

# Sermon Outlines

## The Prayer Life of Christ

**"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."**

(Mark 1:35)

### Introduction

We cannot be surprised by this statement about Jesus and prayer, for you cannot be a reader of the gospels and not notice the frequency of Jesus' private prayer life.

However Christ prayed, the power of His praying is evident, and it ignited an interest in the disciples to become men of prayer.

*"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)*

We can see from this event that prayer is of great value. This is our subject: **The Value of Private Prayer**

#### 1) **There is value in the testimony of private prayer.**

The Lord taught that Christians should go alone into the closet and engage in prayer with God. It is no surprise, then, that we find the Lord doing this very thing himself. If the Lord had not prayed alone, we would question his own teachings (Matt 6:6). This event is but an extension of the Lord's teaching and of His own walk with the Father.

It would be impossible to have a Christian testimony without personal private-times of prayer. To come into public worship and show interest in prayer among God's people having never prayed alone would be strange, proud and deathly cold. The best preparation for public worship is private worship.

J.C. Ryle stated, "*A praying Master, like Jesus, can have no prayerless servants. The Spirit of adoption will always make a man call upon God. To be prayerless is to be Christless, Godless, and in the high road to destruction.*"

It is in the private place, when alone with God, that the Christian best learns to pray, for there is freedom and liberty to pray when alone with God.

#### 2) **There is value in the helps to private prayer.**

- **The right time.** The Lord he had to make time, so he arose early and spent the first hours of the day praying to His Father.  
Each one must find that right time to pray when you are freed from distractions.  
Prayer is not to be multi-tasked - it demands all our minds, souls and bodies. We are to pray at a time when we are free from the world's pressure and even family pressures. That will be different for a young mother in the home from a factory worker.  
Somehow a Christian must find time to pray alone with God. The right time is a help to pray. Guard it.
- **The right place.** The Lord needed to find a solitary place. The success of his own ministry by healing and delivering people from devils, meant that people were flocking to him. He had to seek out a quiet place. Most houses of that time were one-room structures and offered little privacy. I have heard missionaries say that it is difficult when on the mission-field to get alone with God in privacy for lack of sound-proof buildings.

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To have a place that is free from distractions and a place that offers liberty to pray aloud is of great benefit to a healthy prayer life.

### 3) There is value in earnestness in private prayer.

- **We may wonder why prayer was needed by Christ.** I think the answer lies in the use of the word "PROSEUCHOMAI" . This is the Greek word employed in this instance. It is commonly found in the New Testament and most often it refers more to the manner of prayer, and to worship, than to asking or petitioning.  
The need of material blessing or personal supply is not in focus in this instance. It is the Christ's delight in worship, communion and fellowship with God that should strike us. This ought to be our motivation to pray when we go to worship the Lord in the secret place.
- **The Lord freely used the term, "Father" in prayer.** It spoke of the nearest relations they enjoyed, which was never broken, apart from the hours of darkness while the Lord hung on the cross.  
The Lord's prayer-life was filled with praise and devotion. Many times we read of him praying, "*Father, I thank thee...*" See John 11:41, and Matt. 11:25.
- **He did not need to confess sin in prayer** The petition for forgiveness in the Lords' prayer as given to the disciples did not apply to the Lord Himself. He never sinned and never need to plead for forgiveness. This is very different for us, for we need to confess sin each time we go to pray.
- **By using the word "PROSEUCHOMAI" and by placing the word at the end of the text we can see that Mark wanted his readers to note the intensity of the Lord's prayer.** The apostle James used the same word when he wrote that Elijah "prayed earnestly" (James 5:17). Commentators frequently state that this means that Elijah "prayed in his praying."  
Christ prayed with this kind of praying. His heart was in it. His whole being was engaged in communing with His Father.  
Prayer is sometimes called "pouring out our hearts," "seeking God's face," or "wrestling with God." We need such earnestness in our praying.
- **The Lord prayed earnestly before particular tasks.** He called his disciples, before His baptism, at the Mount Transfiguration and in Gethsemane, as the crushing weight of His death weighed down upon Him.
- **But we see here that the Lord prayed with passion in the private place in the course of his regular ministry.** The day that was about to dawn was to be filled with ministering in "the next towns" (v38), in casting out devils (v39), and in healing a leper (v40).

The time for prayer was right and the place was right. His praying in secret was the secret to His doing the will and work of the Father.

We must learn that secret too. When we are weak we must go to the secret place. There is great value in getting alone with God. Build up your testimony of private prayer and the Lord will use you in public worship too.

*"It will always be found that when prayers are few, grace, strength, peace, and hope are small." J.C. Ryle*

*... Ian Goligher*