

## A SOLITARY PLACE

Welcome to the school of prayer.....or more specifically, the Jesus' School of Prayer. Jesus is and was perfect when he walked this earth. He was the most excellent teacher, preacher, healer, pastor, evangelist, disciple maker, servant, leader, and more. Most of all, Jesus was the master of prayer. It was his prayer times that were one secret behind his success. Come with me as we take a peek at his prayer life.

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed". - Mark 1:35 NIV

In the previous evening after sunset, Jesus was very busy....."the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons....." - Mark 1:32-34  
The next morning Simon and his companions went to search for Jesus. They found him praying and told him that "everyone is looking for you!". We must remember that Jesus walked on earth as a man. He got tired and had the stresses of daily life which included the demands of people upon his time. Jesus was full of compassion and was willing to take time for individuals who needed his help. However, he never allowed these daily pressures to rob him of his time alone with God.

Wherever I have travelled around the world, I have sought out places to get alone with God. Sometimes it was in my room, but I often walked and prayed as it was beneficial spiritually and physically. In West London I would often walk along some canals or a nearby park that was formerly a farm. Sometimes I would spend a good part of a day in Richmond Park about 5 miles away, which had 2200 acres and hundreds of deer! This was a wonderful solitary place for this farm boy. In Kenya I went each morning to a Presbyterian Church which was empty during the week, except for some goats outside. When I went for walks in the countryside, I found that I was always being followed by a large group of children. As noted above, Jesus found it a challenge to escape the crowds. In India I spent time on a rooftop or walking in a rice field.... but always mindful of snakes.

Sometimes I have found my car to be good place to get alone with God. I can talk out loud and pour my heart out to God without any inhibition. The Jews in Jesus' day would sometimes retreat under their prayer shawl and pray. Susanna Wesley had about 18 children but would spend an hour in prayer each day under her apron. The children knew that she was not to be disturbed during that time. Her sons John and Charles made a great impact on the world, but it all started with their mother. She had found her solitary place.

Jesus taught his disciples about prayer in his main message that we call the Sermon on the Mount. He admonished them to not show off in prayer like the synagogue leaders, but to go into their room, close the door and pray in secret to their unseen Father. He knows what we need. All of us need to close the door on the cares and worries of this life and enjoy time with one who wants us to 'cast all of our cares' on Him.

Jesus often rose early to pray for many hours. It was his secret for accomplishing much in just a few moments with the people that he encountered the next day. Most of us do the opposite. We spend a few minutes with God and hours 'trying' to help people. When we pray we can tap into God's wisdom, discernment, power, love and boldness. **Jesus could change people's lives in just a few minutes because he spent hours with God.**

We all have different things to accomplish each day such as work, school etc. so we may struggle with the time and energy to rise early each day to the extent that Jesus did, but we can set aside some time each day depending on whether we are a morning lark or a night owl. Here is the challenge for all of us: **Have one time a week when you spend a more extended quality time with your heavenly Father.** He will give you spiritual nourishment you can feast on for the rest of the week. In the coming weeks we will explore the many qualities of our great Father. He is always wanting to hear our voice and spend time with us. That was his first desire after the fall of Adam. He longingly called out to Adam.....'where are you?' It was not a word of condemnation but of that of a loving Father who desired to be with his highest creation, which is mankind.

This past week I was reminded of a song by the Beach Boys. It was not written for a spiritual purpose, but I think the words can fit in with our desire to find a solitary place to be with God.

IN MY ROOM - The Beach Boys.....( listen on You tube if you do not know the song)

There's a world where I can go and tell my secrets to.  
In my room, in my room.  
In this world I lock out all my worries and my fears  
In my room, in my room.

Do my dreaming and my scheming  
Lie awake and pray  
Do my crying and my sighing  
Laugh at yesterday

Now it's dark and I'm alone  
But I won't be afraid  
In my room, in my room  
In my room, in my room  
In my room, in my room.

Let us make room for God in that solitary place

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