



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Mark Sermon Series

Supports Session 2: Proclaimed

Sermon Title: “Jesus and the Morning Watch” (Mark 1:35-39)

Connection to Session 2

As Jesus began His earthly ministry we are given insight into the source of His strength. Jesus committed His life to prayer and gained divine strength. Through his communion with God, He gained direction and was certain of His next steps.

Introduction/Opening

A routine of praying is the key to abiding in spiritual strength. To develop this spiritual habit and keep intercession a priority, we must overcome obstacles and minimize distractions. The result is a daily walk in the grace of Jesus.

Outline

1. Jesus Devoted Himself to Regular Communion with the Father

- a. Jesus woke up before dawn and found a quiet place to pray.
 - i. Hudson Taylor, missionary to China, practiced what he called the “morning watch.” He arose every morning before the others in his household and prayed.
 - ii. Some praying moms I know testify that if they are to devote themselves to prayer, they must wake up before their husbands and children. In the quietness before dawn they read their Bibles and pray. This spiritual discipline establishes the direction of their day.
 - iii. Great athletes testify of the effective training schedule of arising before dawn to run. In the Rocky movies, actor Sylvester Stallone portrays the habit of the champion boxer as he runs through the streets of Philadelphia while the city still sleeps. Rocky ascends the steps of Philadelphia’s city hall as the sun is rising. When he reaches the top of the stairs he jumps and dances in victory.

This is a precursor of the victory he will soon experience in the ring due to the rigors of his physical training.

- b. Peter and the apostles found Jesus and commented that everyone was looking for Him (v. 37). The implication was, “We have things for you to do, why are you out here?”
- c. Jesus was not caught up in the busyness of others. In Gethsemane, He continued to pray after His apostles neglected His request that they pray with him in His critical time of need.
- d. How do you spend your mornings? It is a critical time of day and can be most productive. Have you ever tried a morning watch?

2. Jesus Gained Divine Direction

- a. Jesus didn't respond to Peter's inquiry. Instead, He announced where they were going next and how they would fulfill His calling.
- b. Guidance is needed for our daily decisions through all of life. We never outgrow the guidance that comes through seeking God's will for our lives.

3. What are our Options?

- a. We must carefully assess how we spend our early morning time.
- b. Radio broadcasters recruit their best announcers for morning shows. Radio personalities become famous for early morning humor and musical entertainment in the prime moments as listeners are beginning their days and commuting to work.
- c. We must opt for the morning watch as Jesus did. We will never regret time spent with God at the start of every day.

Conclusion

I had no idea how much a morning quiet time would determine my future plans. Not too long after I began a quiet time, I made a profession of faith and then was recruited to teach a Sunday School class. Within a year or so I sensed a calling to preach. Seminary followed with a series of pastorates after that. I have now been preaching for forty years. I am delighted that my professional life was spent serving Jesus in Texas churches. If you start a morning watch, you might just discover God's plans for your life. If you do, it will be a huge blessing and a direction you will never regret.

Ken and Welda Cox live in New Boston, Texas. In 2012 Ken retired from First Baptist Church after 20 years of service. Ken has been active in prison ministry since 1995 and presently serves as interim pastor of Mount Moriah Baptist Church, Omaha, Texas. Ken and Welda have six children and nine grandchildren.

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