

“Retreat To Power”
Luke 5:12-16

When I was a boy growing up in the little town of Catawba, North Carolina, our pastor at Catawba Baptist Church for ten (10) years was Rev. A.R. Waters. The parsonage was across number ten (10) highway from our house. The Waters children were some of my best friends. We frequently visited each other and spent a great deal of time together. I have many precious memories of the relationships developed with Mr. Waters and his family. I remember watching as Mr. Waters would pick up his Bible in one hand and a small stool in the other hand and quietly make his way into the woods behind the parsonage. Several hours later he would return to the house, not looking tired or troubled but appearing refreshed and strengthened. As I got a little older, it became obvious to me that Mr. Waters was out there in the woods alone praying and studying God’s Word. Mr. Waters was “retreating to power.”

Mr. Waters had a great example for his experiences of retreating to power. The Gospel records make it clear that Jesus Christ, during the course of His earthly ministry, had a number of experiences when He retreated to power. Many times Jesus would slip away from the crowds and pray. One such experience is described in Luke 5:16 which says: “Jesus withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.”

A study of the retreats in the life of Jesus reveals several truths.

1. When did Jesus retreat? He often retreated when He had major decisions to make. Our Lord’s temptation experience as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11 is one example of this truth. After His baptism experience, Jesus’ Messiahship had been confirmed by God, the Father, who said: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Now the question facing Jesus was what kind of Messiah does God want me to be? The people of that day had several different concepts of the Messiah which are reflected in the temptations which Jesus faced out there in the wilderness. As He retreated, Jesus rejected them all and decided that God wanted Him to be a spiritual Messiah. In making this decision, Jesus got away from the crowds and got alone with God.
2. What did the retreats mean to Jesus? A list of benefits could no doubt be made but at least two (2) truths are clear.
 1. Jesus received the knowledge to know God’s will. That was certainly a truth revealed in the temptation experience already discussed. Jesus worked through those temptations by the devil and obtained the knowledge to know God’s will. He left that wilderness knowing that God wanted Him to be a spiritual Messiah.
 2. During those retreats, Jesus was blessed with the courage and the power to do God’s will. In His soul-searching Garden of Gethsemane experience as recorded in Matthew 26:36-46 Jesus found the courage

to do the will of God and go on to face the agonizing death on the cross. After His earnest praying there in the garden, Jesus came to His sleeping disciples and said: “Rise, let us be going . . .” and then made His way to the cross utilizing the courage which God gave Him.

In all of this, there is a tremendous challenge for all the people of God in our day. We need to retreat to power. Like Jesus, our great example, we need:

The knowledge to know God’s will;

The courage to do God’s will;

The divine power to do God’s work even as Jesus did.

In today’s world, there is so much spiritual work to be done. In our preparation to do that great work, let the people of God “retreat to power.” Amen – May It Be So

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.