

Taking Our Cue – Mark 1:35-38

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Busy?*

1. How many of you have what you consider a *busy* schedule?
2. How many of you have found that this Summer has been especially busy?
3. Summer is *supposed* to be the season when we relax a bit.
 - a. the kids are out of school. We go on vacation,
 - b. we sleep in a little longer and drop the pace a bit because there are fewer things we have to do.
4. I don't know about you, but my schedule has gone a bit crazy this Summer. This has become, not a season of a *lighter calendar*, but a *busier* one.

B. *The Pace*

1. Recent studies show that an increasing number of people in the US feel harried, pressed, stressed, and over-committed.
2. At the same time their boss is putting pressure on them to work longer hours, their family is putting the squeeze on them to have more face-time.
3. Up at 6:45, at work at 7:30. Off at 5:30, rush to soccer practice, on the way home grab dinner at the drive-thru. Take the kids to the sitter, then to the theater for the latest flick you have to see because everyone will be talking about it at work tomorrow. Pick up the kids from the sitter, go home and plop into bed around 11:30.
4. That's just Monday!
5. With as frantic as the pace of life is for so many of us, it comes as a shocker to learn that Los Angeles is rated as being the slowest of all major American cities!
 - a. *nationally*, the Japanese keep the fastest pace.
 - b. Americans are a close second.
 - c. Italians and Indonesians keep the slowest pace.
 - d. among American *cities*, Boston and Kansas City have the fastest pace of life.
 - e. New York & Houston rank a close second.
 - f. but believe it or not, the *slowest* pace is kept in Los Angeles.
6. Since where we live here in Ventura County is considered part of the greater Los Angeles region, don't you feel better now - knowing that *your* pace of life is actually *slow* !?!?

C. *Jesus Knows*

1. If you feel harried & busy; stressed, pressed, & the pace of your life is hectic – Know that Jesus knows what that feels like.
2. And in Him we see an example of how to deal with such a hectic schedule.

II. TEXT

A. *Set The Scene*

1. Jesus has just begun his public ministry.
2. He's called 4 of the 12 disciples; Peter & Andrew, and their partners in the

- fishing business, James & John.
3. He's entered the city of Capernaum on the NW shore of the Lake of Galilee.
 4. On the Sabbath day, He went into the synagogue where the entire village turned out for the weekly worship.
 - a. as a traveling rabbi, he was invited to speak - and when He did, it was with such presence and authority everyone was amazed.
 - b. what made His power even more evident was His deliverance of a guy possessed by a demon who happened to be there that day.
 5. After the synagogue service, Peter then invited Jesus to his house there in Capernaum.
 - a. this would have been for the Sabbath meal, but Peter's mother-in-law, who would have been one of those who would have prepared it, lay sick with a fever.
 - b. Jesus simply healed her – no big deal; He just took her by the hand, and she was well.
 6. When the people of Capernaum realized the Power of God had come among them, all those who had some physical infirmity began to show up at Peter's door.
 7. In v. 32 we read –
- 32At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.**
8. Jesus' popularity is running high. He's the talk of the town. Word spread to every home that all who came to Him were healed.
 - a. the miracles were abundant.
 - b. in a small community like this, everyone knew everyone else.
 - c. they all knew about Nathaniel's blindness & Rebekah's paralysis.
 - d. everyone knew how strangely Thomas acted, claiming he heard voices that made him do and say things that were bizarre.
 - e. Miriam's leprosy was well known. For the last 6 years, because she'd been banned from others, living alone in a shanty a few hundred yards outside the city wall.
 9. Yet as people walked through the streets of Capernaum they saw these same people strolling past them totally healed!
 - a. Nathaniel looked right at them and said "Hello!"
 - b. Rebekah wasn't just walking, she was running and leaping through the streets, praising God at the top of her lungs.
 - c. instead of shuffling along with head down, mumbling to himself, Thomas was walking with head high and a bright smile on his face.
 - d. and Miriam, whose face and hands had been so scarred by the years of leprosy – looked like a beauty contest winner!
 10. People ran to gather their needy loved ones and hurried them to stand in line at Peter's door – hoping Jesus would heal them too.
 11. But eventually, it became too late to continue, and Peter closed his door, telling

the people to go home.

B. Vs. 35-38

35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. **36** And Simon [that is Simon Peter] and those *who were with Him* searched for Him. **37** When they found Him, they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.”

1. Before the sun rose that next Sunday morning, Jesus got up, quietly left Peter’s house, and made his way outside the city.
2. There were low rolling hills all around city and Jesus found a quiet place to spend some time with His Father.
3. Later, when the disciples got up, they realized Jesus wasn’t there.
4. Already, the crowds were lining up for more of the same as the night before.
5. So the disciples began to look high and low for Jesus. They found Him, still in the place of prayer.
6. They told Him He needed to return with them because the people were ready for more.
7. Jesus’ answer in v. 38 is surprising . . .

38 But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”

8. Why would Jesus want to leave Capernaum where He’s a hot commodity for other places where He’s not even known?
 - a. this isn’t the way you do things if what you’re aiming at is fame.
 - b. no, you stay and bask in the glory for as long as you can.
 - c. you don’t pick up and take off right when the work you’ve done has finally paid off and everyone is calling your name and singing your praise.
9. Capernaum was not a major city, but it had a synagogue, which means it was fairly good-sized.
10. Yet in verse 38, Jesus said He’d come to preach in the next towns *too*.
 - a. the word “towns” refers to **un-walled villages**.
 - b. these were little country-towns, what we call the *boondocks*;
 - c. “**Podunk**” little spots that barely deserved a name they were so tiny.
11. Today, when someone aspires to fame and success in, let’s say, the music industry, they dream of playing at the Staples Center, Carnegie Hall; or the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion.
 - a. these are the concert halls they want to be able to fill.
 - b. to get there, they begin at local halls and theaters in little towns, playing their stuff and hoping to gather a faithful audience.
 - c. their great hope is that their CD will begin rotation on the radio and that music stores will begin carrying it.
 - d. this attracts the attention of a major label, and soon they’re playing larger and larger halls, until they hit the big time and are filling stadiums!
 - e. no one, while at the height of their popularity and able to fill huge concert halls, keeps playing the little venues; the honky-tonks, community centers, and lounges.

- f. no – they’ve reached the big time; and they go back to the little places they began in only when they’re too old to rock and roll but too young to die.
- 12. At this point in Jesus’ ministry, His rise to public notice has just begun and the momentum of His fame is building steam.
- 13. To step away from that momentum, to pull the plug on people’s expectations of Him, is not the way things are done in this world.
- 14. And that’s the key - Jesus is not interested in performing His ministry according to the conventional wisdom and ways of the world.
- 15. He takes His cue, His direction from His Father. That’s why He was up at a quiet time, in a quiet place – because He needed a quiet heart and knew it was to be found in prayer.

B. Performing His Ministry

1. When I think about the life and ministry of Jesus, I often find myself thinking, “Well, it was easy for Him; after all, He’s God.”
2. Then I’m reminded that Jesus made it clear at the very outset of His mission as the Messiah, He came to live it as a **man**, *not* in His power as God.
3. In the first temptation, the devil tried to get Jesus to use his divinity to turn stones to bread, but Jesus made it clear He would not deal with life through that part of His identity;
 - a. when Satan said, “If you are the son of God, command these stones become bread.”
 - b. Jesus replied, “**MAN** shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”
4. Jesus got up early that Sunday morning in Capernaum because *as a man*, he needed to spend time with God getting his directions for that day.
5. He knew that he had a job to do, a mission to perform, and he wanted to make sure he was going about it in a manner that was pleasing to the Lord.
 - a. he knew the crowds would be lining up early,
 - b. so he got up even earlier, found a quiet place, and communed with God.
6. The admiration of others is something *every* human being hungers for.
 - a. we love it when we’re popular and hate it when we’re despised.
 - b. we love to hear our names on everyone else’s lips.
 - c. being sought after & wanted is a longing that is part of the human soul.
7. So certainly there was a part of Jesus that was stoked about His popularity in Capernaum.
 - a. his mission was off to a roaring start. So far, his ministry was a rousing success.
 - b. as a key city in Galilee, Capernaum could become a center of His fame as the word went out and people began to come from all over.
8. But in that quiet time and place of prayer, the Father told the Son it was time to move on.
 - a. there were needy people in the little burghs of Galilee who *couldn’t come*.
 - b. Jesus needed to *go* to them.
9. As appealing as the acclaim of the crowds in Capernaum was, Jesus lived *more* for the Father’s approval.

C. Taking Our Cue

1. Who do you take your cue from in life? Whose counsel directs your daily choices?
2. Many people, including some Christians, only pray when they're in desperate need or facing a major crisis.
 - a. then they shoot up a 9-1-1 prayer, a call for rescue.
 - b. they don't *have* a habit of daily prayer, because the only time they think they need God is when they're in trouble.
 - c. they never consider going to the Lord for something as seemingly trivial as today's schedule.
3. Think about Jesus; if there was anyone who knew God, who knew His will & Word, it was he!
4. If there was anyone who knew who he was; where he came from, why he was here, and where he was going, it was Jesus.
5. This was a man who was truly together!
6. Yet he made prayer a priority; the first thing he did, to seek God for today's marching orders.
7. Though his course and plan for the day seemed obvious because of the rousing success he was enjoying, Jesus sought God, and God showed him He had *other* plans.
8. Jesus was mindful of the words of David in Psalm 143

8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. 9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; In You I take shelter. 10 Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

8. It's often said that God has an awesome plan for our lives – and as clichéd as that might be, it is absolutely true!
 - a. but, what's that plan for? Is it for the distant future or for today?
 - b. God's plan for you isn't just for the long haul, for some far off point in your golden years.
 - c. God has a plan for you for today, for *this* day.
 - d. do you know what it is? How can you find out?
 - e. there's only one way – by asking Him; spending some time with Him.
9. Now, if God has a daily plan for us, when would be the best time to discover it?
10. First thing in the morning! See how that works?

D. Hearing the Lord

1. Some people say, "I just don't hear from the Lord."
2. Almost always, a little digging reveals that they aren't giving God the opportunity to speak to them.
3. They expect Him to just break into their thoughts, barge His way into their minds, with a major announcement, as if they had a covert earpiece in their ear and were being directed from a distance by someone at a control board.
4. Look at Jesus here – he sought a quiet hour and a quiet place to pray.
5. He made gaining the Father's direction a priority, and God spoke to Him.
6. If you don't get direction from the Lord, if you find it hard to hear Him, then

consider a few things . . .

- a. do you make time with the Lord a priority or is the extent of your prayer-life nothing more than a hotline to the heavenly Bat Cave?
 - b. do you seek the Lord for direction *before* you've gotten in trouble, or only after?
 - c. is there a regular time in your day when you're quiet and alone with the Lord – even if it's for no more than a few minutes?
 - 1) if Jesus needed this, how much more do we?
 - 2) since it's so easy to be distracted; we must *plan* to spend some quiet time alone with our God.
7. Never forget that it's God's very nature to reveal Himself.
 - a. Jesus is called the Logos – the Word of God.
 - b. God is *always speaking* – His word is the cause and foundation of the entire universe.
 - c. Hebrews 1:3 says that is God's Word which holds the universe together.
 8. If you don't hear God, the problem is not on His end; the silence is not His doing. The problem is on your end.
 9. God *is* speaking – we must listen!

III. CONCLUSION

A. Sources of Wisdom

1. So let me ask again – whose counsel directs your life?
2. What influences your choices?
3. Do you live by the wisdom of the world?
4. Do the world's values and the expectations of others direct you?
5. Or do you seek the Lord first thing in the morning and take your cue from Him?

B. Daily Light

1. Now, I know what many of you are thinking, “Lance, I've got a job and a whole bunch of obligations I'm committed to & responsible for. I don't have the freedom to just put all of that aside and ‘Seek the Lord!’”
2. I understand and I'm not saying that if you get up tomorrow a few minutes earlier to pray, that God is going to tell you to *not* go to work.
3. We all know He **COULD** tell you that, but that is not typically the way He'll direct you.
 - a. rather, He'll speak to you about what He wants you to think on,
 - b. about how He wants to live *through you* at work,
 - 1) toward that lazy, frustrating co-worker -
 - 2) toward that annoying boss.
 - c. He may direct you to a different coffee place on the way to work because there's an appointment He's set for you with a cashier whose marriage is going through a tough time, and a mention that you will pray for her will move her to seek the Lord and end up saving her marriage and family from a lifetime of heartache.
4. “Oh come on Lance – as if God was going to say to me, ‘Skip Starbucks and go to Peet's instead!’ Yeah, like I'm really going to get a message like that.”
5. No – you will not hear an audible voice as such.

6. But yes - as you are there before the Lord, just waiting on Him for the plan for the day, offering yourself as a living sacrifice, then He will direct your thoughts, steering you toward those things He intends you to be mindful of.
 - a. a person will come to mind He wants you to pray for and talk to.
 - b. a location will pop up He wants you to visit.
 - c. a task He wants you to pursue will arise.
 - d. He'll also caution you about things and people to stay away from.
 - 1) as you pray, "lead me not into temptation but deliver me from the evil,"
 - 2) He will then mark out those places the enemy has laid traps for you, and show you how to steer clear of them.
7. If this kind of daily prayer for direction has not been a part of your life, then a good place to begin is by asking the Lord to make clear to you whose counsel and wisdom you've been living your life by.
 - a. it might be your own ideas about what you want and need.
 - b. it might be the expectations of others; parents - friends
 - c. it might be the lifestyle that's presented in popular media
 - d. these are all pretty lame sources of direction for our lives.
8. God made us the unique beings each of us are - and yes, He has a wonderful & glorious plan for our lives,
 - a. not just for the long range, for our golden years;
 - b. His plan embraces today. He's got an agenda for *this day*.
9. I think God's plan for our day is the best – how about you?

Psalm 5:1-3

Give ear to my words, O Lord,

Consider my meditation.

Give heed to the voice of my cry,

My King and my God, For to You I will pray.

My voice You shall hear in the morning,

O LORD; In the morning I will direct *it* to You, And I will look up.