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Upper Thames Missionary Church
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Focus!
Mark 1:32-39

The question I have for all of us to consider today is this: **what are you looking at?**
No just with your physical eyes – but with your mind's eye.

Set the scene together.

-in our passage today we have just witnessed Jesus perform two very important healings (healed a demon possessed man and healed Simon's mother-in-law)

-these occur on the Sabbath

-this is why our section begins with “at sundown” they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons

-Jesus escapes temptations rooted in popularity and tiredness by leaving and going out to a desolate place to pray.

-fame / power - these are still temptations we experience today - paul in first corinthians 10 was 100% right when he said no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all people. Jesus had to make a choice

When the temptations of fame and the weakness of flesh were pulling at him to stay in Capernaum, Jesus chose to seek and obey the will of his Father in heaven.

Life he's going to bring each one of us temptation to become self centred. The devil wants to throw off the mission of God from the beginning, and this story shows us how to be on our guard in two ways:

First I think we're going to be tempted by the devil's offer of easy power - if you remember Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of this world. - Satan had some alternative way to grab power quickly.

Second, to be on mission today we need to be aware of the temptation of the flesh.

1. To that first point, we see that Jesus ministry was not about popularity. it was not about numbers it was not even about public perception
2. Ministry focused on popularity is not Jesus- shaped ministry

-A key antidote to the temptation of popularity, seems to be simply to get away. mark says in verse 35 the Jesus departed and went out to a desolate place.

-your ministry out to the community, depends on your ability and your discipline to get away from the hustle and bustle and to spend time listening for a word from God so that you can obey it.

-if you can't hear what God is saying how can you obey?

2. the temptation of the flesh

-big public failings do not randomly happen - they have their roots in small temptations, letting our bodies rather than our obedience to Christ dictate the way that we live. when we become slaves to our appetites for food and drink and sleep we can hardly be surprised when we become slaves to our sexual appetites.

-after a long night a late night of intense miracle working ministry, Jesus gets up not just early but literally “a great amount of time before morning” in order to go and pray. don't underestimate the fact that Jesus was human and no doubt very tired.

-I'm not saying you need to get up a great amount of time before the sun every morning but I am suggesting that those times when ministry seems most intense after a late night, perhaps the best thing you could do the next morning is not sleep in but get up and go find quiet and secluded place and pray.

Individual - individual mission and ministry requires that we first cultivate a strong up relationship with our Father.

-Feeling a strong call for “out” ministry - to meet the needs of people around you, will always come with a strong call “up” call. We must obey both calls, it's not a pick and chose scenario. Christ models that clearly for us here.

What about our corporate mission?

- a congregation must realize that together as one body we must altogether pursue the upward call of Christ. we must all take seriously early mornings and late nights in prayer with the father - we must all take seriously the discipline of regularly being in the scriptures, and letting the Holy Spirit make things known to us.

Each one of us have gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit that must be teamed up in the corporate ministry of the church

What is that ministry?

I.e.why would Jesus hide away early in the morning from the crowds and even his own disciples?

v. 38 -he says nothing in response to his disciples intense searching and reproachful statement that everyone is looking for him (they want him to choose the route of popularity – to cash in on his big night and capture the momentum in Capernaum)

-instead Jesus simply says let us go on to the next towns that I may **preach** there also for that is why I came out.

to preach? what does that mean?

to preach means to proclaim something - to make it known.

-he said in verse 14 Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying the time is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe the gospel.
(remember gospel means good news.)

Jesus came into Galilee letting everyone know about the good news that the Kingdom of God is on their doorstep - it is a royal decree and announcement that the true king is returning - prepare yourselves, stop serving yourselves in the false gods and get ready because the true God is here - and this is good news.

- his primary ministry was not to heal

-it's no wonder then that as he went through Galilee in verse 39 he preached and cast out demons. no doubt casting out the spiritual forces of evil is a more powerful illustration of the real battle that Jesus is waging.

-Jesus came primarily to set spiritual captives free. because the root of the problem today just as it was then his spiritual

- and while acts of service and kindness even healing, can be a powerful sign of God's love and plan, ultimately what people need then and today it's spiritual freedom a new life.

Our mission, individually and corporately, is always going to be a ministry leading to spiritual freedom and spiritual breakthrough.

-people in Mitchell need spiritual freedom. people in Mitchell need hope from the chains that bind their hearts - and together as a church each one of us working in the giftings that we have can serve and bless and love and teach preach the good news of the Kingdom of God this Christmas season.

-It starts with each one of us fixing our eyes on Jesus, and bringing our whole life, body and soul, into alignment with him.