

**A LIFE OF PRAYER**  
**1 Corinthians 9:16-23 & Mark 1:29-39**

This past week, our Falls Youth Services group that meets here on Wednesday morning, were excited to work on a project they have been asking to do. Making jewelry by stringing beads allowed them to use their creativity in making their own designs which is something they are familiar with. All our youth are very creativity. At the same time, making jewelry was also something that does not come easy for many of the youth. Using fine motor skills proved to be at times very difficult for some. Yet if threading a bead or a shell was somewhat challenging, they did not quit, but instead would ask for help.

In this morning's gospel reading, we find Jesus healing many who were sick and freeing those who were possessed by demons as they were brought to him. In other words, his ministry up to this point was in a familiar setting or environment.. something he was used to. But he knew what was coming... something unfamiliar or you might say somewhat more challenging. After a night of sleep, Jesus gets up early in the morning and goes to a place to be alone and there he prayed. What happens after he

prays? After prayer, he announces that they will go to other towns, the unfamiliar, in order to proclaim the message.

The story is told of a little boy and his father. They were walking along a road when they came across a large stone. The boy looked at the stone and thought about it a little. Then he asked his father, “Do you think if I use all my strength, I can move that rock?”

The father thought for a moment and said, “I think that if you use all your strength, you can do it.”

That was all the little boy needed. He ran over to the rock and began to push on it. He pushed and he pushed, so hard did he try that little beads of sweat appeared on his forehead. But the rock didn't move .. not one inch, not even half an inch.

After a while the little boy sat down on the ground. His face had fallen. His whole body seemed to be just a lump there on the earth. “You were wrong,” he told his dad. “I can't do it.”

His father walked over to him, knelt beside him, and put his arm around the boy's shoulder. "You can do it," he said. "You just didn't use all your strength. You didn't ask me to help."

Sometimes the world in which we live tells us that it is all up to us. It tells us that we have to be strong and independent. It tells us we can't and shouldn't count on anyone or anything else. And yet, what faith tells us and what Jews and Christians have known forever is that we have a ready resource in God, strength for those who ask.

God is our strength. God gives us what we need when life seems challenging. I wonder if there are obstacles in our path today that prevent us from imagining what might be possible tomorrow? We need to take time alone. In solitude. In Prayer. These practices, were Jesus' own example. If you recall, Jesus did not retreat from the crowds in order to get away from others. Jesus sought the oneness and one-on-oneness with the desert, mountains and water in order to find one another-ness with the Father.

There is a difference in being in solitude and being solitary. The father of our Methodist tradition, John Wesley, stated it this way: “There is no such thing as a solitary Christian.” In other words, solitude is not solitariness. When Jesus sought solitude he took the weight of the world with him and laid its cares and concerns at the feet of the Father. It was during this alone time that Jesus crafted his greatest prayers ... the “Lord’s Prayer and the “Gethsemane Prayer.” It was after this time of prayer that Jesus became re-energized and refocused in order to continue his journey of proclaiming the message of God’s healing power to the world.

There is power in prayer in the life of a believer. There was a news clip which appeared in the papers after a blackout in one city. I don’t know if it was a misprint, a mistake or if it was true: “During the power failure many people complained of having gotten stuck for hours on escalators.” We can’t go through our every day life with Jesus or God switched off. We won’t make it. There won’t be any power for living. We’ll be stuck on the escalator of life and won’t have the energy to walk up or down. We need to spend time in prayer. Prayer is our connection to the source of power in life, God.

Jesus knew that. And if Jesus, the Son of God, needed to refuel, to reconnect, to plug in and recharge, what makes us think that we can get along without it? We have a source of power and energy just waiting to be tapped. All we have to do is plug in. Amen.

This morning we will all plug into our power source as we share in this table, this sacred moment of Holy Communion. Come and be reenergized as we join together in prayer.