis original

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 456. Emphasis original

Edersheim notes that our Savior's example in prayer teaches us that, "He was not merely a worker of miracles, but that He, Whose Word demons obeyed, lived a Life, not of outward but of inward power, in fellowship with His Father, and baptized his work with prayer."<sup>4</sup>

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## The Multitudes Seek Jesus

3. (vv 36-37) It was long after the sun was up that Simon and the other newly recruited disciples found Jesus and declared, *All men seek for thee*.
  - (a) At the same time, the \_\_\_\_\_ were also seeking him, as Luke's gospel reveals (Luke 4:42). They didn't want Jesus to leave but desired *that he should not depart from them* (Luke 4:43).
  - (b) (v 38) But Jesus told his disciples, *Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also*: (v 38). He declared the same to the multitude (cf. Luke 4:43). He would not stay in Capernaum, but he must travel throughout Galilee: *for therefore came I forth*.

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## Jesus Seeks Multitudes

4. (v 39) And so the Savior, with his disciples, left Capernaum and *preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee*.

APPLICATION → As desirable as it may have been to stay in Capernaum amongst welcoming faces and listening ears, the Father's will for the Son was to *preach the kingdom of God to other cities also* (Luke 4:43). Ryle reminds us that Jesus "left the glory which he had from all eternity with the Father, to do the work of an evangelist."<sup>5</sup> **Christ was sent, not primarily as a performer of miracles performer, but more as a \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel.**

NOTICE → The amazing work ethic and gracious willingness for Christ to travel (on foot<sup>6</sup> mostly) to other cities instead of waiting for them to come to him is cause for the believer to exult in our Savior's \_\_\_\_\_ spirit! "Josephus says, There were above two hundred cities and towns in Galilee, and all, or most of them, Christ visited."<sup>7</sup>

APPLICATION → We see our Savior in private prayer after a day of preaching sermons and working miracles, and before entering into greater labors all over Galilee. **Prayer is needed after \_\_\_\_\_ and before \_\_\_\_\_**. Spurgeon, preaching on this passage, said, "He kneels, He cries, He supplicates, He speaks with God, He prays. Is this His rest after a toilsome day? Is this His preparation for coming labor? It is even so. That early morning of prayer explains the evening of power. As man, He had not possessed that wonderful power over human minds if He had not perpetually communed with God. And now that His day's work is done, and the marvelous evening is over, all is not ended—a life-work still remains before Him, and therefore He must pray."<sup>8</sup>

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): "solitary" • 2. spiritual; → possible; b) necessary; → paradox • 3. a) multitude • 4. → preacher; → missionary; → victory; battle

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<sup>4</sup> Edersheim, 490.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 19.

<sup>6</sup> Some estimate the total distance that Christ walked during his earthly ministry was up to 4,000 miles, or approximately 5 miles per day.

<sup>7</sup> Henry, 44.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Spurgeon, "Before Daybreak with Christ", *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon #1769* (accessed Feb. 14, 2026) <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1769.pdf>. Emphasis mine.