

SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

SUBJECT: DOING MINISTRY

SCRIPTURE: MARK 7:31-37

SERMON NO. 17

Introduction

True ministry must begin in prayer, be motivated by divine compassion, be directly involved in people's LIVES, and challenges people with the truths of God's love.

The Four Parts of Basic Ministry.

I. LOOK TO HEAVEN IN PRAYER (34a). *And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.* This was a symbolic gesture that said to everyone around, including the man who was going to be healed..., that the source of the power that was going to be displayed came from God.

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, looked toward Heaven before He ministered to this man, speaks volumes concerning the importance of prayer in doing ministry.

Jesus Himself modeled the importance of prayer throughout His earthly ministry. He was always going off to some place or another to pray. Before every major decision He made, He would spend hours, sometimes all night, in prayer. And even though He was in constant touch with God (because He never stopped being part of the Triune God) He still found it necessary to engage in regular, daily seasons of prayer, as well.

Friends, if Jesus thought it necessary to pray for His ministry, how much more is it necessary for us to be praying?

Prayer puts us in contact with God. Through prayer, we're able to draw close to God and discern His will, and receive instructions from Him, and receive the gentle nudge from Him to go this way or that.

If we learn anything from Jesus' example it is this simple truth... we must pray if we're going to be used of God in ministry. Prayer lets us know our own need for God and equips us to be used by Him to minister to the lives of others.

Leonard Ravenhill, a man who studied revivals around the world and became the leading expert on revivals and prayer in the 20th century, wrote the words on the fronts of your WIG's this morning... "The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray; many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising, but few who are interceding. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A worldly Christian will stop praying and a praying Christian will stop worldliness. Tithes may build a church, but tears will give it life. That is the difference between the modern church and the early church. In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethren, let us pray."

How much are you praying? Do you pray daily? Do you pray consistently? Do you pray not only for yourself, but for others? Do you spend enough time in prayer to let God speak to you as well?

If we want to see the power of God in our lives, and through our church..., we must pray. That's the first principle of ministry.

II. BE MOTIVATED BY DIVINE COMPASSION (34b). *he sighed,* It indicated a deep caring at His very core, for this needy man. It indicated that Jesus was filled with compassion for this deaf man. Jesus cared. That's what the sigh meant.

Over and over in the New Testament, we read how Jesus was moved with compassion as He looked at the lost and hurting crowds of people. Jesus' heart was broken as He encountered hurting people. He ministered to people because He cared about their needs. And so should we, for that very reason. If the sigh could preach to us, it would say that we must care.

Caring reaches out to others. Caring gives us motivation to minister. Jesus cared and so must we. We must care enough to care. *We must be moved with compassion if we're going to touch other people with the love and power of God.*

III. BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED TOUCH (33). *And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;* Jesus physically touched this man. And friends, every true ministry of God's church family will have some kind of outward touch connected to it.

As long as we stay in our stained glass boxes, Satan is content to let us do whatever we like. After all, what real difference does it make as long as we stay within the walls of our church buildings?

But when a church starts being the church, that's when Satan gets upset. And we can only really be the church when we reach out to others with the touch of Jesus.

If we're going to minister to people, we have to get involved in people's lives. We have to physically rub shoulders with them. There must be contact. There must be touch. For ministry to be real ministry it must be hands-on ministry. *There should be something you're doing in your life that is physically touching people.*

IV. COMMUNICATION OF GOD'S LOVE (34c). and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. Jesus looked him right in the eye and said, "Ephphatha! Which means "be opened"! That was the first word this man heard. And it was a liberating word. It was a word of grace.

Just like Jesus spoke the word to this man, we must also speak the word to others, as well. Unless you are able to speak about your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and share the plan of salvation, all the compassion in the world won't help people with regards to eternity.

Conclusion

The goal of Christian ministry is to bring people face to face with the power of God and His love for them.

Sometimes we only speak to people. Sometimes we don't pray. Sometimes we're not really concerned. Sometimes we speak at a distance and there is no touch.

Sometimes we simply try to meet physical needs. We reach out and touch, but there is no life changing word. There is no challenge to the soul. And so, while they may leave with a full stomach, they go away empty because God has not filled them up with Himself

True ministry must... .begin in prayer, ...be motivated by divine compassion, ...be directly involved in people's lives, ...and challenge people with the truths of God's love.

Only that kind of ministry can be successful ministry. Only that kind of ministry can change the eternal destiny of a person. Only that kind of ministry works because it is patterned after the model of the Lord Jesus Christ.