

Luke 5:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Analysis

Luke records Jesus' pattern: 'And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.' The imperfect tense indicates continuous, repeated action—Jesus habitually withdrew for prayer. The 'wilderness' (Greek 'erēmos,' ἔρημος) provided solitude away from crowds. Prayer sustained Jesus' ministry—He sought the Father's presence regularly, not just during crises. This challenges activist ministry that neglects contemplation. Jesus' power in public ministry flowed from private communion with God. Withdrawing to pray wasn't escaping responsibility but recharging for greater effectiveness.

Historical Context

This verse follows accounts of Jesus' growing fame and increasing crowds (v. 15). The more His ministry expanded, the more He withdrew to pray—success increased His need for communion with the Father, not decreased it. Luke emphasizes Jesus' prayer life more than other gospels, recording Jesus praying at key moments: baptism (3:21), choosing apostles (6:12), before Peter's confession (9:18), at transfiguration (9:28-29), in Gethsemane (22:41-44), on the cross (23:34, 46). Jesus models priorities—prayer sustains ministry, relationship with God enables service for God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' pattern of withdrawing to pray challenge modern ministry activism that neglects contemplation and solitude?
2. What does Jesus' increased prayer during increased ministry demands teach about the relationship between power and communion with God?

Interlinear Text

αὐτὸς	δὲ	ἥν	ὑποχωρῶν	ἐν	ταῖς	ἐρήμοις	καὶ
himself	And	he withdrew		G5298	into	G3588	the wilderness
G846	G1161	G2258			G1722		G2048
							G2532

προσευχόμενος

prayed

G4336

Additional Cross-References

Luke 6:12 (Prayer): And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

Matthew 14:23 (Prayer): And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Mark 6:46 (Prayer): And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

John 6:15 (Parallel theme): When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

