

Stressed by My Pace**Core Competency**
*Single-Mindedness*Mark 1:21-39
Mark 6:30-46**Core Competencies****Core Beliefs**

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope

Grace Community,

Easter...so often we forget that we are Easter people each and every day of the year. Sometimes it's easy to forget the celebration that Jesus rose from the dead and has claimed victory over death. We often lose the reality of the power of the resurrection.

We often lose that 'reality' because we become so consumed living in this reality and living as if this was the only life we will ever have or know. Cell phones, pagers, PDA's, lap top computers, phones, instant messaging, emails and text messages are all begging for our attention, and add to the myth we've 'got to be productive.' It's a struggle for me — just ask Bonnie, my wife. During dinner I can hardly sit there while the phone is ringing...I just HAVE TO answer it. Caller ID has helped me set some boundaries so I guess there is hope for me. We are a society that talks about being efficient and productive and setting goals to accomplish great things, yet seldom are we intentional about building into our lives what we read in Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God."

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is from Philippians 4:6 "Be anxious for nothing..." Too often I think that is easier said than done. Our new series, **Stressed to Kill**, will provide some practical steps on how we can live in a way that teaches us how we can arrange our lives so we can "be still and know" the presence of the almighty God, who raised Jesus from the dead and gave us victory over death. In experiencing the presence of God, we will be able to understand from firsthand experience to, "Be anxious for nothing..." and live a life which Paul later says will allow us to experience the peace of God which transcends all understanding.

None of us want to live a life so stress-filled that it literally kills us. This week, commit to yourself, others and God that as we journey from Easter, we will be walking into a deeper reality of what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ—by building opportunities to 'be still' and experience the presence of God in our life.

On the Journey with You.

*Junio***Engaging Our Minds & Hearts****Day 1**

This week's core scripture passages are **Mark 1:21-39** and **Mark 6:30-46**.

We will begin our study time this week reading these passages within their immediate context. Your time today will be spent in reading **Mark 1:1-2:12** and **Mark 6:1-56** several times. Utilize different versions if you like and become familiar with the events taking place in these passages. If you have internet capabilities, you can go to www.biblegateway.com, to access a variety of versions.

Because God's desire is that we would know Him as we spend time in His Word, begin your time in prayer asking that He will reveal to your mind and heart the truth that He has breathed into these accounts. What you are reading is far more than events and people and places. It contains a very real pattern and example to each of us. Pray that you would have ears to hear, eyes to see and a heart that is teachable.

Day 2

Today's Passages: Mark 1:1-2:12 and Mark 6:1-56

Pray first!

Today read through the same passages as yesterday. Pay special attention to and list the events that happen prior to and immediately following our core passages.

Day 3

Today's Passages: Mark 1:21-39 and Mark 6:30-46

Pray first!

1. Today read through the core passages. Write a summary of the places, people, and events that take place.
2. How would you describe the "pace" of Jesus' life as recorded in these chapters?
3. Do you see any indication of stress or anxiety in Jesus?
4. What activity does Jesus make time for that would explain the lack of stress or anxiety?

Day 4

Pray first!

Today, we will look at a few other passages in scripture that help us to understand the importance of prayer to Jesus and to us. Read through each passage and note what truths you can apply to your life.

Luke 5:15-26:

Luke 6:6-13:

Luke 18:1-8:

Jude 20-21:

Finish your time today by reading through **Psalm 23** and the “Antithesis” below. Honestly evaluate which is a more accurate description of your heart and life.

Psalm 23 — Antithesis

The clock is my dictator, I shall not rest.
It makes me lie down only when exhausted.
It leads me into deep depression.
It hounds my soul.

It leads me in circles of frenzy, for activities sake.
Even though I run frantically from task to task, I will never get it all done,
For my ideal is with me.
Deadlines and my need for approval, they drive me.
They demand performance from me, beyond the limits of my schedule.
They anoint my head with migraines,
My in-basket overflows.
Surely fatigue and time pressures shall follow me
All the days of my life.
And I will dwell in the bonds of frustration
Forever.

Source unknown

Day 5

Pray first!

One of the core competencies that reflects our growth in Christ-likeness is the practice of **Single-Mindedness**. The key verse for this practice is **Matthew 6:33**, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.”

The passages of scripture that we have looked at this week, clearly demonstrate for us from the example of Jesus’ life, that despite the incredible pace of His life, He displayed no stress. We cannot ignore His commitment and practice of regular prayer as a major factor.

Prayerfully read over the following Assessment Statements for the core practice of Single-Mindedness:

- I desire Jesus Christ to be first in my life
- I see every aspect of my life and work as service to God
- I spend time each day reading God’s word and praying
- I value a simple life-style over one cluttered with activities and material possessions.

Now honestly ask God to help you evaluate your daily life. Does it reflect this practice? Is there stress in your life because you have not made time for God to speak to you and direct the content and the pace of your life? Are you ready to be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit? What steps would God desire and empower you to take in order to become more single-minded and less stressed? Write a prayer of desire and commitment to Him today in regards to these steps.

Engage the Context

Mark 1:21-39

In order to understand this scene Mark paints, we must first understand who Jesus was as a Jewish Rabbi. First Century Palestine was replete with Rabbis. The rabbi was the celebrity of the day. Children would long to be a rabbi when they grew up. The way you became a rabbi was to be an apprentice or a disciple of a rabbi. A young Jewish boy would leave family and friends around the age of ten in order to go with their rabbi and learn his teachings and way of life. The teachings and interpretation of the Law that the rabbi had was known as his yoke. So the disciple would take upon himself the yoke of his rabbi.

A disciple could gain authority by studying under and gaining the approval of his rabbi. For example, we know that Paul was a rabbi. He was a disciple of Rabbi Gamaliel, who was a disciple of the famous Rabbi Hillel. Therefore, Paul had the authority of Gamaliel who had the authority of Hillel. This line of authority would supposedly go all the way back to Moses, who originally received the Law from God.

²¹They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people were amazed at His teaching, because He taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

- The people were amazed at Jesus because He did not teach under the authority of a rabbi, but rather He had His own authority as directly from God.
- **Capernaum** is a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee about two and one-half miles from the mouth of the Jordan River. Capernaum was the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Matt. 4:13). Here He healed the centurion's son (Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10; cf. John 4:46-54) and engaged in other healing, teaching, and exorcising (Matt. 17:24; Mark 2:1; Luke 4:23, 31; John 2:12; 6:17, 24). In particular, Jesus was active in the synagogue (Mark 1:21; John 6:59) and in 'the house' (Peter's?; Matt. 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34; 9:33). In spite of all His work there, however, Jesus apparently felt rejected by the people of Capernaum and cursed the town (Matt. 11:23-24; Luke 10:15).¹

²³**Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil 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!”**

Notice, it is only 23 verses into Mark's account of Jesus' life when we find Jesus engaged in strife with evil. This will continue to be a central theme throughout Mark's gospel.

The term, “Holy One of God” is most likely intended to be a messianic title. The nation of Israel had been waiting for the last 700 years for God's Messiah to come and deliver them.

²⁵**“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. ²⁷The 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.” ²⁸News about Him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. ²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ³¹So He went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and 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.**

This idea of keeping quiet about the messianic identity of Jesus is a common theme in the first eight chapters of Mark. Jesus is consistently telling people to keep quiet about His identity.

Notice the amazing pace of Jesus' ministry in verses 25-34. Mark intentionally builds the pace to a frenetic pace before contrasting with the tranquility of the following verses.

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. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for Him, ³⁷and when they found Him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” ³⁸Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else — to the nearby villages — so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” ³⁹So He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.**

¹Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Feedback

What is helpful?
What could be better?
What is missing?
Is it helping you be more
prepared for Sunday?

Send your feedback to
engage@gccaz.org

Mark 6:30-46

The immediate background to these verses is **Mark 6:7-13**. Here Jesus sends out the twelve to do ministry. We find them here having returned from their missions. Another key piece to set the scene is that John the Baptist, Jesus' close friend has just been beheaded. We know from the parallel passage in Matthew that Jesus found out about this and it weighed heavily on Him (Matthew 14:12).

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught. ³¹Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." ³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

The disciples returned triumphant, but exhausted as they hadn't even had a chance to eat. In addition, Jesus was emotionally exhausted having heard of John the Baptist's death and now having to shepherd the twelve again. Yet they retire to a solitary place amidst the celebration.

³³But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. ³⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So He began teaching them many things.