

## “Jesus Calls the Twelve: Part Two”

Luke 6:12-16

Last week we studied about six of the Twelve Disciples, whom Jesus named as apostles: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Bartholomew. Today we will study about five more of the Twelve Disciples: Matthew, Thomas, James *son of* Alphaeus, Simon who is called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

Next time we will study about Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

**Read Luke 6:15-16...** The first apostle in our list today is Matthew. We read about his calling in **Luke 5:27**, where he is called Levi, using his Hebrew name, as does **Mark (2:14)**; but here in **Luke 6:15** he is called Matthew, his Greek name. Several of the Twelve had two names, e.g., Simon>Peter; Bartholomew>Nathanael; Judas, the son of James>Thaddaeus; Thomas>Didymus.

Matthew, as a tax collector, would have been hated by his own countrymen the Jews, who would have considered him an enemy of Judaism; tax collectors weren't allowed to worship in the Temple or synagogue, nor were they permitted to testify in court, for the Jews considered them to be liars, swindlers, and traitors.

See **Luke 3:12-13**, where people were coming out to John the Baptizer at the Jordan River, “And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.” You see, Tax collectors bought a franchise from the Roman Governor, in order to collect certain taxes (for many different things) for Rome. Anything the tax collector was able to get above what was required to be paid to Rome, he could keep for himself; therefore tax collectors practiced extortion, larceny, and loan sharking (loaning out money with very high interest rates), of which nonpayment ended with prison.

When Jesus called Matthew, he obeyed and followed Him; in fact, Matthew was so excited to follow Christ that (cf. **Luke 5:29**) he held a special dinner at his house and invited his friends to come and meet Jesus. There were many tax collectors and “other people” at that dinner, to which the Pharisees and scribes complained to Jesus’ disciples (**Luke 5:30**), “Why does your teacher [Jesus] eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

The word “sinner” is used by the Pharisees of anyone who refuses to follow the Mosaic Law as it was interpreted by the Pharisees, and for Jesus to sit at a table (in the ancient world a sign of intimacy) with such “sinners” was too much for the Pharisees (the teachers of the law) to keep quiet about.

Jesus responds to them (**Luke 5:31-32**), “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners.” In **Luke 18**, Jesus told the people a parable that illustrates what He means in **Luke 5:31-32** means (**Luke 18:10-11, 13-15**), “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.’” “But the tax collector, standing some distance

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away, was [not] even [willing] to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’”

When Matthew left his profession to follow Christ, unlike the other disciples who could have returned to fishing or farming, Matthew could never return to tax collecting, for Rome would never allow it, and most likely, Matthew would be arrested and sent to prison for abandoning his post as a Tax Collector for Rome.

Matthew believed in Jesus as the Messiah and followed Him for three years; and then after receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Matthew was sovereignly equipped and moved to write twenty-eight chapters about the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, this is the Good News of Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Next in this list is **Thomas**, who it is often called the “doubting” disciple; but honestly, that is just not true (see **John 10:22-33; 11:1-16**). Bethany was near Jerusalem, a dangerous place for Jesus to be at that time, nearing His final entry into Jerusalem, when He would be arrested and crucified. Thomas (called Didymus, meaning twin) understood the danger, and yet he was willing to go with Jesus even if it meant his own death, he was not a coward!

When the disciples were in the upper room, that last night with Jesus, before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus explained that He was going to leave them (**John 14:1-7**); Thomas feared he would not be able to go where Jesus was going, and he did not want to be separated from the Lord.

Just before going to Bethany (as we read earlier), Thomas declared he was willing to die with Jesus, he doesn’t want to consider being without Him; but Thomas, like the other disciples, didn’t understand about Jesus’ death and resurrection, let alone His return to the Father in heaven.

After Jesus’ death, Thomas was broken hearted and probably feeling abandoned, because His Lord was gone. When 10 of the Twelve (Judas being dead) told Thomas that the Lord had appeared to them it was probably more than he could bear; he said he wouldn’t believe it until he saw the Lord for himself.

One week later Jesus again appeared to the 10, and this time Thomas was present and he genuinely believed that the Lord had risen from the dead (see **John 20:19-29**).

Without the resurrection we would have no hope for salvation, but He did rise from the dead, as Paul repeatedly declares (see **1 Corinthians 15:17-20**).

Next in our list is **James, son of Alphaeus**, who never said anything or wrote anything, that is recorded in the Bible.

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In **Mark 15:40** he is called James the less [*mikros, i.e., smaller or minimal in stature, age or influence*]. This reminds us that Jesus didn't call prominent, prestigious, or powerful men to serve Him, He chose those who would follow; and so James the less will sit on a throne reigning over one of the tribes of Israel in the millennium, just as the other Apostles will; not because of who they were but because of who called them and set them apart: Jesus Christ the Lord Who uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things (cf. **Hebrews 11:1-40**, Hall of Faith).

Next in this list is **Simon, the Zealot...** Simon is only mentioned in the New Testament, where the names of the disciples are listed, other than the, there is no information given about him.

We do know that, as a Zealot, he was an activist and militant extremist who was passionate and zealous for the Law of God for Israel, until he met and followed Jesus Christ, God's Son.

There were several dominant groups within Judaism at the time of Christ:

The Pharisees [separated ones], were religiously pious fundamentalists, legalistic separatists, keeping strict observance to the traditional and written law

The Herodians were mostly a political group that supported King Herod Antipas, the Roman Empire's ruler over much of the land of the Jews from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.

The Sadducees, were a powerful religious-political group in Israel; they confronted Jesus, and later opposed the preaching of the apostles.

The Essenes were mystics, who lived in caves and practiced severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence.

The Zealots [like Simon] were anti-Rome terrorists; in fact, one group of zealots was known as the Sicarii [*sword*]; they were assassins who didn't give a thought to murdering a Roman, or any Jew who sided with Rome.

The Zealots held in an almost impenetrable fortress called Masada, situated on top of an isolated rock plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. From there they deployed their guerrilla-warfare against Rome, until the Romans conquered Masada in 73 A.D., only to find that the Zealots had killed their wives, children, and then themselves, so as not to become slaves to Rome (960 died, and it is said that two women and five children escaped by hiding in a cave).

Next in our list is **Judas, the son of James...** Depending on the translation you are using, it may say Thaddaeus, Lebbaeus, Lebbaeus called Thaddaeus, or Judas, son of James. Let's refer to him as Thaddaeus, from here on out, so as not to confuse him with the other Judas who betrayed Jesus.

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We don't know much about Thaddaeus, but we do know he asked a great question (**John 14:22**), “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” In other words, why are you showing Yourself to us and not to the rest of the world? Why aren't they able to see and to know that You are the Messiah?

The Bible records (**John 1:10-11**), “He [Jesus, the Messiah] was in the world, and though the world was made by Him, the world didn't know Him. He came to His own [the Jews], and those who were His own did not receive Him [i.e., they rejected Him].”

Jesus only reveals Himself to those who believe in and receive Him; only those who are willing to repent, believe, and follow Him (**Mark 1:14-15**), “Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel [the good news].’” [and then come] **17**, “Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

What is the good news? Please turn in your Bible to **1Corinthians 15:1-4**, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in all of Christianity, without it Christianity is nothing more than just one of the many religious programs or organizations that are based on human philosophy and tradition.

**1Corinthians 15:17, 20**, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins,” and **19-20**, “We are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”

Jesus repeatedly taught His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, (**Mark 8:31-32**), “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again.”

Peter's first sermon was about the death and resurrection of God's Son (**Acts 2:21-24, 32-34, 36**). Without Christ's death (full payment for all our sins), and His resurrection (demonstration of eternal life), we have no hope of forgiveness or eternal life.

July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 – (full sermon notes)

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Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the grave to set us free from sins’s curse and condemnation, apart from that there is no salvation (**John 14:6**), “Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me,” (**John 3:16**), “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

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

**Romans 10:9-10**, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

We are all sinners, but only those who trust in the saving work of Christ on the Cross and the evidence of the empty tomb, are forgiven sinners. Like the men we have studied these past two Sunday’s, the Apostles of Christ, what you are before coming to God is not important, for God makes you a new creation when you trust and believe in Jesus Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior.

God takes the weak, foolish, dull-minded, intelligent, apathetic, zealous, and the seemingly insignificant from among mankind, and turns them into willing workers, supernatural servants who bring the light and the salt of the gospel of God into this darkening and decaying world.

**2Corinthians 5:17**, Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**Galatians 2:20**, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

**1John 5:1-5**, Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

*Pastor Mike*

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