



VISION YOUTH DEVOTIONAL

Term 2, 2020

~~Volume 1~~



Hey!

In this interesting season we are in, we believe that it is a time not to shrink back and be discouraged, but to move forward and go deeper in our walks with God.

Sometimes when things are stripped away it reveals what is truly important. Our relationship with Jesus is truly the most important thing in our lives and like any relationship it requires time and investment to see it grow and strengthen. The best way to grow closer to God is to spend time with Him, and our prayer is that this devotional will help you do just that!

This year, we have been journeying through the book of Mark, and this devotional has been prepared to be a helpful resource in seeing the words of this amazing gospel come alive in your heart. There will be further 'volumes' as time goes on. We pray it would encourage you, challenge you, strengthen your faith and cause you to go deeper in your walk with Jesus like never before!

We think you are amazing and we are cheering you on in all that God has for you!

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Day 1 - 3 Priorities

Read: Mark 1:1-8

Beginnings are important aren't they? Think of your favourite movie or book. The beginning helps frame your understanding and experience for the rest of the story and also gives context for what is to come.

In today's passage we read 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. This should cause us to sit up and take notice as something significant is about to be laid out for us! In these first few verses of Mark we see 3 priorities that will help frame our understanding of life and faith if we can grab hold of them.

- The priority of Jesus - it's all about Him! Jesus is not just some 'added extra' to our lives, but must be central! As you examine your life, is Jesus at the centre? Is He your priority, or do all the other things get in the way?
- The priority of repentance - to prepare the way for Jesus to come, John the Baptist brought a message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Repentance means turning AWAY from sin, from our own way, and turning TO God. In your life right now are there things that need to be dealt with? Sins that need to be turned away from? Don't delay, bring them before God and deal with them!
- The priority of our proclamation - just as John the Baptist preached and proclaimed a message pointing others to Jesus, so your life speaks and proclaims a message! What is the message of your life pointing people towards?

Lord, I desire that you would be the centre of my life. Help me to turn away from sin and turn towards you, and may that be a constant thing in my life. Help me to point others toward you in the way I live and speak. Amen

Day 2 - Identity & Power

Read: Mark 1:9-12; Matthew 4:1-11

Have you ever been looking for something, but couldn't find it, only to later discover that you had been looking in the wrong place the whole time? It's frustrating isn't it, for no matter how hard we look if it's not there, we won't find it!

Sometimes in our search for our identity and approval, we can be looking in all the wrong places - in getting good grades, in doing a good job, in being popular, in sporting achievements, in a relationship. The truth is, our identity and worth is not caught up in those kind of things - it's found in GOD! In who HE says we are, and who we belong to.

At Jesus' baptism, before He did anything significant in ministry, God the Father spoke loud and clear, publicly affirming Him - that He was His beloved Son and God was well pleased with Him. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus too which empowered Him for His earthly ministry.

In our lives, we need to know our identity (who God says we are, our approval in Him), and we need to receive His power. Knowing our identity propels us into all that God has for us, just as Jesus launched into His public ministry after receiving His Father's public affirmation. Because we are loved by God, we should be compelled to love others. Because we are chosen, we should recognise that there is a divine call on our lives and seek after His plan and purposes - to bring Him glory!

Knowing our identity - that we are loved by God and belong to Him - is a powerful tool in resisting temptation and resisting the lies of the enemy. Do you know who you are and whose you are?

Lord I thank you that I am loved by you. Thank you that I am yours. That you have chosen me, you have called me. Help me to be secure in my identity in you. Amen

Day 3 - FOLLOW ME!

Read: Mark 1:16-20; Mark 2:13-17

If you were going to choose people for a really important task like, well, being trusted to carry on the work of the Son of God once He'd ascended to heaven and birth the church to ensure it was well established and could thrive for generations to come - what sort of people would you choose? If it was me I would choose those who were qualified - people who were loyal, humble, full of character, eloquent in preaching, full of faith - that sort of thing. If we look at who Jesus chose as His disciples though, it would be fair to say He chose the unlikely, the unqualified and the undeserving!

Have you ever felt unlikely, unqualified and undeserving? I certainly have! The good news is, that's just the sort of person God desires and is able to use, because it means we have to trust in Him and in our weakness, He is strong! Jesus looks for something different than we do - He isn't looking for perfection, waiting for you to have it all figured out - He is looking for you to give Him your wholehearted and ongoing YES!

In Mark 1:16, it says Jesus SAW them...and then said 'FOLLOW ME'. Be encouraged that Jesus sees you and knows you right where you are at, right in your unqualified-ness, in your undeserving-ness - and He issues that same invitation to you - FOLLOW ME! The disciples left everything to follow Jesus because they saw in Him something so wonderful, so compelling that they simply had to respond with their wholehearted YES! Will you respond to Jesus' call with your wholehearted YES too? He is able to do a lot with a little.

Keep Him at the centre of your life, walk with Him, and watch and see what He does in you and through you!

Lord I thank you that you call me to follow you. What a privilege that is! I say yes to you today and choose to follow you, wherever you would lead me. Be glorified I pray. Amen

Day 4 - Jesus' Compassion

Read: Mark 1:21-34; Mark 1:40-45

In 1 John 3:8 it says 'the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the evil one'. Time and time again throughout the gospels we read accounts of Jesus doing this by healing, bringing salvation, deliverance and freedom! As you can imagine, people were attracted to this and so the crowds came because they wanted something out of Jesus.

There is a trap we can fall into - and that is of only coming to Jesus when we want or need something. Of course, Jesus loves it when we come to Him with our needs and requests, but remember the heart posture we have when we do this - He is not just our personal butler that we click our fingers when we want something! He is Lord, He is King and He desires relationship with us - to be part of every area of our lives. Come to Jesus because of who He is, not just what He can do for you.

In the midst of all the healing and setting people free, the crowds and busyness, the gospels tell us that Jesus was 'moved with compassion', and that this was a motivation for Him to bring healing and freedom to people. When the man with leprosy came to Jesus (1:40-45) - bearing in mind leprosy was a hideous disease in every sense of the word - Jesus met this man right where he was at, He didn't turn him away, but was moved with compassion and reached out and touched him.

Two things from this - when you come to Jesus, He will not turn you away - He longs to touch your life, particularly those areas that need healing or freedom. AND, just as Jesus was moved with compassion, ask Him to move your heart with compassion towards those around you. You will begin to see people differently.

Lord Jesus, help to come to you first and foremost, because of who you are. I honour you as Lord and King today. Thank you for your compassion, and your love for me. Would you move my heart with compassion for those around me.

Day 5 - Prayer

Read: Mark 1:35-39; Matthew 6:5-13

We all know that prayer is crucial in our lives as Christians but sometimes we find it really hard to make a priority every day. We start praying then BAM, two sentences in and our brains are totally side-tracked and we're thinking about what we're going to snack on next, what homework we still have to do, a meme or Tik Tok we saw - there are so many distractions!

The point of this devotional is not to make you feel guilty about your prayer life but exactly the opposite. The point is that when we look at Jesus we see that He was completely committed to constant prayer and communication with His Father. When we see how Jesus deliberately put prayer as the first thing in His day, the top of the to-do list, it spurs us on to follow His example.

So here are a few things we learn from Jesus in this passage. As you read through these points, there are questions for you to think about how it applies in your life.

Verse 35 says that Jesus deliberately got up early to pray and went to a solitary place (He was alone, just Him and the Father)

- Do you have a specific time that you set aside to be with the Lord? What can you move around to make time with the Lord a regular part of your day?
- Do you have a place you can go to pray and be with the Lord? I've found that having a specific and solitary place for quiet times helps me to not get distracted and allows me to be focused on the Lord. Can you find a space like this where you can specifically go to pray?



Day 5 - Prayer

In verses 37-38 the disciples ask Jesus where He was because everyone was looking for Him. Jesus says that it's time to move on to another town - He knew what to do next because He had been communicating with His Father. We know that Jesus always does what He sees His Father doing (e.g. John 5:19).

- Have you ever spent time praying about a specific decision, issue, or problem and known more peace and certainty after talking to the Father about it? What is something on your mind that you can talk to God about and ask Him for His wisdom and guidance? He loves to hear and answer our prayers so don't be afraid to bring anything before Him.

While Jesus spent time specifically in prayer, as we see in this passage, He also prayed 'on-the-go' throughout the day.

- What could you do to remind yourself to pray constantly throughout the day? With more time at home maybe you could stick reminders on your mirror, computer, bedroom door, phone lock-screen... anywhere that will remind you to take a moment to talk to the Lord.

If you're finding it difficult to pray, don't forget that you can ask God to help you! The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray and He answers them by teaching them the Lord's prayer. If you're not sure what to pray, have a go at reading through the Lord's prayer slowly and thinking about each sentence. This can really help you to think about what different topics you can pray about. (Check out Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4).

And as a final encouragement, remember that "God is interested in your prayers because He is interested in you!" (quoted from *Too Busy Not to Pray* - a great book about prayer!).

Lord, would you teach me to pray. Would you help me to go deeper in prayer that I might grow closer to you. Thank you for the power of prayer and that you are interested in every area of my life. I bring these cares and requests to you today ----- Amen