

The Desolate Place and the Divine Imperative

Sermon Series: Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 4:42-44



Big Idea

It is in the Desolate Place with God that the Divine Imperative for my life is made evident. Getting alone with Him clears my vision and confirms my sense of His calling.

(1) What Is the Desolate Place?

Christ is retreating into a desolate, wilderness-like place. In the Biblical record, the wilderness is a place of trial (Deut 8:2); a place of temptation (Luke 4:1-2); a place of want (Luke 9:12); a place of demons (Luke 8:29); a place of danger (2 Cor 11:26). But, intriguingly, it is also a place of revival and intimacy with God (Hos 2:14-15); a place of rest and refreshment (Mark 6:31); a place of fullness and provision (Luke 9:17); a place of vision and clarity (as we'll soon see in our text). It is a place to be alone with God.

As we follow Jesus we come to see that it is time spent in this Desolate Place that keeps clear before Him the Divine Imperative—the mission that God has sent Him on, the Father's to-do list for His life.

(2) Where Is the Desolate Place?

Certainly there is something to getting out of your normal environment that is conducive to meeting with the Lord. But we must resist the notion that such a place is somewhere we can only visit every now and again. No! We need it every day! Therefore, it is important to see that the Desolate Place truly can be wherever you are. The Desolate Place is wherever the child of God is willing to lay himself down desperate to meet with His Father.

(3) Why Do We Avoid the Desolate Place?

(1) I'm Too Busy

(2) I Get Too Lonely

(3) I Don't Know What to Do

We owe our very salvation to the Desolate Place. It is Christ's commitment to the Desolate Place that keeps the Divine Imperative ever before Him. Throughout this gospel, we will watch as He keeps retreating and refreshing. He keeps clear on the reason He has been sent by God into this world. And we watch this holy habit of His carry on until we come to one final example of it in Gethsemane. It is in Gethsemane that we are told: "He withdrew from [His disciples] about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed . . ." (Luke 22:41). And He lays it all out before His Father. And when He rises from His knees, the mission is again clear: "[Judas] . . . do what you came to do" (Matt 26:50).

Reflection Questions



- When was the last time you were *really* alone with God?
- How does time in the Desolate Place help connect you to the Divine Imperative for your life? Give some personal examples.
- Has obedience to God ever caused you to let others down? How did you feel? How did you stay strong?
- Where is your Desolate Place with God? How can you cultivate rhythms of retreat into God's presence?
- Why do you often avoid the Desolate Place with God? Be honest.