

9. Jesus Chose the Twelve Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain why Jesus chose to heal on the Sabbath even though He knew that the Pharisees would begin to plot His death as a result. In our topic today, we are going to see why Jesus chose the twelve to be with Him.

In our last topic, we learned several things about two groups of people that were around Jesus. One group was composed of the Pharisees and Herodians who wanted to destroy Jesus because they saw Jesus as a threat to their religious or political power. The second group was the large multitudes of people. Many in this group came to be healed or bring family members to be healed. Others were just curious to hear what Jesus was teaching. There was also a third group following Jesus, and that was His disciples. In our topic today, we are going to see why Jesus chose twelve of these disciples to be a smaller group of disciples. Mark 3:13-15 says, “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.” Here, we see that Jesus called the men that He wanted to be in this smaller group of disciples.

We read that Jesus went up on the mountain and called to Him those that He wanted. Luke 6:12-13 gives us a little more detail about what happened that day. Those verses say, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” In these verses, we see that Jesus spent the entire night in prayer before selecting the twelve. Jesus gave us a very important lesson about how to select people for leadership development. We need to pray that the Lord will give us wisdom about whom to choose, so that we are working with the people with whom the Father wants us to work. Jesus chose this twelve from a larger group, because it says that from among His disciples He chose these twelve.

It was only after praying all night that Jesus called to Himself those that He wanted. Later, Jesus told them, in John 15:16, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” Jesus chose the twelve so that they could bear fruit that remains. Here, in Mark, we see several reasons why Jesus chose the twelve so that their fruit would remain.

First, Jesus chose the twelve that they might be with Him. Christ explained why it was so important for these men to be with Him, in Luke 6:40, where we read, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.” The word translated “perfectly trained” means “*to make complete, to equip or make one what he ought to be.*” This word is used in Hebrews 13:20-21, where we read, “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, the word

is translated “make you complete”. Jesus wanted the twelve to learn by example how to become complete, so that they could do Christ’s work and carry out the will of the Father. We are to make disciples by taking others with us so that the same thing can happen.

Second, Jesus chose the twelve that He might send them forth to preach. The disciples would learn what to preach by the things that they heard Jesus preach as they went with Him. Matthew 4:23 says, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Jesus showed the disciples what to preach and teach, and showed them how to preach and teach.

Third, Jesus chose the twelve to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons. We saw in Luke 6:13, a few paragraphs earlier, that these particular twelve disciples were also called apostles. The word “disciple” means “*a learner or one who is taught by another.*” The word “apostle” means “*one who is sent forth with orders or a qualified representative.*” We see that the apostles would later verify their message about the death and resurrection of Jesus by having power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons. Hebrews 2:3-4 says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” God confirmed the message of the apostles about the resurrection by signs, wonders, and miracles.

We also see the names of the men who were chosen to be the twelve apostles. Mark 3:16-19 says, “Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, ‘Sons of Thunder’; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.” In this list, and every other list of the twelve, Peter is always named first; Philip is always named fifth; and James, the son of Alphaeus, is always named ninth.

In every list of the twelve, the name of Peter is always followed by James, John and Andrew, although the order of these three may vary. Philip is always followed by Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, although the order of these three may also vary. The same thing is true for James, the son of Alphaeus. The last three also follow his name, although the order may vary. This may be an indication that Jesus divided the twelve into three smaller groups. This would have made it possible for Jesus to discuss the questions of the smaller groups. One illustration of this is found in Mark 13: 3-4, where we read, “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?’”

Jesus had taken the disciples with Him to a mountain, and that was where He chose the twelve to be with Him. Once the twelve had been chosen, Jesus returned with those twelve to Capernaum and went into the house. Since there is no mention of the owner of this house, this was probably the house that belonged to Peter and Andrew. Mark 1:29 shows that their home had been used as a gathering place at an earlier time. That verse says, “Now as soon as they had come out of the

synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.” We then go on to read, in Mark 3:20-21, “Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard *about this*, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, “He is out of His mind.” As soon as the crowds heard that Jesus had come back to that city, they immediately began to gather again.

In Mark 1:33, we read, “And the whole city was gathered together at the door.” Then, in Mark 2:4, we read, “And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.” However, the crowds continued to grow as Mark 3:7-8 says, “But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him.” These crowds were coming from greater distances, and their purpose for coming was to see and hear Jesus. As a result, the people trying to get to Jesus were around Him constantly.

There were so many people trying to get to Jesus, during this time period, that there was no opportunity for Jesus and His disciples to even eat. This caused His close friends to become concerned and take action. Many of these close friends were probably relatives of Jesus. These were people that had known Jesus for many years, and they decided that Jesus needed to be rescued from the crowds that were continually surrounding Him.

In fact, these friends and relatives had reached the conclusion that, “He is out of His mind.” The word translated “He is out of His mind” means “*to be amazed, to be out of one’s mind or to be insane.*” This word is used in Acts 2:12-13, where we read, “So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’” Here, we see that the crowds could not understand what was happening and were confused. That was also true of the friends and relatives of Jesus. They could not understand why Jesus was so popular with the crowds. The people of His home town of Nazareth had rejected the teaching of Jesus. His brothers said, in John 7:3-5, “‘Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.’ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.” Those close to Jesus could not understand why the crowds were attracted to Jesus.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that there were very different opinions about Jesus. Some, like the religious leaders, saw Jesus as a threat to their power. Others, like many in the crowds, wanted to see miracles. His family and friends thought He had gone insane. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand why the various people had different opinions.