

July 24th, 2022 (full sermon notes)

“Jesus Calls the Twelve: Part One”

Luke 6:12-16

Last week we ended our study in **Luke 6:11**, where the Pharisees were angered by Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath and rebuking them for not knowing that it was okay to do so; Jesus even cited an event from the Old Testament when David and his men broke Sabbath laws by eating the consecrated bread. Jesus made it clear that breaking Sabbath rules was permitted for acts of mercy and necessity for the Sabbath was made for man to pause and worship God; man wasn't made for the Sabbath in order to keep rules and perform rituals.

Today we pick up with the Lord calling twelve specific men out of all those who were following Him, to become apostles.

Read Luke 6:12-13... After the interactions with the Pharisees in chapter 6, Jesus goes off to have some quiet time with the Father, as was His normal practice.

In the morning He called His disciples to Himself.

It was never Jesus' intent to proclaim the kingdom of God by Himself. He only ministered for three years and never traveled outside of Palestine. Jesus, from the very beginning, began training the men who would continue His work. The men He chose were the committed few among the unbelieving many.

Multitudes were able to hear Jesus speak and to see Him heal and perform wondrous signs. Jesus had an audience wherever He went, to the point where He had a hard time being alone with the Twelve, let alone with the Father for prayer.

The crowds flocked to experience the authority of His voice, the unique message He brought, the miracles He performed, and His expressed love for the common people who were sick, diseased, demon possessed, sinful.

Out of all the crowds who followed Him, Jesus chose to Himself twelve common men as His apostles; men who would take God's message of salvation to a lost world. The apostles were ordinary men, and as far as we know only one of them was materially prosperous (Matthew, the tax collector). None of the Twelve was highly educated or had prominent social, political, or religious status.

Details about some of these men remain unknown because neither Scripture nor secular history records about them. And yet, the apostles, through the power of the Holy Spirit, received God's divine revelation and were responsible for writing most of the New Testament.

Read Luke 6:14a... Jesus had previously called these men to follow Him, now He sets them apart as apostles [*apostolos, lit. messenger, sent out*].

These men had left their homes, families, and occupations (fishermen, farmers, tax collector) to follow and live with Christ for three years, in order to learn from His words and His actions; being sovereignly chosen by God for just this purpose (**John 15:16**), "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you."

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These men were personally taught by God the Son, that they would realize the presence, provision, pleasure, and power of God, even so, it appears they constantly were found lacking in their spiritual understanding of who He was, why He had come, and what they would be called to do on His behalf. They didn't understand His teachings anymore than the rest of those who followed Jesus.

There are several lists of the apostles in the NT (**Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13, 26** Matthias added). Peter is always listed first, and was clearly the leader of the Twelve, with whom Jesus spent more time than with any of the others.

What do we know about Peter? No other name, apart from Jesus, is mentioned more often in the NT than that of Peter. And no other person in the NT speaks as often or is spoken to as often as Peter; and no other disciple is as severely rebuked by the Lord in the Scriptures.

Peter always wanted to be close to the Lord: walking on water (cf. **Matthew 14:25-31**); in the Garden falling asleep while praying, then later swinging his knife at the high priest's servant (cf. **Matthew 26:36-51**); Peter told the Lord (cf. **Matthew 26:35**), he would die before disowning Him; but after His arrest (cf. **Matthew 26:69-75**) Peter denied even knowing Jesus. And yet, God used this imperfect and impetuous man mightily for the cause of Christ.

The next three names in that first group are Andrew, James, and John; and in the other lists of these men they alternate in their order, with James or Andrew always being listed second in the group; however, Peter, James and John formed the inner, inner circle of Christ's men, and were often singled out from the other nine during special events: Transfiguration, Raising the dead back to life, Praying in the Garden.

What do we know of Andrew? He is not mentioned anywhere in the synoptic gospels except where the lists of the Twelve are given. We know he left following John the Baptizer to follow Christ. He confessed Jesus as the Messiah and shared that with Peter, introducing his brother to the Lord (cf. **John 1:37-42**).

Andrew loved to bring people to the Lord: when Jesus was feeding the 5,000 (cf. **John 6:5**) and asked, "where bread might be acquired so that these people could eat," Andrew answered (cf. **John 6:9**) by bringing a boy to Jesus who had five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus took that small portion of food and feed everyone.

In another situation when some God-fearing Gentiles asked Philip if they could meet Jesus, Philip went and told Andrew, and Andrew took these Gentiles along with Philip to see the Lord (cf. **John 12:20-22**).

Andrew was not well-known like Peter, James, or John; but Andrew was often referred to as Peter's brother. He is an example of those who humbly work quietly behind the scenes, not needing the limelight or recognition, but willing to be the support person in ministry so that others could do what they had been called to do.

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What do we know about James? James is never really separate from his brother John during the three years of following Jesus. They left their father's boat to follow Jesus at the same time (cf. **Mark 1:20**), and their father had hired servants there with him, evidently he was well off, it is possible that James and John were in the fishing business together with their father .

James was the first of the Twelve to die for the sake of Christ; and is the only one of the Twelve whose death is recorded in the Scriptures (**Acts 12:1-2**), “Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.”

What do we know about John? Like his brother James, early in their ministry, he was zealous and wanted to call down fire upon the Samaritans (**Luke 9:52-54**); on another occasion John reports to Jesus that he and some of the disciples saw a man driving out demons who wasn't one of the Twelve (**Mark 9:38**), so “we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” And of course, Jesus rebuked John, telling His disciples to let the man do whatever brings glory and honor to the Father.

God's Word is very clear that we are not to break fellowship with people because of their race, gender, status, appearance, culture, etc. (**Galatians 3:28**); but we are not to be in fellowship with those who teach false doctrine or continue living unrepentant immoral lives (cf. **Romans 16:17-18; 1Corinthians 5:9-11**).

John's transformation is seen in his love for the believers and his desire for unbelievers to know the truth that it might set them free now and forever in Jesus.

John was a recipient and proponent of the love of God, which permeates all his writings: The Gospel According to John, 123John, Revelation of Jesus Christ to John.

John taught on God's love more than any other writer in the NT, that: God is love (cf. **1John 4:8, 16**); God loves His Son (cf. **John 3:35; 5:20**); God is loved by His Son (cf. **John 14:31**); God loved the disciples (cf. **John 13:35; 16:27; 17:23**); God loves all of humanity (cf. **John 3:16**); God has a special love for all believers (cf. **1John 3:1**); believers are commanded to love one another (cf. **John 13:34; 1John 4:11**), and to love our neighbors as ourselves, for this fulfills all the commandments (**John 14:23; 1John 4:11-5:5, 11-13**).

John so closely identified with Christ's love that he referred to himself multiple times as the disciple whom Jesus loved (cf. **John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20**).

John was banished to the island of Patmos where he died in the service of His Lord, as the last of the apostles, after receiving the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus called James and John “Sons of thunder,” i.e., they had zeal, passion, and were most likely aggressive in their character. This is expressed well in several passages (**Matthew 20:17-28; Luke 9:52-56**).

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Philip is the next disciple mentioned here, and he is always listed first in the second four-man grouping of the Twelve. **What do we know about Philip?**

Philip lived in the same hometown [Bethsaida] as Peter and Andrew; they were all fishermen and probably knew each other long before Jesus called them.

From the synoptics [Matthew, Mark, Luke] we don't learn much about Philip, but John gives us some insight (**John 1:43**), Philip is the first person to whom Jesus says directly, “Follow Me.”

The first thing Philip does after meeting Christ, is to go find his friend Bartholomew [also known as Nathanael] and tell him (**John 1:45**), “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

It would seem that Philip studied the Old Testament, for he immediately knew this was the Christ, and he went to share this good news with his friend.

We learn more about Philip from John's account (see **John 6:5-7**). Philip seems to be the bread buyer of the twelve; he knew how much they normally needed and how much it cost. 200 denarii equals about 8 month's wages; one denarius equalled one days wage for common labor (cf. Matthew 20:2), and there are 24 work days in a month (4 weeks, 6 days a week) X 8 months = 192 denarii]. But Philip clearly didn't understand the supernatural nature of Jesus, as perhaps Andrew did (see **John 6:8-14**).

Bartholomew [Jewish/English] was likely his surname [Aramaic, *Bar means* son of + Aramaic, *Tolomai*]; Nathanael was his first name. So he was Nathanael, son of Tholomew.

We only know of him from the four lists of the twelve (**Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13**), and from John's account. Nathanael was from from Cana, it would seem he was prejudiced against Nazareth, as were most Jews, considering it a place for uneducated, uncouth, near-do-wells (**John 1:46**).

Our preconceived notions often blind us to the truth, our prejudices can keep us from experiencing God's presence, pleasure and power; but Nathanael's desire to know God's truth seemed to override his societal and cultural prejudice against Nazareth (**John 1:45-49**).

Jesus looked into Nathanael's heart and saw an honest and true descendant of Abraham, spiritually as well as physically; for he was not a hypocrite nor deceitful, like the Scribes, Pharisees, and religious leaders of the day; he was a genuine Israelite by Abraham's standard; in fact all the true disciples of Jesus Christ are what is in mind in **Galatians 3:26-29**, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”

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The question is, are you a spiritual descendant of Abraham, and an heir according to promise giving to him, concerning the eternal blessing that comes to all who are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ?

2Corinthians 13:5, “Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?”

1Timothy 2:3-4, “ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men [women, and children of age] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

What truth? Jesus said (**John 14:6**), “*I am the [only] way [to God], the [only] truth [of God], and the [only] life [with God]; and no one comes to the Father [i.e., no one is acceptable to God; no one is considered righteous,; no one gets into heaven except through Me [God’s Son].*”

Still not sure? Ask God to forgive your sins and to save you. God turns no one away (cf. **Romans 3:10-12; 23-24; 6:23; 5:8; 8:1; 10:13**).

Acts 4:12, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved.”

1John 5:11-13, “ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Pastor Mike

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