

1:29-31

29 Now as soon as seen in verses 10, 18, 20, 21, and 28, this same word for “immediately” is used in the next verse (“at once”). **as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.** This gives us the reality that these little segments really occurred in close succession one with another. Taking these verses by themselves, it seems we have a group of five at this point.

This hardly seems like another anecdote of “fishing for men.” Rather, this seems like an episode of Jesus and what we might call “opportunity targets.” He wasn’t looking for teaching to do or fish to be caught, but He did rightly because he was living in that home and was to enjoy the Sabbath meal in that home with the four men in this passage.

30 But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. We can talk about how it’s important to take care of your parents in their twilight years and not ship them off to second-rate homes here and there, and making sure they’re well cared for, but I don’t think that would be popular so I won’t say anything about it.

31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, This is a detail unique to Mark in both this story and in the healing of the demon-possessed man (9:27).¹ **and immediately the fever left her.** One does not know if Jesus knew Peter’s mother in law before this episode.

- a. He knew Peter, we’re told, from John 1.
- b. He knew Peter’s business associates, James and John through familial connections.

Some of us were “fevered” with addictions, and some were fevered with worries, and some are fevered with the addiction to worry. Jesus saves people. It is His character to save. His Name means “Jehovah saves.” We know, then, that when we are healed by the touch of Jesus, we have something eternally significant going on in our lives.

I don’t think I need to remind you, do I, that many died this night in the world of fever? Do I need to remind you that not everybody was seen by Jesus? Should we remind ourselves that Jesus was dealing with this woman because Jesus was dealing with her son in law, Peter? Have you considered that Jesus affects people through you or because of you because of their proximity to you? Have you considered that you could be the avenue of blessing or salvation in the lives of others by your mere presence in a place?

And she served them.² Here is a scenario where a lady is cured of a malady and it moves her to serve (“wait tables”). Question: Do you find it easier to serve when you have been relieved of something in your life? When you consider the heartache you used to have financially, do you serve others through your generosity? When you consider the health problems you used to endure, do you serve others through your strong arms? The reality, though, is that I don’t think this was out of the ordinary for a lady to be hospitable to guests in her home whenever possible. I think the point of Mark is to demonstrate that this woman was cured to pre-fever health. At any rate, this isn’t a bad thing for us to learn: we should never waste our good health being selfish—even if it is more culturally than “Christian” to be hospitable.

1:32-34

At evening, when the sun had set, probably, the meal Peter’s mother in law had prepared for them was being consumed as it was usually eaten following the setting of the sun. Did He get to sit and enjoy a meal? **they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.** Now that the Sabbath was over, hard work could be done, and others were free to work at bringing their sick to Jesus.³ **33And the whole city was gathered together at the door.** Imagine a township, the size of the one we mentioned in 1:21 showing up

¹All three Synoptics say Jesus did this with the Jairus’ daughter (to round out Mark’s three accounts of “lifting by the hand”). Matthew and Luke say this of no one else.

²More on this in the author’s commentary on Matthew 8:14-15.

³A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Mk 1:32.

at Peter and Andrew's home. I am not comfortable with very many people knowing where I live, but here we go... **34 Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.** Once again, the reader is left with the question of whether it was the "who" or the "when" of this evangelism with which Jesus was concerned. We are not sure, within this passage, whether it was because it was a demon or because it was a demon early in the life of Jesus' ministry.

1:35-37

35 Now in the morning, A reader is hopefully getting the idea that Mark wants you to have a grasp of this Sabbath day/night as it pertains to the business of Jesus. Are the readers supposed to assume this means that all Christians are supposed to be endlessly serving and healing (so to speak) and traveling to fish (so to speak) and sleeping very, very little? Stay busy...for awhile (with all the "immediately" references)? It seems that our lives are filled with seasons of opportunity. **having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.** Is this a proof-text to get up early to pray? Perhaps, but Jesus' prayer was of obvious necessity, while the timing may have been because He was alone. Furthermore, He saw that communion with the Father was of greater concern than service to others. We are let in on this concern of Jesus when Simon relays the desire of the people to see Him (1:36-37). If you want to get right down to it: Jesus was concerned about service...to a point. He realized, though, as God's Son, that spending time with the Father was worth avoiding people.

6:46 And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

14:32 Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

If Mark's themes of "urgency" and "prayer" mean anything, they mean that [Jesus was at least urgent about prayer.](#)

*Review of E.M. Bounds' "Necessity of Prayer"*⁴

The life of E.M. Bounds extends from the 1830's until August of 1914. After desiring to study law, he felt the call to be ordained as a Methodist preacher. Furthermore, he served as a chaplain in the confederate army wherein he was spent some time as a Prisoner of War.

He cared for the souls of men through prayer during his time as a pastor, and editor, and an evangelist. He passed away in Washington Georgia.

Purpose/Thesis of This Book

The main idea herein is that prayer is essential for every part of any one desiring to be a person who walks with God. There are no shortcuts in the believer's life. Bounds goes even further to state that if there is no inclination to pray, there is no indwelling Holy Spirit. Hence, this person is lost without Christ.

Summary of the Book

Since these were mere notes that were edited by another individual, it would be somewhat inappropriate to assess Mr. Bounds' ability to layout a book. However, the book begins with three chapters discussing the role of faith and trust (which I think are synonymous) in prayer (Chapters 1-3). These are indispensable elements. Then, there is a progression to the role of "desire" (Chapter 4)—then, of "fervency" in prayer (Chapter 5). Then, profoundly, one finds the bar raised even higher to find two chapters on "importunity" (Chapters 6 & 7), and the importance of endurance in prayer. Later on, there is a further progression of "vigilance" of prayer in one's perspective (Chapter 11).

⁴Originally Written in Pursuance of M.R.E. from LBTS (2010).

Then, there are a series of elements that are both instigative and responsive of a prayer life such as “character and conduct” (Chapter 8), “obedience” (Chapters 9 & 10), rich knowledge of the Word of God (Chapters 12 & 13), and church attendance (Chapter 14).

One does not see an overemphasis on things the writers of today may have written concerning career enhancement, financial prosperity or self esteem. One might assume that these were concerns in Dr. Bounds’ day, but that these would “take care of themselves” in the process of putting things in their proper order.

Assessment of the Book

Exegetical and Hermeneutical Skills

These two terms allude to the questions, “What is there?” and “What does it mean?”

Obviously, the man has great ministerial credentials. Furthermore, it can be said that he held a prayerful discipline with which few can share company. What is certain is that He believes in the authority of Scripture as there is, in every one of the fourteen chapters, repletion of Holy Writ.

There is, by and large, an apparent adherence to the Word of God. Care must be given in going from Scripture to Scripture lest we fall into hasty interpretation (exegesis).

There is an example, however, of just the opposite in the chapter three: Dr. Bounds deals with “Prayer and Trust”. He says, “Trust is not a belief that God can bless, that He will bless, but that He does bless, here and now.” One may take great exception to this since he just dealt with Mary and Martha in the aftermath of Lazarus who felt as though “God’s blessing” would be revealed in a brother who would not have died. As Bounds shows, God’s blessing “here and now” was revealed in letting Lazarus die so a greater miracle could be performed (John 11).

Concepts and Principles reflected in the article

Of course, one does not need to rehash fourteen chapters to get the sense that prayer permeates each part of the believer’s life. One even gets the idea that he mentions those most crucial themes in their order of importance as they thrive throughout the writing of this book. There are some prevailing themes, however, that should be pointed out:

1. Prayer is both a result and a source of most spiritual traits and disciplines.

Take, for instance, the idea of “Prayer and Faith” covered in chapters 1 and 2: In chapter one, he says, “when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live”. Dr. Bounds is saying that the exercise of prayer is one that strengthens the inner man. He goes on to say “faith is kept alive by prayer”.

However, he also says that effective prayer is impossible without faith. In chapter two, he says, “Doubt and fear...usurp the place of faith, and although we pray, it is a restless, disquieted prayer that we offer, uneasy and often complaining”. He then goes on to use Philippians 4:6 quite effectively.

What is apparent from his writing is both the mutual benefit which prayer and faith share, and the resultant progression of faith within prayer. Faith also sparks desire to pray which strengthens the new man to new heights of faith.

2. A prayerful life must have a militant posture.

This militant posture bears fruit in the traits of “fervency” (Chapter three) and “desire” (Chapter four). There is an emphasis placed on declaring a war of sorts against frivolous thinking (“the menace of prayer—wandering thought”- Chapter four), an emphasis placed on zealous declaration of one’s needs as before a king (“God requires to be represented by a fiery church”), and an emphasis placed on the need for a living man to keep praying to stay alive spiritually (“it stays and pleads and persists, and refuses to let go until the blessing has been vouchsafed”).

Dr. Bounds has it right: we are to emulate the “Author and Finisher of our Faith” (Hebrews 12:2) in “striving against sin” (Hebrews 12:4). One cannot read these Scriptures without remembering the picture of a battling, praying Christ in the wilderness, in the garden, on the cross, and in the grave.

3. Prayer cannot be paid forward or paid back.

Dr. Bounds is a champion of the idea that you cannot pray for today's needs tomorrow. The fact that it is a militant issue (point 2) gives the element of appropriateness and urgency. One cannot pray for tomorrow's needs today. There is the overwhelming Sovereign hand of God which knows all and sees all, but to pray effectively, one needs as many details as possible to “ask and receive”.

He drives this point home throughout, but says in chapter one, “As every day demands its bread, so every day demands its prayer. No amount of praying, done today, will suffice for tomorrow's praying”. We have not, “because we ask not” (James 4:2). We have no “reception” because we have done no “asking”- no doors open, because we have not “knocked” (Matthew 7:7). So, it is certainly difficult to pray for as we ought when the situation has not developed fully enough for us to pray intelligently.

Conclusion

You don't get any more utilitarian than taking part in the action of prayer. Bounds has shown its relevance to every part of the Christian endeavor—from faith to church attendance.

Understanding that this book was a labor of love and work of editing done by his good friend Homer Hodge, one wouldn't leave the seeming overabundance of devotional material upon Bounds. There does seem to be much more of a “deeper life” emphasis, and less of a “nuts and bolts” feel. In other words, though this book could be split up even further than it is already in the chapter divisions, the real answer, once again, is editing.

I would not recommend this book to anyone who is already convinced that the Scriptures are the authority on prayer simply because I believe it is much more readily defined in the pages of the Gospels, in about as many words.