



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #055
Jesus' Great Galilean Ministry

Jesus' First Tour of Galilee
The First Tour is Birthed in Prayer
MK 1.35-39 (Parallel Texts: MT 4.23-35; LK 4.42-44)

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35 Very early in the morning, while it was still pitch dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went out to a desolate, solitary place, where he continued to pray ^Lat daybreak. ^MSimon and his companions scoured the countryside looking for him. 37 When they finally found him, they exclaimed, "Everyone is looking for you!" ^LThe people would have tried to prevent him from leaving them, but he said:

38 ^M*"Let us go elsewhere—to the nearby villages ^Land other towns—for I must ^Mpreach ^Lthe good news of the kingdom of God there also. This is why I was sent, ^Mwhy I have come."*

39 So, he traveled throughout ^{MT}all ^MGalilee, constantly preaching ^{MT}and teaching in the synagogues, ^Mdriving out demons, ^{MT}proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

The news about him spread out all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases—those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed—and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across the Jordan followed him.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus.*

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	A Secluded Place Outside Capernaum
Time	August, when Jesus was 31 (Month 8)
Stage of Jesus' Life	Stage IV: His Great Galilean Ministry
Chapter II	The First Tour of Galilee
Section #055	The First Tour of Galilee Was Birthed in Prayer

Today's reading summarizes Jesus' first tour of Galilee. We only have five specific texts in the Synoptics describing events on this tour, but they are all highly significant. It took Jesus about six months to complete one tour of the region.

We can project this time frame because we know Jesus' practice was to speak in the local synagogue on the Sabbath. As there were about 25 towns and villages in Galilee proper, it would have taken Jesus roughly 25 Sabbaths to visit every synagogue in the region. (He also made period visits back to Capernaum during his tours, as we shall see.) Jesus probably remained in the vicinity of each town or village for ministry during the week in which he spoke in the Synagogue, speaking daily to the growing crowds that gathered to him.

Jesus inaugurated his first tour after spending the early morning hours in private prayer on Sunday. This prayer time completed the 24 hour cycle that began the day before with Sabbath worship at 8:00 AM.

Jesus had ministered long into the night. Then he rose up very early in the morning--several hours before daybreak, well before his disciples--and went out to find a private place to pray. This was not an isolated event for him. Luke makes it clear (LK 5.16) that Jesus sustained a regular discipline of private prayer. Several hours a day alone in prayer was his lifestyle. We can see the priority he gave to his prayer ministry by the way he sacrificed sleep to do it. We can see the impact of his prayer time by the way it fueled his desire to launch out on his first tour.

As Jesus communed with his Father, and the Spirit in prayer, his vision for reaching every person in the world with the message of the good news about him was reaffirmed. It would have been much easier to settle into an exploding ministry in Capernaum than it was to walk to every village, town, and city of Galilee. Travel on foot was dangerous, difficult, and logistically demanding in every way, not to mention exhausting!

Jesus had a burning passion to present his gospel to every person in Galilee, and minister healing and deliverance to all who needed it as well. He could not wait for needy people to come to him--it was his mission to "go" in to the world to make disciples.

When the excited people of Capernaum tried to convince Jesus to stay there, he would have none of it. He left heaven and came to this earth to proclaim the gospel to all people... **"For that is why I have come."** His time in prayer prepared him to overcome the temptation to limit his ministry to just one place. Jesus came to **"make disciples of all the nations."** His commitment never veered from his all-encompassing vision to be the Savior of the entire world.

Over the following six months Jesus systematically visited every village, town and city of Galilee. His three-fold ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing all physical and spiritual maladies occupied his entire day, every day. No wonder his popularity grew like wildfire during these opening months of ministry in Galilee.

The combination of powerful public preaching to the masses by the greatest communicator in history, and miraculous ministry to every disease, demon-possession, and malady that came to him caused great crowds of people to begin to follow him over the months of this tour. They came from as far away as Syria to the North and West, the Decapolis ("10 Cities") to the Southeast, Perea on the East side of the Jordan River, and Jerusalem and the rest of Judea to the South. People from throughout Palestine converged on Galilee searching for Jesus like an army of ants.

Each of the only four events that the Synoptic writers gave us from the first tour of Galilee are crucial for understanding what was happening every day. The 24 hour period that led into the tour was representative of a typical Sabbath. Weekdays were even busier. Jesus shared the gospel every day with thousands of people in personal evangelism over the course of the tour, and many tens of

thousands in his preaching to the crowds. The world had never seen ministry like this before. There is just no one like Jesus!

APPLICATION:

Jesus delivered his vision and zeal for "**making disciples of all the nations**" into the hands of all believers. A growing band of full-time disciples followed Jesus on this tour and observed everything he said and did. At night they would discuss it with him, share a common meal, and pray together. Jesus encouraged them all to spend their early mornings in private prayer, as he did.

Like Jesus, we too should labor in private prayer every day. The kind of prayer that Jesus practiced, and taught us to engage in will inevitably strengthen our vision and commitment to "**go**" to all the people that he has placed in our life to share the gospel with. Jesus is both our example, and teacher of the connection between our prayer life and our involvement in evangelism/missions. We will see how Jesus linked prayer and ministry as we follow his example and teachings in future DJN.

How is your private prayer life doing these days?

What does the example of Jesus say to you about prayer? About your passion to share the gospel with all people?

What specific changes do you need to make to follow Jesus' example more fully? When will you get started?