

Jesus Appoints The Twelve

Are you appointed?

Mark 3:13-19

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Pastor Francis Bezzam

¹³ And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴ And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons. ¹⁶ He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷ James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸ Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

My title for this sermon is “Jesus Appoints The Twelve”. Subtitle “Are you appointed?”

If you were asked the question, what is the most significant decision you have made in your life, what would you say?

You might say marriage, starting a family, career choices, going to college and so on. All these can be significant decisions you have made or are going to make in your life.

In this passage you see Jesus makes one of the important ministry decisions. This is significant because his decision will impact who will carry Jesus’ mission on this earth. This decision is so significant that Jesus’ choosing of the twelve has had far reaching impact 2000 years later. If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, it is because those early disciples made disciples who made other disciples...until you became a disciple.

To give you some context, last week, we saw that whenever unclean spirits or people possessed with demonic spirits saw Jesus Christ, they trembled, cried out and disclosed his identity. We also saw that scores of people from all over came to Jesus. To see him. To be healed by him. To touch him. Jesus’ fame had spread far and wide.

And you would think anyone who becomes so popular would seek all the attention. Jesus does something counter-intuitive when his popularity is at an all-time high. Jesus focuses on a few than the crowds. And this few ordinary group of people turned the world upside down. Jesus knew that having a few men passionate for the Gospel is always better than a lukewarm crowd. Jesus never refused anyone who came to him but in this passage, we will see Jesus appointing twelve apostles and delegating his authority to do what he had been doing – preaching, driving out demons and much more. But there is one central

purpose as to why Jesus appoints his disciples – that they might *be with him*.

Today, we will see *how* our Lord Jesus Christ chooses twelve men, one of whom will betray him, but yet is chosen by our Lord.

I have divided up the passage into four parts. We'll look at verses thirteen and part of fourteen, go to sixteen through eighteen and then come back to verse fourteen and fifteen. Because fourteen and fifteen give us the purpose of Jesus' appointing his disciples. So here are the four parts:

Jesus Prepares

Jesus Appoints

Jesus' Appointees

Jesus' Purpose for his Appointees

Jesus Prepares.

¹³ *And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.*

Notice where Jesus goes to prepare? Jesus went up on the mountain. We are not told which mountain but mountains had a special significance in the Old and New Testaments.

- Where did Noah's ark rest after the flood? On the mountains of Ararat. There, on that mountain, God makes a covenant with Noah. (Genesis 8:4)
- Where did God test Abraham? On Mount Moriah. (Genesis 22:2)
- When God gave the ten commandments to Moses, where did He descend with a mighty trumpet blast? Mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:16-20:12)
- When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal, where was it? Mount Carmel. Elijah prayed and God answered by sending fire on the altar. (1 Kings 18)
- Jesus taught on a mountain. The Sermon on the Mount was at one of the mountains around Galilee. Jesus also taught his disciples on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:3). So, mountains were places of covenant making or of God's revelation to man.

But here we see Jesus going up to a mountain by himself. To plan and to prepare.

How did Jesus prepare for this very significant decision?

Luke tells us that Jesus prepared by praying.

In the parallel passage in Luke's Gospel, we see Jesus praying. Luke 6:12- *"In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God."*

Jesus prepared by praying all night. It's very likely that Jesus prayed for a solid *twelve* hours. What was Jesus praying about? Jesus was communing with his Father.

This wasn't a one time prayer. It was Jesus's practice to get away and be alone with God the Father and pray. We had seen Jesus' prayer life in Mark 1 and we'll see more of his prayer life as we go through Mark's Gospel.

- Before he began to preach, Jesus got up “*very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed*” Mark 1:35

Do you have major decisions to make in your life? Start by *praying*. Put everything before God. Tell God every detail. Commit your way to God. Call on Jesus.

Some of us are reading through the book of Isaiah these days. God tells the prophet Isaiah to let the people know that they should inquire of God instead of inquiring with mediums and necromancers. (Isaiah 8:19). God was offended with his people when they turned to sorcery. God had disciplined them and yet they did not turn to him. (Isaiah 9:13).

You have such a privilege to bring all your plans, hopes and dreams to God. Let God direct your paths. Young men and women, boys and girls, you have so much future ahead of you. Prepare for life by praying like Jesus. Get alone with him. And you will see that your life will be full of blessing.

So, Jesus prepares by praying. Then he calls his disciples. We are not told if Jesus called them *after* he finished praying but the grammar says he *himself* called them. It is very likely Jesus gave his disciples an appointment to meet him at the mountain in the morning prior to going up.

Verse 13 says ..“*called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.*”

Notice verse 13 tells us Jesus *called those he desired*. This is like a draft pick. Because it is quite possible Jesus called a gathering larger than just twelve. It is also possible Jesus called only twelve.

In the NFL draft, the eligibility a player to make it to the draft is that they should have been out of high school for at least three years. The rules do not state that a player must attend college, but virtually all of the players selected in the NFL draft played college football. The eligibility for someone to be Jesus' team is that they should been a disciple. Jesus calls his disciples. And they come to him. Let's look at his appointment.

Verse *fourteen*.

Jesus Appoints.

¹⁴ *And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles)..*

The first thing you see here is the number twelve. Why twelve?

Twelve has a historic and prophetic meaning. You have twelve tribes of Israel.

Some say the number twelve indicates completeness.

The book of Revelation mentions twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes of the sons of Israel, twelve foundations, twelve apostles of the Lamb, twelve pearls and twelve kinds of fruit. (Revelation 21,22)

In the Gospel of Mark, there is mention of the number *twelve* a few times.

Jesus healed a woman who had a discharge of blood for *twelve* years. Mark 5:25

Jesus raised a little girl who was dead and she was *twelve* years of age. Mark 5:42

Jesus fed the five thousand and the left overs were *twelve* baskets. Mark 6:43

Jesus appoints twelve and he gave them a name. He named them *apostles*.

Who is an apostle? Here it simply means “sent one” or “sent out” or *messenger*.

All the apostles were disciples. All disciples of Jesus are *apostles* in the sense of being messengers. (Luke 10:1).

As a disciple of Jesus, you are an *apostle* when you carry the message of Jesus wherever you go.

However, all apostles are not Apostles (with a Capital A).

Why? Because the Apostles were the founding fathers of the church.

In Acts 1:21, Peter writes about how Matthias had taken the office of Judas Iscariot (after his betrayal and death). Peter says an Apostle is someone who was a disciple of Jesus, and who was an *eyewitness* to his death and resurrection.

Paul says in Ephesians that you are “*members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone*” Ephesians 2:19-20.

So, Jesus appoints twelve men and names them apostles. Let’s look at who they are. Verse *sixteen* through *nineteen*.

Jesus’ Appointees.

¹⁶ *He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); ¹⁷ James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); ¹⁸ Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him..*

When we saw chapters one and two, we saw Jesus calling five disciples – Andrew, Simon (Peter), James and John and Levi (Matthew).

In Matthew 10:2, we see the leader of these apostles “The names of the twelve apostles

are these: *first*, Simon, who is called Peter”.

First is from the word *protos*. Meaning the man standing at the top.

Peter was someone who spoke first only to find out his mind had not caught up with his speech. He was quick to speak and act. Jesus called him “Satan”. Peter had to learn discipleship the hard way by trial and error. By denial and repentance. Jesus had some very tender words to him after he rose from the grave. Jesus said to Peter, “Simon son of Jonah, do you love me?”. Peter had to learn the task of loving after failing. Jesus appointed Peter as the leader.

What more can we say about these men? These men were divided in three groups of four. Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. And the second group of four are Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas. And the last group of four are James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

We know that at least four of these apostles were fisherman. One was a tax collector, or even a chief tax Collector. One was a political activist called Simon the Zealot. John MacArthur in his book titled “Twelve Ordinary Men” writes that “one faction of the Zealots was known as *sicarii* because of the small, curved blades they carried”. Zealots were known for terrorizing or even killing Roman soldiers and even tax collectors according to MacArthur. We also know that Thomas was a doubter or a skeptic. Judas Iscariot turned out to be a thief, a deceiver and a traitor – Judas. John 12:4-6 tells us about his deception and how he stole from the money bag.

We don’t know much about what the others did but we can say that these men were everyday people. MacArthur observes that Jesus chose “*common men to an uncommon calling*”. He observes that Jesus did not call a rabbi, a scribe, a Pharisee, a Sadducee or a priest. One thing we can say about these men, at least from what we have seen so far. These men were willing to forsake all and follow Jesus. They had a level of humility, willingness and teachability to sit under Jesus.

Jesus had a very specific purpose in calling these men and appointing them as apostles. What was it?

Verses *fourteen* and *fifteen*. This is the most significant part of our passage.

The Purpose.

14-15 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and have authority to cast out demons.

The purpose of appointing the twelve disciples was two-fold:

- 1) That they might *be with him*
- 2) That he might *send them out to preach* and to have *authority to drive out demons*

Let me unpack the second part first and come back to the first part of his purpose.

Jesus appointed them to preach the Gospel and drive out demons.

1. The phrase ‘send them out’ is the verbal form of the word *apostle – apostello*. Jesus came to preach and teach. Now he desires that these handpicked men will preach as well. So this was recruitment for their training.
2. In addition to recruiting these apostles to preach, Jesus also gave them authority to cast out demons. Last week we saw that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Now Jesus delegates His authority to these twelve men to cast out demons as well. Matthew’s Gospel tells us more – “*And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction*” Matthew 10:1.

You could say that Jesus’ recruitment of the twelve was *preaching* and *serving*. Their *preaching* would attend to the spiritual condition of others. Their *serving* would attend to everything else.

But the most important reason as to why Jesus appointed is seen in verse *fourteen*. *And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him..*

This is very significant. The first and foremost thing about being a disciple is fidelity, attachment or longing to be with their Master. These twelve men were called to be with Jesus, learning from him. They were to travel with him, talk with him, eat with him and follow his model. This is the common purpose for all disciples of Jesus Christ.

So much can be said about this purpose statement here.

When Jesus calls a man or woman to himself, there is fundamental change in their mindset, in love and affection.

- When we get to Mark chapter five, we will see how a man who had living in the tombs, cutting, hurting himself and without hope. When Jesus meets this man he is made whole and we see in Mark 5:18, that all he wants to do is to *be with Jesus*. Matter of fact, he begs Jesus to take him with him. No true disciple of Jesus would ever say I want less of Jesus. There’s a yearning, a craving and a desire for every of disciple to be with Jesus. Paul said, “My desire is to depart and *be with Christ*, for that is far better” (Philippians 1:23)
- Do you remember the words of Jesus to the thief on the cross, when he asked Jesus to remember him? Jesus said “today you will *be with me* in paradise” Luke 23:43.

Imagine the comfort of this man as he prepared to die? This is what Jesus offers to every one who turns to him. Paradise with him.

- So these early disciples were called to *be with* Jesus. And their ministry was as effective as their time with Jesus. Jesus would send them out two-by-two (Mark 6:7) and they would come back and report to Jesus. But these disciples also knew Jesus was not going to be around for a very long because Jesus told them. In John 7:33, *“Jesus then said, “I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.”*
- However, Jesus promised these disciples that his supernatural presence would be with them. How? *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”* John 12:16-17. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, God is with you if the Holy Spirit is in you. In Acts 4:13, we see these disciples being recognized *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”* What would others say of you?
- Jesus prayed a profound prayer for his disciples in John 17 – *“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world”*. Jesus called his disciples to *be with them*. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to *be with them*. Jesus prays that they will *be with him* in heaven one day. In the same way, Jesus called you. The Holy Spirit will be with you and one day you will be with Jesus forever.

As I close, consider what you were appointed for. You were once appointed to judgment. The author of Hebrews says 9:27, *“it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment”*. Jesus took your appointment for judgment and appointed you to eternal life (Acts 13:48). Jesus took upon himself the wrath and judgment you deserved.

Jesus also appointed his disciples to bear fruit.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide” John 15:16

Jesus spent a significant time training these men for the work that were to do after he would ascend to the Father.

Similarly, Jesus has a mission for you and I as well. To bear fruit.

There is someone in your life who needs the Gospel. And that someone may never know Jesus without you. Jesus wants you to bear that fruit. That is why He gave the Holy Spirit. To witness for Him.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Jesus Appoints the Twelve. Mark 3:13-19

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What is the two-fold purpose of Jesus appointing his disciples as apostles?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe you are an "apostle" of Jesus? Why or why not? How do Apostles differ from *apostles*? Luke 10:1, Romans 1, Ephesians 2:19-20, 2 Corinthians 12:12

3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What will you do make Christ Jesus known?