

## "THE SOUND OF SILENCE: DRAWING NEAR TO GOD IN THE NEW YEAR" MARK 1:35-39

### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Prayer** – I pray to God to know him, to lay my request before him and to find direction for my daily life. Psalm 66:16-20

16 *Come and listen, all you who fear God;  
let me tell you what he has done for me.*

17 *I cried out to him with my mouth;  
his praise was on my tongue.*

18 *If I had cherished sin in my heart,  
the Lord would not have listened;*

19 *but God has surely listened  
and heard my voice in prayer.*

20 *Praise be to God,  
who has not rejected my prayer  
or withheld his love from me!*

Prayer, solitude, and silence are complementary spiritual disciplines that Jesus, himself, practiced. With regard to prayer and solitude, Jesus told his disciples, "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:6). Unlike hypocrites who pray to be heard by others, Jesus wants his disciples to pray to be heard by God.

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***Glory be to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, so it is now and so it shall ever be, world without end. Alleluia. Amen.***

*– The Gloria*

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With regard to solitude and silence, Jesus set an example for his disciples to follow. Mark tells us that in the midst of a hectic schedule, Jesus did what seems counterintuitive to most. Instead of sleeping in after a demanding day, he got up very early in the morning, long before dawn, and went off by himself to pray (1:35). By himself, he had no one to talk to but God and no one to listen to but God. Practicing silence involves not talking to others, not listening to others talking, not engaging in conversation. Obviously, that's easier to do when you're alone. On solitude one author writes, "In solitude the heart waits for God, and God alone. Here the soul opens wide to listen and receive" (Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 112). And on silence the same author writes, "Silence offers a way of paying attention to the Spirit of God and what he brings to the surface of our souls" (108).

One way to practice prayer, solitude, and silence is to practice fixed-hour prayer. This spiritual discipline is also called "observing the hours" or "keeping the offices." It goes back to the ancient practice of praying at fixed times during the day. The psalmist wrote, "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous laws" (Ps 119:164), and later the apostles set aside time throughout the day for prayer (Ac 3:1; 10:9). While many breviaries and fixed-hour prayer books identify seven offices—Midnight (10:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.), Night Watch (1:30-4:30); Dawn (4:30-7:30), Morning (6:00-9:00), Midday (11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.), Vespers (5:00-8:00), Compline (before retiring)—most people can't pg. 2

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simply pray in the morning, noon, and in the evening (see Phyllis Tickle, *The Divine Hours: Pocket Edition*, vii). "There are seven offices observed in each day," writes Tickle, "or there are seven provided. Most lay Christians find themselves unable to observe all seven and choose, instead, to select for observation those hours that are most compatible with their individual schedules and daily lives" (vii). You will be given an opportunity to pray the hours for Wednesday, December 28th, following your study of Mark 1:35-39.

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Mk 1:14 *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

16 *As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.*

19 *When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*

21 *They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil[e] spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"*

25 *"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.*

27 *The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they*

*obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.*

29 *As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.*

32 *That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.*

### Mark 1:35-39

35 *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"*

38 *Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. (NIV (c)1984)*

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Bracket "very early" and "still dark" in v. 35.

\* Underline "left," "went out," and "solitary place" in v. 35.

\* Circle "prayed" in v. 35.

\* Circle "companions" in v. 36.

\* Highlight "everyone" in v. 37.

\* Box "so" indicating purpose in v. 38.

\* Circle "preach" in v. 38 and "preaching" in v. 39.

\* Bracket "driving out demons" in v. 39.

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day **2**

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What do you infer about Jesus and about prayer from verse 35?
2. Verse 36 refers to Simon and "his companions." Identify them. (Cf., v. 29).
3. When they got up, Jesus was nowhere to be found. Describe their reaction.
4. Explain the point of Mark's use of *hyperbole* in verse 37.
5. Why was "everyone" looking for Jesus? (Cf., vv. 21-34).
6. Given the success he had had in Capernaum, why would he want to leave?
7. Explain the significance of the fact that Jesus traveled throughout Galilee "driving out demons."

**EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Jesus' popularity spikes shortly after he begins his public ministry in Galilee. After calling the brothers Simon and Andrew and the brothers James and John, Jesus goes with them to Capernaum where on the Sabbath in the synagogue he begins to teach. The gist of his message is recorded in Mark 1:15: "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" People are amazed in part because he speaks with authority and in part because he exorcises a demon before their very eyes. The fact that he had such power authenticated his message and indicated that the kingdom of God was truly near. Perhaps he did this more than once seeing that the crowd responded by saying, "What is this? A new teaching-and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him" (1:27). It didn't take long for word of him to spread throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Once they left the synagogue, Jesus and his disciples come to the home of Simon and Andrew where Simon's mother-in-law is in bed sick. Jesus takes her hand, helps her up, the fever leaves her, and she begins to wait on them. That same evening, the whole town shows up at Simon's door with sick friends and loved ones. Jesus heals "many," maybe all of them, since the term can mean "all" on occasion. Not only does he heal many sick but he also exorcises many demons, which further fuels his fame. One would excuse Jesus for sleeping in the next morning, but on the contrary, he gets up very, very early, long before dawn, goes off by himself, and prays. This is not what Jesus did once; this is what Jesus does, repeatedly. Luke tells us, "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Lk 5:16).

When the disciples get up, Jesus is nowhere to be found. They issue an all points bulletin, launch a manhunt to find him, and when they do, they exclaim, "Everyone is looking for you." Their use of hyperbole is understandable. It doesn't take long for the crowds to grow so large that Jesus can no longer enter a town openly. Instead, he had to stay outside, and yet, people still came to him from everywhere.

When we read that Jesus prayed, we uncritically assume that he did exactly what we do when we pray-ask for things, lots of things, one thing after another. And while prayer certainly includes bringing requests to God, it involves much more like giving thanks, offering praise, and admiring God's holiness. Neither reading the scriptures, in general-or better yet, praying the scriptures like Kenneth Boa suggests in his *Face to Face* books-nor reading the Psalms, in particular, involve asking for things, but both amount to prayer.

Rather than just a talk about prayer, why not pray three of the offices of daily prayer for December 28. Just follow the guide for the Morning Office, Mid-day Office, and Vespers Office.

**The Morning Office**

*To Be Observed on the Hour or Half Hour Between 6 and 9 a.m.*

**The Call to Prayer**

Come, let us sing to the LORD;\* let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation. *Ps 95:1*

**The Request for Presence**

Bow your heavens, O LORD, and come down;\* touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. *Ps 144:5*

**The Greeting**

My lips will sing with joy when I play to you,\* and so will my soul, which you have redeemed. *Ps 71:23*

**The Refrain for the Morning Lessons**

Remember, LORD, how short life is,\* how frail you have made all flesh. *Ps 89:47*

**A Reading**

Read Mt 2:13-18

**The Refrain**

Remember, LORD, how short life is,\* how frail you have made all flesh.

**The Gloria****The Lord's Prayer****The Prayer Appointed for the Week**

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that I, who have been born again and made your child by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy

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Spirit; through my Lord Jesus Christ, whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

### **Concluding Prayers of the Church**

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the holy innocents of Bethlehem by King Herod. Receive, we pray, into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims; and by your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought me in safely to this new day: Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all I do direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

### **The Midday Office**

*To Be Observed on the Hour or Half Hour  
Between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.*

#### **The Call to Prayer**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. *Doxology*

#### **The Request for Presence**

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever;\* may the LORD rejoice in all his works. *Ps 104:32*

#### **The Greeting**

Hosanna, LORD, hosanna!\* LORD, send us now success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord...

God is the LORD; he has shined upon us;\* form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar. *Ps 118:25-27*

#### **A Reading**

Read Jeremiah 31:15-17

#### **The Refrain**

Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again in joy, shouldering their sheaves.

#### **The Midday Psalm**

Read Psalm 123

#### **The Refrain**

Those who go out weeping, carrying the

seed,\* will come again in joy, shouldering their sheaves.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Prayer Appointed for the Week**

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that I, who have been born again and made your child by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through my Lord Jesus Christ, whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

### **Concluding Prayers of the Church**

O God, whose beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them: Give me the grace to entrust the holy innocents of Bethlehem to your never-failing care and love, and bring me to your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth; mercifully accept the prayers of your people everywhere, and strengthen each of us to do your will; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

### **The Vespers Office**

*To Be Observed on the Hour or Half Hour  
Between 5 and 8 p.m.*

#### **The Call to Prayer**

Praise the LORD, all you nations;\* laud him, all you peoples.

For his loving-kindness towards us is great,\* and the faithfulness of the LORD endures for ever. . . *Ps 117:1-2*

#### **The Request for Presence**

O LORD, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God.

Make haste to help me, O LORD of my salvation. *Ps 38:21-22*

#### **The Greeting**

You are my refuge and shield; my hope is in your word. *Ps 119:114*

#### **The Hymn**

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

#### **The Refrain**

. . . it is good for me to be near God' I have made the Lord God my refuge.

#### **The Gloria**

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### The Prayer Appointed for the week

Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that I, who have been born again and made your child be adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through my Lord Jesus Christ, whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

### Concluding Prayers of the Church

O God, whose beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them: Give me the grace to

entrust the holy innocents of Bethlehem to your never-failing care and love, and bring me to your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth; mercifully accept the prayers of your people everywhere, and strengthen each of us to do your will; through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

## The Message of the Passage

*Imitate Jesus who, after an exhausting ministry in Capernaum, engaged in prayer, solitude, and silence before going elsewhere in Galilee to preach.*

## notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 35 **very early, still dark** "The word *proi* in Mark means the last watch of the night from three to six a.m. *Ennucha lian* means in the early part of the watch while it was still a bit dark (cf. Mark 16:2 *lian proi*)" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 1: 263). "Early morning prayer was a characteristic of Jewish piety (Pss. 5:3; 88:13; 119:147)" (Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT, 100).
- v. 35 **solitary place** "Whereas Jesus no doubt sought to be alone at time in order to pray, the comment about Jesus seeking an uninhabited place serve to show that Jesus' popularity and fame were so great that he could not be hidden. Even in deserted, unpopulated areas, people were flocking to see him" (100).
- v. 36 **his companions** I.e., James, John, and Andrew are not called disciples here.
- v. 35 **prayed** Jesus spent extended time in prayer. "Imperfect tense picturing Jesus as praying through the early morning hours" (264). "Lightfoot notes that, in Mark, there are three specific references to Jesus at prayer (1:35; 6:46; 14:32). All are at night, and all at times of tension: but surely this early rising for prayer shows a general pattern" (R. Alan Cole, *The Gospel according to Mark*, TNTC, 117).
- v. 36 **look** "Jesus meets temptation again in this lonely place when Simon and those who are with him 'hunt him down' (*katadioko-not* 'look for him' as in NIV, or 'follow him' as in the RSV). The verb suggests they have engaged in an urgent manhunt for Jesus" (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary; Mark*, 73).
- v. 37 **everyone** Here Mark uses hyperbole to emphasize Jesus' rise in popularity.
- v. 38 **somewhere else** People "are looking for him in Capernaum because of the miracles, not because of his words, and the disciples would like to accommodate this surge in popularity: more evening healings with a band concert, perhaps they could even develop a Capernaum healing theme park. Jesus is not interest in the fleeting adulation of crowds and refuses to go back to Capernaum because he is to go to preach to all Israel" (Garland, 74).
- v. 39 **throughout Galilee** "The first of what seem to be three tours of Galilee (second tour, Lk 8:1; third tour, Mk 6:6 and Mt 11:11) (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Mk 1:39).
- v. 39 **driving out demons** "The mention of Jesus's driving out demons in 1:39, however, emphasizes the defeat of the demonic powers (cf. 3:20-30) and thus the arrival of the kingdom of God even better than Jesus's healing ministry, although as we shall see in 1:40-45, certain healings were especially associated with the coming of the kingdom of God" (Stein, 102).

Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

### Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

As a family think of 10 situations that require a person to be quiet (e.g. library) Ask why is it so difficult to be quiet? Read Mk 1:35-39. Jesus not only liked to be in situations where it was quiet, he went out of his way looking for them. When it was quiet, he could better focus on talking and listening to God. This New Year make it a priority to spend time talking with God without all the distractions around you.

### Pray it!

As a parent you can teach your child to pray by using actual scriptures as a guide. Pray this scripture with them this week..

Lord, if I had cherished sin in my heart, You would not have listened; but You have surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Ps 66:18-19

### Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

**Prayer** – I talk to God so I can know Him, ask Him for things and find out what He wants me to do.

**Memory verse** – "Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!" Ps 66:20

### Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- \*Where did Jesus go when he left the house?
- \*What did Jesus do when he got to the solitary place?
- \*Why was everyone looking for Jesus?
- \*What did Jesus say was his purpose for coming to the earth?

### Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

It's good to pray for others, and even better when others know you are praying for them. Choose three people and pray for them specifically. Send them a text (parents may need to help) to let them know that what you prayed for them.

*Kids K through fourth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.*



Family completes **Experience It** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family participates in **Live It** \_\_\_\_\_ and **Pray It** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child memorizes **Memory Verse** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).