

The Gospel of Mark

A study on the servanthood of Christ

Week Two: The Servant's Values & Priorities

Learning task # 1

1. Share with a couple other people the paragraph that you wrote this week about how God has been preparing you for, "such a time as this."
2. Read Mark 1:14. As Jesus began His ministry He proclaimed the Kingdom of God is near. What do you understand being a servant in the kingdom of God entails?

The Values of the Servant

We all tend to have "preferred" values and "real" values. Someone may say they value prayer, for instance, but if they do not make time in their life to do it, it is a preferred value rather than a real value. **Real values are what we make time in our lives to do.**

Read Mark 1:14-20

A. Jesus Valued Making Disciples (1:14-20)

Everyone needs something in which he/she can invest their life. Jesus did not call mankind to a comfortable life of ease. Rather, He called them to a task in which they would have to spend themselves.

1. Jesus hand-picked individuals He could pour His life into.
 - a. He saw Simon and Andrew. (1:16) The word "saw" means He looked at them analytically and considered them.
 - 1) He checked them out, no doubt, observing their attitudes and their willingness to grow. He observed their dedication and their use ability.
 - 2) It is interesting to note that Jesus never called anyone from idleness. He called busy, hard-working ordinary people from the mainstream of life.
2. Come follow me. (1:17)
 - a. He called them not to ease, but to **service**. "I will make you fishers of men."
 - 1) "Will make" – Becoming a fisher of men is a process, not an identity.
 - a) The word is used in the sense of construction. It carried with it a responsibility.
 - b) They were fishermen, they understood the work and effort it required.
 - 2) Jesus didn't invite them to sit around and wait for heaven, rather He was inviting them to invest their lives in ministry and service.
 - b. They forsook their nets, and followed Him.
 - 1) Their nets represented their former life-style, their livelihood, and their ambitions.
 - 2) "Forsook" is a legal term meaning to divorce. They made a complete break from their former way of living.
 - c. "Followed Him" – The idea is apprenticeship. They watched and learned from Him so that they could do what He did.
3. It was as if Jesus said, *Give me 12 ordinary men and with them, if they will give themselves to me, I will change the world.*

Learning task # 2

1. What does it mean for a person to sacrifice personal achievements, friends, or even family for the sake of Christ?
2. Make a list of some things that prevent people from following Jesus whole-heartedly.
3. What actions might be necessary to eliminate those hindrances from one's life?

Read Mark 1:21-28

B. Jesus Valued Teaching (1:21-28)

1. He taught as one having authority and certainty, He knew what He was talking about.
 - a. The teachers of the law quoted all their experts from the past to strengthen their theories, but they demonstrated no life in what they taught.
 - b. Jesus backed-up His words with demonstrations of power.
 - 1) Words that are not backed-up with power are soon found to be empty.
 - 2) Jesus did not teach with empty clichés' or untried theory, but with things He practiced and mastered.
2. Effective servants in God's kingdom value transparency and the willingness to share the experiences and lessons they have learned.

Learning task # 3

1. What is the difference between teaching philosophies and theories and in teaching practical life experience applications which you have lived?
2. Why is it more effective for us to be honest and transparent about what we have learned through our struggles and failures than it is to simply try to teach unpracticed ideas and theories?

Read Mark 1:29-34 & 1:40-2:12

C. Jesus Valued People (1:29-34; 1:40-2:12)

1. Healing Peter's mother-in-law. (1:29-34)
 - a. Because of this miracle, the entire town brought their sick and Jesus healed them all. (1:32-34)
 - b. He compassionately met needs
2. Healing the leper (1:40-45)
 - a. Lepers were considered unclean and were outcast of society.
 - 1) Jesus cared (1:41 "filled with compassion).
 - 2) Jesus was available (1:41 "I will")
 - 3) Jesus involved Himself (1:41 "reached out His hand and touched him")
 - b. Unless the needs of people move us to compassion, we won't be effective servants in the kingdom.
3. Healing of the paralytic and forgiving sins. (2:1-12)
 - a. This was not a popular action. The religious establishment called it blasphemy.
 - 1) But Jesus was more concerned with obeying the Father than the religious establishment.
 - 2) By healing the paralytic in the manner in which He did, Jesus was saying, '*Any imposter can say your sins are forgiven, but I will prove it and demonstrate it by healing this man. You say I have no right to forgive sins? Watch this!*'

- b. (2:11-12) Everyone was amazed, literally they were beside themselves with wonder at the miracle.

Learning task # 4

1. Following the example of the paralytic man's four friends, what does it mean for us to carry people's needs into the presence of Jesus? What are practical ways for us to do that?
2. Share a time when you were able to see a friend miraculously set free because you and others risked carrying them into the presence of Jesus.

Read Mark 2:13-17

D. Jesus Valued the Unlovely. (2:13-17)

1. Tax collectors were hated and despised by the people and considered traitors.
2. The calling of Levi, by Jesus, was not a popular decision. It didn't put Jesus in the good graces of the people.
 - a. Jesus loved people nobody else loved and served people nobody else wanted to serve.
 - b. He was more concerned about obeying His Father than in pleasing the crowd.
 - c. While Jesus hated sin, He loved sinners and He never confused the two. (2:17)

Learning task # 5

1. What should hating sin but loving sinners look like in the context of today's church?
2. What are reasons we sometimes are reluctant to get involved with unlovely people?
3. List some categories of people who tend to be overlooked and neglected within the sphere of your influence. What can you do to extend the love of Christ to them?
4. Share three things that you value and how those three things are expressed in your living.

The Servant's Priorities"

Jesus took time for the essentials (3:7-34). Priorities are not usually a conflict between good and bad but rather a conflict between important and urgent. Jesus never allowed the urgency of ministry to crowd out the essential of spending time with the Father.

Read Mark 1:35-39

A. The Priority of Prayer (1:35-39)

1. For Jesus prayer was a priority. The Greek words, "early in the morning", denotes the last watch of the night between 3:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.
2. Mark 1:35 tells us Jesus knew that He could not keep up His tremendous schedule of giving without spending time receiving from God. He understood that He could not meet the needs of men until He first had met with God.
3. *"Prayer will never do our work for us; what it will do is strengthen us for the work which must be done."* William Barclay

Learning task # 6

1. What part does prayer play in you living out your values?
2. What are things that tend to crowd out prayer in your life?

Read Mark 2:23-3:6

B. The Priority of Personal Time Away from the Pressures. (2:23-3:6)

1. Mark 3:7 tells us that Jesus withdrew from His disciples. Mark tells us 11 different occasions on which Jesus withdrew from His work in order to pray, to rest, or for private times with His disciples.
2. Jesus understood that life's pressures always magnify.
 - a. The way to keep things in proper perspective is to get away from the pressures for a while by spending some time privately for yourself.
 - b. Everybody needs private time, time that is different from your ordinary responsibilities. This is time when you do things for no other purpose than because you enjoy them.
 - c. Part of that private time needs to be time you spend with the Lord for no other purpose than because you enjoy Him.

Learning task # 7

1. Share with the group some of the ways you practice taking time for yourself.
2. What are ways you make deliberate times for the Lord? Why are those times important?

Read Mark 3:13-34

C. Jesus Was Committed to the Priority of His Calling. (3:13-19)

1. He spent time with His disciples preparing them for works of ministry.
 - a. He did not allow busyness to distract Him from His objective of training and releasing ministry to others.
 - b. He invested in them so that they could do what He did.
2. He kept pride under subjection (3:11-12)
 - a. The demons, by crying out "You are the Son of God" were trying to appeal to Jesus' pride. They were trying to cause Him to rely on Himself instead of consulting with the Father.
 - b. Jesus never exalted Himself or relied on His own abilities, He always did what the Father was telling Him to do.
 - c. Servanthood flows out of humility.
3. Jesus kept His heart in control and did not allow His emotions to control Him. (3:20-34)
 - a. His family thought He was insane. (3:21)
 - b. They went to take charge of Him. The Greek word means to take possession of, or to seize by force.
 - c. They were intending to take Him by force against His will and compel Him to do what they thought best.
 - 1) They were, no doubt, motivated by a protective concern for Him. They meant well. But they were totally out of order.
 - 2) They weren't hearing from God, they were simply acting out of their own fleshly concerns.
 - d. The religious leaders thought He was demon possessed. (3:22-30)
 - 1) But Jesus knew who He was, and He knew who His master was. As important as family may be and as important as the religious leaders may have been, Jesus made it clear **that there was no greater priority than doing the will of God.**
 - 2) Because Jesus knew who He was, He did not lose sight of His goal.

4. If I am not committed to the will of God, I will never have enough time to follow through with doing it. It is essential that if we are going to be effective servants, we must be committed to what God is committed to. Jesus was totally committed to doing the will of His Father.

Learning task # 7

1. What must we do with the pressures and guilt that people sometimes try to use to control us?
2. Values lead to priorities and priorities determine commitments. What do your commitments reveal about your real values and priorities?
3. What practical things do you do to keep your emotions and priorities under control and to keep yourself committed to the will and purposes of God?