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5 Practical Applications

Of True Ministry



5 Practical Applications for True Ministry

Insights from Mark 1:21-34

Mark 1:21-34

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and right away He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. ²² They were astonished at His teaching because, unlike the scribes, He was teaching them as one having authority.

²³ Just then a man with an unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He cried out, ²⁴ “What do You have to do with us, Jesus—Nazarene? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him and said, “Be quiet, ^v and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit convulsed him, shouted with a loud voice, and came out of him.

²⁷ Then they were all amazed, so they began to argue with one another, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! ^b He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” ²⁸ News about Him then spread throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee.

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went into Simon and Andrew’s house with James and John.

³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was lying in bed with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. ³¹ So He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all those who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town was assembled at the door, ³⁴ and He healed many who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him. ^[1]

The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version. (2009). (Mk 1:21–34). Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers. ↑

Introduction

Life is not a computer program. Computer programs are written to produce an appropriate response to a specific command or action. Even in a world full of video games and technology that opens up vast possibilities, the programming still provides an appropriate response to specific commands. In life you can do everything just right and never get the appropriate response. In life we deal with a physical reality but there is also a spiritual realm that affects our lives in ways that we often fail to see. When we look at the ministry of Jesus in [Mark 1:21-34](#), we witness Jesus in the work of ministry and the not quite rightness of the people's response. Yet as these verses are looked at further we can draw some practical applications to aid us in our own day to day lives as we embrace the daily ministry that the Lord Jesus has entrusted to us as well.

Textual Instruction

In these verses we see the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus, the confusion of Jesus' hearers regarding his message and his authority, the spiritual opposition to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and the healing ministry of the Lord Jesus as well. When we see these things we find clarity and confusion. We find power and we see humility. We see Jesus take steps to prevent the demons from proclaiming who he was and we see Jesus publicly cast demons out and heal.

Through the ministry of the Lord Jesus, what we see is the reality of the Gospel ministry. The Gospel ministry will divide people between those who will believe and those who will not. The ministry will divide people between those who will come to Jesus because of who he is and those who come to Jesus in the hopes of what they can get out of Him. These scenes in the ministry of Jesus provide us with the reality that we can teach right, act right, lead right, and do right only to find many rejecting. But we also see the reminder that we are to teach right, act right, lead right, and do right anyway.

Ministry is not a formula that results in automatic responses and programmatic effects. Ministry is messy and often times the value of what we do in ministry cannot be properly or affectively assessed. We have no idea how many of these early people who were in the crowds and who were experiencing healing went on to follow the Lord Jesus and to become part of the church, but we can rest assured that God knew them all.

These brief scenes offer a great deal to us regarding ministry going forward. I want to share 5 Ministry Applications from these verses then to aid each of us as we engage in day to day ministry with the Lord Jesus and His kingdom.

Application #1: All True Ministry Is Rooted In The Authority of The Lord Jesus

The first application for us to grasp is that All True Ministry is Rooted in the Authority of The Lord Jesus. When Jesus taught, the people marveled at the authority he taught with. When Jesus cast out demons they marveled at his authority over the demonic and spiritual realms. When he healed they marveled at his power over sickness and disease.

The ministry we engage in each day is not ministry that is rooted in our own authority or based on who we are. True ministry is rooted in who the Lord Jesus is. The Apostle Paul would write in [2 Corinthians 5](#) that we are Ambassadors for Christ. We carry his message, we go under his banner, and we seek his purposes. We are not building our own personal brand as though we can provide the hope that others need. We are not promoting ourselves or even the eternal benefit of our local church. We are carrying forth the name of the Lord Jesus, the hope of the Lord Jesus, the work of the Lord Jesus, and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. What we do is rooted in who he is and what he has done and we desire what he desires in our ministry activity.

If what we are doing then is not rooted in the authority of the Lord Jesus, then what we are doing is something far less than the ministry to which we have been called.

Application #2: All True Ministry Will Produce Mixed Responses

The second application that we must understand then from this text is that All True Ministry will Produce Mixed Responses. When we look at this passage, we see some who believe, some who reject, and some who want what they can get. The reality is that all true ministry, will produce mixed responses. The Scriptures tell us that those who do not yet know the Lord Jesus suffer from Spiritual blindness that only the Holy Spirit can remove, the Scriptures tell us that those who have come to know the Lord Jesus battle their fleshly nature daily, and the Scriptures tell us that ultimately it is God who is responsible for the spiritual maturing of believers. As a result, mixed results should be expected when we engage in ministry.

The reality is that we cannot guarantee the harvest of the ministry any more than we can guarantee the harvest of crops in the field or an investment return on the stock market. Sometimes the harvest comes from ministry we cannot fully understand. In my previous church the most “successful” preaching event I ever had was the Sunday I preached the worst sermon on giving to the local church and 3 families joined at the invitation. We cannot know exactly what moment of ministry God will use in bringing forth his harvest, but what we can guarantee is that there will be responses to the ministry that we are engaged in and that while we can rest assured that there will be a mixed bag of those responses.

Application #3: All True Ministry Will Face Spiritual Opposition

So while we must understand that all true ministry is rooted in the authority of the Lord Jesus and that all true ministry will produce mixed results, we must also grapple with our third application and that is that All True Ministry Will Face Spiritual Opposition. I do not know the tone that the demons used in dealing with Jesus, but from the response of the Lord Jesus it is clear that what they were doing was bringing opposition to his purpose and work.

Why? Because Jesus tells us that the ultimate work our spiritual enemy Satan is to Steal, Kill, and Destroy in [John 10](#). If that is his work, then he will oppose the ministry we do that brings life and freedom to those who will believe. This spiritual warfare then is the unseen battle that often takes place in the work that we do. This is why we must be engaged in spiritual warfare ourselves through prayer, through encouragement for each other, and through the faithful ministry of the Scriptures. This is why we must pray as individuals, as families, and as a church. This is why we must tie ourselves together as a family of faith and hold each other up in the work of ministry.

We will be opposed spiritually in the ministry that we do. The enemy will use circumstances, our flesh, and any other means within his grasp to fight against the daily ministry that you engage in and the corporate ministry that we as a church engage in.

Consider Sundays. All week I get up before 7:00 AM so that I can be at work by 8:00 AM at VOA. Sunday rolls around and it is the day we have set aside to gather together and worship as a family of faith and suddenly I am tired and don't want to get out of the bed. The stuff I did on Saturday seems to have worked me over and Sunday is a day I fight the dragons to get up and get moving. My family wants to get together and so I consider skipping out on the morning service or I am running behind so I miss out on my L.I.F.E. group at 9:45 AM.

Folks, that is opposition to the ministry. When you commit to ministry you come face to face with opposition of a spiritual kind and you had best be prepared for that opposition, you had best grab hold of the weapon of prayer and the weapon of God's word, and then press forward into the ministry to which you have been called.

Application #4: All True Ministry Will Produce Spiritual Fruit

Despite our opposition, we see from Jesus' ministry as well our fourth application which is that All True Ministry Will Produce Spiritual Fruit. The Scriptures are clear that all true ministry produces fruit. While we may not know what form that fruit will take, the evidence of fruit cannot be denied.

As you engage in ministry day-by-day, fruit is being produced in the hearts and lives of both yourself and in the hearts and lives of others. We will never know the breadth and depth of the fruitful harvest that will be produced this side of eternity, but fruit is there. Wednesday night we played Bible Jeopardy. For some of you who have taught children in various forms over the years, you were able to witness fruit that had been produced over those lessons in the responses of many that you have taught. There is nothing wrong with that at all because it further reflects the reality of the spiritual fruit your ministry offers as you engage in ministry to others.

Application #5: All True Ministry Is Empowered by The Work of The Lord Jesus

The fifth application then is reflected in Peter's mother-in-law. All True Ministry is Empowered by the Work of the Lord Jesus. Jesus brought healing to her life and from that healing she then served others. Consider the fact that her service is related to the work of the Lord Jesus in bringing her healing. For those who have trusted in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, healing from sin has been brought to bear and from that place ministry to others can flow.

Every ministry we undertake, is empowered by what the Lord Jesus has done. If he is the not the power behind it, then it is not ministry. As we trust in him more and more to use us and as we surrender more of ourselves to him, his power in us for his ministry is more fully displayed.

Conclusion

Let us not fall victim to discouragement. Let us not give up the work of ministry to which we have been called. Rather let us recognize the applicable reality of ministry and embrace it fully and completely. Let our ministry be rooted in the authority of the Lord Jesus, let us accept that our ministry will produce mixed results and that it will be spiritually opposed, and let us rejoice in the knowledge that our ministry will produce spiritual fruit because all true ministry is empowered by the work of the Lord Jesus.

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