

Expository Thoughts On Mark - Mark 6:30-34

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

Let us mark in this passage, the conduct of the apostles when they returned from their first mission as preachers. We read that they "gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught."

These words are deeply instructive. They are a bright example to all ministers of the Gospel, and to all laborers in the great work of doing good to souls. All such should daily do as the apostles did on this occasion. They should tell all their proceedings to the great Head of the Church. They should spread all their work before Christ, and ask of Him counsel, guidance, strength, and help.

Prayer is the main secret of success in spiritual business. It moves Him who can move heaven and earth. It brings down the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, without whom the finest sermons, the clearest teaching, and the most diligent labors, are all alike in vain. It is not always those who have the most eminent gifts who are most successful laborers for God. It is generally those who keep up closest communion with Christ and are most constant in prayer. It is those who cry with the prophet Ezekiel, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." (Ezek. 37:9.) It is those who follow most exactly the apostolic model, and "give themselves to prayer, and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4.) Happy is that church which has a praying as well as a preaching ministry! The question we should ask about a new minister, is not merely "Can he preach well?" but "Does he pray much for his people and his work?"

Let us mark, in the second place, the words of our Lord to the apostles, when they returned from their first public ministry. Jesus said to them, "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

These words are full of tender consideration. Our Lord knows well that His servants are flesh as well as spirit, and have bodies as well as souls. He knows that at best they have a treasure in earthen vessels, and are themselves encompassed with many infirmities. He shows those who He does not expect from them more than their bodily strength can do. He asks for what we can do, and not for what we cannot do. "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

These words are full of deep wisdom. Our Lord knows well that His servants must attend to their own souls as well as the souls of others. He knows that a constant attention to public work is apt to make us forget our own private soul-business, and that while we are keeping the vineyards of others, we are in danger of neglecting our own. (Cant. 1:6.) He reminds us that it is good for ministers to withdraw occasionally from public work, and look within. "Come with Me by yourselves to a quiet place and get

some rest."

There are few unhappily in the church of Christ, who need these admonitions. There are but few in danger of overworking themselves, and injuring their own bodies and souls by excessive attention to others. The vast majority of professing Christians are indolent and slothful, and do nothing for the world around them. There are few comparatively who need the bridle nearly so much as the spur. Yet these few ought to lay to heart the lessons of this passage. They should economize their health as a talent, and not squander it away like gamblers. They should be content with spending their daily income of strength, and should not draw recklessly on their principal. They should remember that to do a little, and do it well, is often the way to do most in the long run. Above all they should never forget to watch their own hearts jealously, and to make time for regular self-examination, and calm meditation. The prosperity of a man\

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