

From Simon to Peter #08 - in His Steps

by J. Glyn Owen

To become fishers of men, we must prioritize communion with God and follow his will, just as Jesus did.

Duration: 27:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 1:21-27, Mark 1:35-39, Luke 4:18-19

Topics: "Simon to Peter"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of knowing the reason for our existence and why God has preserved and redeemed us. He uses the example of Jesus, who, in communion with God, heard the cries of the lost sheep in other towns and felt compelled to go and preach to them. The preacher applies this message to Simon, highlighting the need for Christians to be sure of their initial call and to have a place of private communion with God. He also emphasizes the importance of moving out of this place of communion with a sense of compulsion to fulfill our daily duty in spreading the message of God.

Transcript

That very simple word which we were considering just a few Sundays ago, follow me, said he, follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men. Follow me, that's the condition. We must now take, take a look at the scriptures of the Gospels and see for ourselves what really it means to follow me, to follow Jesus.

It was a very simple directive on the face of it. One might almost gloss it over as meaning very little and signifying little. But when you come down to the Gospel narratives and consider the implications of following in the footmarks of our Lord, you'll find that the way is steep and rugged.

You'll find that the way is difficult and tough and that there are many, many adversaries on the way. Even so, this is the way. If Simon is to become Peter, he must follow the Saviour.

If you, if I am to become a fisher of men, there is only one way. We must follow in the footmarks of our Lord. There is nothing for us to learn which we cannot learn by following him.

Every lesson we need to learn, we shall learn as we press forward, moving along, at the heels of the ongoing leading shepherd of our souls, captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ. Come then, let us see the master man fisher about his business, looking at him particularly to mark his footfalls, to see the way he goes, to behold the principles whereby he acts or does not, and then by the grace of God to apply these

things to ourselves that we become fishers of men. Now there are three outstanding signposts that mark his journeying, as the record will point out in this particular passage to which I've called your attention this morning.

And I want us, as briefly as possible, to be looking at these three landmarks in following the Saviour. There are three principles really, that are enunciated in his life and practiced by him so utterly and so gloriously and so evidently. Now the first thing I would like you to notice, in verse 35, Jesus began the day after the Sabbath in a place of communion with God.

How simple, but how utterly far-reaching. Jesus began the day after the Sabbath in a place of communion with God, and I want to underline these words, a place of communion. Let's read verse 35.

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place and there prayed. Now that is one daily feature that will be required of any person who is to become a fisher of men. The pilgrimage from Simon to Peter, be it in the historical Simon or in you and in me, the pilgrimage from the old to the new, from the man we were by nature to the man God has promised to make us by grace, the pilgrimage from Simon to Peter necessarily means that we have a place of communion with God.

I'm not now speaking of the family altar. I'm not now speaking of the Lord's day and the necessity of meeting together often in public worship. I'm speaking of something far more intimate and far more personal that applies to every individual man and woman of God.

A place of communion is a necessity. Now we must be careful to note the significance of our Lord's having such a place at all. You see, as the incarnate Son of God, be it noted, he found it necessary, he found it necessary to leave aside both friend and foe in order to commune with God personally and directly.

He left his foes, he left his friends. May I go further? He even left nature behind, as it were. And he went aside to commune directly with God, he to whom the lily of the field was eloquent, even the green blade of grass spoke of his Father's handiwork.

He goes aside to pray directly to his Father. He did that. Not that he was ever severed from God or his communion with God ruptured for one solitary moment.

On the contrary, his life was one of unclouded communion with God. And yet he turns aside from that ordinary plane of everyday communion in the common things to have this intimate communion alone and apart with his Father. Now let's get the fact.

Let's get the significance. It is most pertinent and of practical significance to us that he did that. You see, if there was any person in the course of human history that could have done without these exceptional communings with God, it should have been Jesus.

His heart was utterly dedicated to do the will of God. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and never grieved the infilling Spirit. He knew the will of God from eternity.

He was with the Father in eternity when all the progress of history was chartered. He knew everything he needed to know. He had everything he needed to possess.

If there was any person in history who could have done without it, it should have been he. You and I often don't know the will of God. And when we don't know the--when we don't know the will of God, we need to

discover it.

But when we discover it, we are not always wholehearted in doing it. And when we have the Spirit within us, we grieve the Spirit. We are so different from him.

How much more then do we need these times of communion with God, when neither friend nor foe obtrudes, but when in the aloneness of the moment we can open our hearts and be frank and honest before the glare of the throne, and receive his judgments and assessments, as well as the grace that he gives to those who draw near. Notice that with our Lord this was a matter of priority. I remember how this took me by storm the first time I noticed it.

The priority which Jesus gave to the fellowship, his fellowship with God, is evidenced in many ways. Let me just point to one thing. It's important to notice the context here.

And the previous day had been a Sabbath day, our most exacting day for our Lord. As some of you may be tempted to question that, and unless you know what it is to wrestle with evil spirits and evil powers, you may not believe what the Scriptures say. But if you know what it is to wrestle with principalities and powers, and to meet demon-possessed people on your path, and rescue them from the clutches of the devil, you'll know what I'm going to say now, and you'll appreciate it.

The Sabbath day begun, as it must for the Son of God, in honoring his Father's injunction to worship on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day was the Lord's. He goes necessarily to the synagogue and worships there.

He wasn't an ordinary worshipper. This was not his hometown, and as a visitor he was given the book in the synagogue, quite obviously, and he began to expound the Scriptures, and to join the people in prayers and in praises. Then a demon-possessed man comes into the synagogue.

I don't know how he was there, but there he was. And of course the fray, the battle begins, the first battle of the day. Apart from the battle of expounding the Scriptures to men that have misconstrued them, there is this other battle with a demon-possessed man.

The man is rescued by the intervention of our Lord. The service proceeds. Jesus now goes with his little band of disciples to Simon Peter's home in Capernaum.

Going in through the door, he's told that Simon's mother-in-law is ill with a fever. Here comes a miracle of healing. And Luke the doctor tells us that when Jesus healed, virtue went out of him.

Healing to Jesus was never a matter of a divine fiat. Utter the word, full stop. It's happened.

Virtue went out of him. He spent the day with his disciples, teaching them and admonishing them, perhaps altogether within the privacy of Simon's house, I don't know. Then the Sabbath ended.

During the Sabbath, of course, the Jew could carry no and nor nothing on his back or in his arms. He was forbidden by the scribal understanding of the Sabbath. But they were all waiting on tiptoe.

It's a remarkable picture here. They were all waiting for the Sabbath to end. Why? Because they wanted to take their burdens, sick, and carry them, and lay them at the feet of the Master and beg that he would stretch forth his hand or utter his word in healing.

And outside Peter's house in the Capernaum street where he lived on that night, after the Sabbath was over, late at night, you see a multitude that the scriptures don't attempt to number. They've all brought their burdens, their sick folk, their problem folk, and they've brought them along, they've carried them along, and there they are waiting for one thing, the touch of the Master, the word of the Christ, the healing virtues of the Son of God. We're not told what time he went to bed that night.

Now anybody that is aware of spiritual issues and spiritual battles should be able to strike a total heel. This has been a most exacting day, preaching to people who have no sympathy with your message, extricating men not only from the power of the devil, but also of disease. And here we read, And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and he went out to a lonely place, and there prayed.

It had priority of place with the Son of God, does it with us? It was a matter also not only of priority, but of consistency. You see, our Lord was the most consistent person that's ever lived. He had been to the synagogue on the previous day, on the Sabbath day.

Why did he go to the synagogue? Well, not to be seen of men. He went to the synagogue because it was his father's house, it was the place of worship. It was the place where the nucleus, the remnant of God's people met along with others.

And those that waited salvation in Israel were there along with others who misunderstood completely, but they were there, he went. In other words, he went to please God. He went to worship God.

He went to pray to God. Very well then, having publicly attended the synagogue for worship on the Sabbath, he will privately attend to the same exercise the next morning. You see, God was as important on the Monday morning, or I say, Sunday morning, the Sabbath is on the Saturday.

God was as important the next morning as he was on the Sabbath day for him. It wasn't a matter of day, it wasn't a matter of the season, it was a matter of heart, and of soul, and of evaluation. To follow Jesus means having a place of private communion with God, where you worship him and hear his voice, as well as being loyal at the place of public worship at the appointed hours.

That is the way for Simon to become Peter. That is the way for a man to be weaned away from material and earthly things, and to become a fisher of men. And there is no other way.

A place of communion. Secondly, Jesus emerges from his place of communion, will you notice? Mark 1, 36 to 39, with a God-given sense of compulsion. Jesus did not simply come to do God's will.

Now, he did that. He did come to do God's will, but not simply to do God's will. He came to do God's will in fellowship with God.

And that makes a world of difference. Jesus was not an errand boy sent by the Father to do certain things here upon earth, whilst the Father remained in heaven. Jesus came to live on earth, and to act on earth, as a man in communion with God in heaven.

And they spoke together, and they labored together, and they suffered together, and they had victories together. It was the Father and the Son. He was no mere errand boy.

Now, that meant, of course, his constant conferring with the Father, so that he might do his Father's will, in his Father's way, at the Father's time. This is why, you see, for one thing, you notice our Lord so conscious

of the fact nine hour is not yet come. The time hasn't come to do certain things, and so I'm not doing them.

He would refrain from doing certain things, legitimate and right as they were in themselves, but no, no, no, they mustn't be done yet, because it's not the hour. He could hear the tick of the clock in his Father's home, and until that clock strikes time, he doesn't do even what he's pledged to do. It must be done in the right time.

Our Lord was not only conscious of a call to be the Savior of men--this is the point I'm getting to--he was conscious also of his daily duty. And he moved out of this place of communion with a sense of compulsion. These are his words, Come, let us go into the next towns also, that I may preach there, for therefore came my force.

Now, if ever there are challenging words for a Christian man and a Christian woman, there they are. Jesus has been in the heart of the throne. Here from the world we turn.

Within the veil we bow the knee, the hymn we've just sung. What for? To hear the voice of God, to commune with our Father. Then what? Right, we know what to do, we know where to go, we know how to do things, we're ready for the day, we've had our command.

We move out in fellowship and in communion with a sense of compulsion. Thus spiritually armed for the day, you will notice how Mark was impressed by both a negative and a positive fact. Negatively, our Lord refused to heed the clamor of the Capernaum multitudes, to go back to them for the day.

Look at verses 36 to 38. And Simon, we read, and they that were with him, followed after him. That is after Jesus.

He had gone aside to pray. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek thee, that is now, early in the morning, all the Capernaum people, seek thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth.

Have you noticed what happens there? Quietly, unobtrusively, without making a fuss of it, Jesus turned down the plea of the Capernaum people to go back again and to show them the might and the mercy of his right hand. He simply, he simply made it clear that he intended now to follow in the pathway of duty which was forward, not backwards. Forward into new areas, not backward to the old.

Not where he was yesterday, but where God wills him to be today. And that is positively put in the words to which I've already referred. Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth.

Capernaum sought him, if we understand her right, because of his miracles, because of his power to heal and alleviate the sick. Of course they wanted a man like this all day and every day. What a wonderful thing to have, a man like this among you.

Come back, come back, they said. Spend the day with us. Repeat the things you did yesterday.

We still have more sick people. We still have more demon possessed. No, says our Lord, I've come forth for another purpose.

And though I may be doing this on the way to fulfill the larger purpose of God, there is another reason that has brought me forth. Come, let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for therefore came

I forth. In other words, our Lord's purpose at this point in his ministry was, first of all, to exercise his prophetic ministry of teaching.

Ultimately, of course, it is to lay down his life, in a high priestly sense, for the sins of men. But at this moment, the purpose of God, planned in eternity, was that he should teach. And so he tells them, therefore came I forth.

And therefore I must go into the next villages, into the next towns, to preach there also. He knew what he was to do, and he knew where he was to do it. My good friend, do you know anything of this sense of compulsion? Like a goat that carries you along through the days, living a life that in your heart of hearts you know you're doing your master's will.

In communion with his father, Jesus heard again the bleating of the sheep in the other towns. He'd never seen them yet, but there they were, lost in the desert. They've not seen his might, they've not seen his person, they've not heard his voice.

And he hears them bleating, and he says, I must go. And therefore came I forth. Do you know the reason for your existence? Men and women, will you will you will you forgive me for putting it so bluntly this morning? Do you know why God has preserved you in life and redeemed you by the blood of Christ? Are you sure in your souls this morning, as you sit in these Knox pews, and as I stand in the pulpit here, are we sure that we know why we're here? Therefore came I forth.

There is one place to know it, and to discover it, and to be reassured of it daily. And that is in a place of communion, where the heart communes with God. To the extent that you and I know communion with God, we may know whether or not we are about his business.

Now this was a wonderful message to Simon. You see, I'm doing the carnal thing first. Before I apply this to myself, I'm applying it to Simon.

Oh, I trust the Lord will forgive me that, because I'm doing the preaching this morning. But I'm going to come to myself in a moment, and to you as well. But may I say that this was a very special, a very relevant message for Simon.

You see, we all, and Simon among us, we all need two things if we are to become fishers of men. We need to be sure of our initial call. Now every Christian worker knows this, and especially if you're involved in what we call full-time work, at home or on the mission field anywhere, you need to be sure of your initial call.

Make sure that you've not thrust yourself out when the Lord meant you to be somewhere else. Make sure of your call. We need to be certain of our initial call.

But we also need to be certain of the fact that daily we're doing the Master's will. That daily we are about the business of the day according to the the agenda in heaven. Now, Simon had been initially called, come after me and I will make you to become fishers of men.

He'd been called. But you see, at this moment he was floundering as to what to do. Even that initial call was uncertain, but he most obviously didn't know what to do today.

He was now toying whether he should go forward or backward. He felt the pull of two worlds. And it was he, you notice, who came to Jesus and suggested that he should come back to Capernaum for that day.

Why? Well, because that's where his boat was. That's where his home was. That's where his family was.

And how much easier it would be to serve the Lord in Capernaum and to stay in Capernaum, where he could go back to the boats and the fishes if he so desired, rather than follow into new areas, into new fields, into difficult places, beyond the home territory. There is only one way of assuring Simon and reassuring him of his original call and of the purpose for today, as well as of mediating grace to do the will of God today, and that is in a place of communion. That is God's ordinance.

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