

MEDITATION 12

Mark 1: 35-39

³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ Jesus answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

"In the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed."

In the morning while it was still dark... This is quiet time, time to reflect, time to breathe, time to be away not just to be away, but to regroup, get centered, grounded, clear-headed...

Jesus also goes out to a "deserted place"... a place without people, a place to be by himself, away from the noise and the need... Not to escape, but to build up his inner reservoir of compassion, care, listening attention, capacity to diagnose and see into people's souls, because only then can he truly heal...

And there he prayed... To pray is to ask for something, and to pray is to seek out something... What do you ask for in prayer?... What do you receive in prayer?... Is prayer just a list of concerns for you?... Or is prayer also about pauses of silence, sometimes tears, sometimes anguish, sometimes worry or exhaustion, or sometimes sheer gratitude and joy... What is prayer for you?...

"And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they had found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you."

Jesus doesn't tell them to leave him alone... He is replenished enough to go back out into the fray... to recommit to his call, his vocation, his mission, which is: compassionate healing and healing compassion...

What is your call, your vocation, your mission at this time of your life?... Does quiet time in prayer help you discern, regroup, recommit and energize for that?... Do you have clarity or is this more a time of discernment?... Are you able to find the quiet space, or are you inundated, stressed, a bit overwhelmed?... What do you need to pray for?... What should you pray for?...

Prayer: I ask you, O God... I need you, O God... Give to me as only you can give to me, O God... Show me the way you have for me right now, O God... Give me clarity, give me

courage, give me strength and give me assurance and peace in your love for me wherever I am right now...

"He answered, "Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do."

Jesus not only goes back into the fray... He expands his mission to neighbouring towns across the region of Galilee in Northern Israel/Palestine. He is getting ever clearer about his mission. Not just that he is the messiah of God, but how he must live this call among his people and in the world...

Once again we may ask: what is your call at this time of your life? ... It may be the same as it always was but it may also be different now... It may be about changes in your relationships, your health, needs that have emerged, situations and circumstances in your life or in someone you care about and feel responsible for... It may be a time to reflect on your job and career, or a time of transition in retirement or a later stage of life...

What is your call at this time of your life?...

Prayer: Show me the way, O God... Shine your light ever brighter for my way ahead... Give me the energy, the purpose, the peace in what is or the courage to believe in what may yet be and what steps I need to make toward that...

And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

The next stage of Jesus mission begins as his message and ministry spreads... What will come to be?... We know how the story goes, many of us anyway... But do we really know it?... Do we know it in a way that is personal to us?...

PRAYER: Open our hearts in faith, O God... to trust where you may take us even when it's not yet clear for us...

Open our hearts in hope, O God, hope that you have a purpose and a plan for us whatever our life circumstances may be at this time...

Open our hearts in love, O God... beyond the hurts, beyond the accusations, beyond the grievances, beyond the loss of passion in what once gave us passion, O God... Open our hearts in love again or in a new way...

Fill us with your love... Awaken what may have died or become numb in us... Assure us that you have blessing in store for us no matter what life can sometimes look like and feel like... We pray this way in Jesus' name... Amen.