

19. Jesus Chose the Twelve to be Apostles

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to do good to others as they serve the Lord. We saw that Jesus made it very clear that it is always right to do those things that are good and beneficial to others. This is one of the ways that we show the love of Christ to others. Today, we are going to see that Jesus chose the Twelve Apostles. We will also see that Jesus gives us a very important example for our own lives by what He did before He chose the twelve.

Luke 6:12-16 says, “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: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.” Jesus had a large group of followers that followed Him. However, Jesus knew that it was necessary for Him to choose a much smaller group in order to equip them to carry on His ministry when He returned to heaven.

The night before Jesus chose that smaller group, we see that He went out to a mountain and spent the entire night in prayer. In this way, Jesus gave us an example of a key to effective ministry for our own lives. Jesus showed us to select a small group of people to train after much prayer. Then, those who are chosen will be the ones that God wants us to train.

Mark 3:14-15 gives us three reasons why Jesus chose these twelve men. Those verses say, “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.” First, Jesus chose the twelve so that they could spend much time with Him to help them grow in godly character and learn how to serve Him by His example. In the same way, as we choose a small group to be with us, we show them how to develop godly character and show them how to serve the Lord. Second, Jesus chose the twelve so that He could show them what to preach and then send them out to preach. Third, Jesus chose the twelve to have power both to heal sicknesses and to 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?” The twelve were given these signs of healing and casting out demons to verify their message about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

We also learn another thing about the way Jesus trained the disciples. In every list of the disciples, Peter is always mentioned first, Philip is mentioned fifth and James, the son of Alphaeus, is mentioned ninth. Here, we see that Jesus divided the twelve into three smaller groups. Andrew, James and John are always the next three mentioned after Peter. Bartholomew (Nathanael), Matthew and Thomas are always the three mentioned after Philip. Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot are always the three mentioned after James the son of Alphaeus. As they walked along the roads traveling from place to place, this made it possible for Jesus to

spend time with each of these three smaller groups and discuss their questions.

Luke 6:17-21 says, “And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all. Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: ‘Blessed *are you* poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed *are you* who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed *are you* who weep now, for you shall laugh.’” Here, we see one of the things that happened after Jesus had chosen the twelve.

In these verses, we see that Jesus came down the mountain with His disciples. This included a group of His other disciples in addition to the Twelve. Jesus and this larger group of disciples were met by a very large group of people who came from several different areas to see Jesus. Some came to hear Jesus. Others came to be healed of their diseases. A third group that came were those who were tormented by unclean spirits (demons). In addition, the people in the large crowd also wanted to get close enough to Jesus to touch Him. We see that power went out from Jesus and He healed them all, whether they had diseases or were tormented by demons.

Jesus knew that the crowds were there because of their own needs or because they were curious. However, we see that the concern of Jesus was to teach and equip His disciples. As a result, Jesus turned and spoke directly to His disciples. The crowds were free to listen but His concern was to teach those who had a greater commitment. Matthew 5:1-2 says, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying.” Matthew also shows us that Christ focused on teaching His disciples even though there was a much larger group listening.

Christ told why He chose to explain His teaching to His disciples at another time. Mark 4:11-12 says, “And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables, so that “seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest they should turn, and their sins be forgiven them.”’” Christ never rejected the multitudes. However, His focus was to teach and train His disciples. 1 Corinthians 2:13-15 says, “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.” Only people who have repented of their unbelief and placed their faith in Christ have the Holy Spirit to give them understanding. As a result, Jesus focused on teaching and equipping His disciples, but also gave all who came to Him the opportunity to hear what He taught.

Jesus said that several groups of people will experience blessing. First, the poor are promised blessing. Matthew 5:3 says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Those who are poor in spirit are those who humble themselves before God. Second, those who

hunger now are promised blessing. Matthew 5:6 says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Here, we see that Jesus talked about those who hunger and thirst for the things that are right in the sight of God. Third, those who weep now are promised blessing. Matthew 5:4 says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” Here, we see that those who mourn because of true sorrow for sin will be comforted.

Luke 6:22 -26 says, “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” In these verses, we see that a fourth group is promised blessing.

This group promised blessing is those who are hated for Jesus' sake. Jesus told His disciples that people would hate them, exclude them, revile them and cast out their name as evil because of their service for Jesus. Jesus told them and us that when such things happen, we can rejoice and leap for joy because we can look forward to the reward that the Lord has for us in heaven. Joy is based on what the Lord is doing in our lives. Jesus told His disciples that the fathers of those who rejected them rejected the prophets.

The word translated “woe” means *alas or woe and is an expression of grief*. First, the rich will experience grief because they chose to seek their riches on earth instead of looking for heavenly riches. Second, those who are full now will experience grief because the time will come when they will be needy and have nothing. Third, those who laugh now will have lives that are filled with sorrow and weeping for all eternity. Matthew 13:49-50 says, “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Fourth, Jesus said that those who were well spoken of at that time would also experience grief because their fathers spoke the same way about the false prophets. In fact, such individuals were the false prophets of the time of Jesus.

Here, we see that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand and learn how to explain to others that all those who truly follow Jesus will have opposition here on this earth. In contrast, those who are approved by the world today will face eternal judgment for all eternity. Life on this earth is very short and the judgment of those who reject Jesus will be eternal. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children develop eternal values instead of earthly values.