

Mark 1: 35-45

35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' ³⁸He 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.' ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

40 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean.' ⁴¹Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.' ⁴⁵But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Commentary: Jesus is very busy traveling, preaching, teaching and healing. But the secret to his success is very simple. He knows his limits and he is intentional in taking time alone to pray, meditate, and be renewed in his oneness with his father God. Renewed and refreshed Jesus goes out again and confronts a sick man. Leprosy is a particularly disgusting disease in sight and smell. Yet what comes out of Jesus in this encounter? - He was 'moved with pity.' The man is active in his desire for healing and Jesus responds immediately. Even though he tells him to keep things quiet the man spreads the word about Jesus' miraculous powers so that Jesus is further mobbed by the crowds.

Questions: How intentional are you with your spiritual development and quiet time? Generous and compassionate feelings cannot arise from within you if you are not spiritually renewed. How badly do you want to be healed? Or does a part of you want to maintain the status quo, the familiar and well-worn, even if it is not what God wills for you?

What an opportunity, in this season of restriction, limitation and aloneness... what does spiritual development and intentional quiet time look like? Being forced out of the status quo, the familiar and the well-worn by external circumstances, what does inner opening to healing and compassion look like?

Prayer: Lord God, convict me anew about my need to find some time alone with you, to meditate, ask questions, open myself to your leading, even if something in me is reluctant to give up and change certain patterns, habits, and ways of relating. Help me to trust that you will bring me to a better place. Help me to let go and let you take charge, especially in this season of struggle; Amen.