

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

07 January 2024

The Spiritual Prayer Retreats of Jesus

Text: "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." *Mark 1:35*

Our Lord not only had the habit of regularly attending public worship, but he went apart repeatedly to talk with and receive help from the father.

It is interesting to note the circumstances that provided the occasion for our Lord's going apart for a private worship experience.

Jesus was strongly led by the Spirit to go away into a desert place at the beginning of his earthly ministry.

Sometimes we fail to recognize that the Holy Spirit of God strongly led our Lord into a desolate place as he sought the direction and methods for his redemptive ministry.

The forty days in the wilderness was a period of intense communion with God.

Our Lord talked to his Father, and we can be sure that the Father talked to his Son.

Even the angels ministered to him during this time.

Jesus retreated to a place of prayer when the responsibilities of life weighed heavily upon him.

Jesus found it necessary to go apart to be with God so that he might receive strength, guidance, and help as he faced both the opportunities and the duties that befell him.

If Jesus needed a prayer retreat in the face of his responsibilities, it follows that we also need to go apart for communion with God.

When great choices needed to be made, our Lord made them after serious reflection and communion with the Father.

Our lives would be more harmonious with the will of God and we would experience far greater joy in living, if we made our life decisions matters of earnest prayer rather than just making snap decisions along the way.

Our Lord experienced a retreat when he was weary and needed rest.

A pastor was encouraging his people to be zealous in their efforts for God.

He reminded them that the Devil never takes a vacation.

However, Jesus and the apostles found it necessary, at times, to go apart into a private place that they might rest and that the vital energies of life might be restored.

If they needed this, surely we also need it from time to time.

Our Lord went apart to a private place for prayer when he experienced misunderstanding.

At times even the apostles greatly misunderstood the motives and methods of their Messiah.

Following our lord's multiplication of the loaves and fishes, these apostles were encouraging the crowd to marshal a movement to crown Jesus as their King.

Our Lord broke up this demonstration and compelled the apostles to get into a boat so that he might send them away.

After they had gone, he needed an experience with God and went apart for prayer.

Being misunderstood is the lot of every person, and it can be very painful.

Jesus resorted to prayer when he was misunderstood, and that is what we should do.

Jesus retreated to a private place when he needed encouragement.

About six months before his crucifixion, Jesus took three of his disciples with him to the top of a mountain for a time of prayer.

On the mountaintop, Jesus experienced the presence of Moses and Elijah.

They discussed with him that which was to take place by means of his death on the cross and his resurrection from the tomb.

In addition to meeting with these Old Testament characters, our Lord heard the voice of the Father expressing his divine approval.

If Jesus needed to be encouraged, all of us need to be encouraged.

We can find that encouragement if we take time out to go apart and be alone with God.

Jesus went apart into a private place for prayer when he desperately needed strength for the impossible tasks he faced.

Our Lord went apart into a private place for prayer as he faced his crucifixion, and he prayed repeatedly.

At that time he also needed the encouragement and strength of the prayers of his three chosen apostles who were there but who fell asleep.

If we are too busy to draw into a private place to commune with God and let him speak to our minds and hearts, we are entirely too busy.

We all need to arrange our schedules to let God have the place that belongs to him in our lives.

We should spend a time of solitude with God each day, praying and reading his Word.

We all can find time and space for private worship if we set our hearts in it.

Not to do so is to impoverish ourselves, to miss the blessings of God the Father.

God leads, he does not push.

Only those who are willing to follow can be led.

Are you easily led by God?

Only then can you go the correct direction.

A direction that gives life to yourself and others.