

Chosen

January 20, 2019

Mark 3:13-20

13 He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Then he went home; 20 and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat.

In Mark chapter 3 Jesus chooses his disciples. There are some certain things that are pointed out in today's Scripture; (1) he went up the mountain (2) he chose the ones he wanted (3) he appointed twelve (4) they are named apostles (5) they are to be sent out to proclaim the message (6) they have authority to cast out demons (7) Judas Iscariot is listed as the one who betrayed him (8) then he went home (9) the crowd problem continue.

Early in the Gospel of Mark there are large crowds following Jesus. This grew into a big enough problem to where Jesus decided to go to a lake where he could be on a small boat to avoid the crowds pressing upon him. At this point in the Gospel the crowd problem is because he healed many people. So, people began to crowd him and they kept pushing forward trying to touch him. They wanted Jesus the healer. As the ministry of Jesus progresses the crowd problem becomes serious. He cannot appear in public without being pressured. Crowds keep seeking him his reputation has spread throughout Galilee and Judea and further into areas that he has not preached. The crowds are not necessarily believers or disciples; they are there for Jesus' reputation as a healer. Then Jesus goes up a mountain.

Jesus selected the ones he wanted. He called them to him. We can only speculate why he appointed the ones he did. My thinking is that these select few were different from the crowd. They were sincerely interested in Jesus himself; his teaching, his mission, and his ministry. They were willing to give of themselves for the ministry of Jesus. The people that were chosen by Jesus did not raise their hands and say "please pick me." They did not follow Jesus around in order to try to impress him. They did not try to drain any healing energy from him. The people that were chosen by Jesus are people that the Lord selected not based on wealth, or skill, but because they were willing to be disciples. They were willing to follow, willing to obey, and willing to proclaim the message. They were faced with a choice to follow Jesus as a disciple or be a bystander.

Twelve is a significant number. Twelve represents the tribes of Israel. Twelve indicates that Jesus has come to restore Israel. Out of the multitude, thousands of people, only twelve were selected. It is interesting that at this place in the Gospel that are named apostles. I did a little research and learned that some ancient manuscripts omitted this small segment of verse 14. "He appointed twelve to be sent out to proclaim the message." We do not have the original manuscript. What we have are handwritten copies of handwritten copies. "Whom he also named apostles" could be some words that a scribe omitted and further manuscripts copied the text with this omission. The words could be something that a scribe inserted and further manuscripts copied the text with the insertion. They are named apostles is interesting and it is significant because the Greek word "apostolos" means sent out. They are not just selected or designated but are chosen to be sent out. The word means a person designated to be sent on a special mission.

They are selected to be sent out to proclaim the message. This is important! This is something we all need to learn. This is the mission of discipleship. Jesus called them for the specific purpose of proclaiming the message.

We are disciples. We have a responsibility, as disciples, to proclaim the message. Proclaiming the message is not about going up to strangers and asking them "Are you going to heaven or hell when you die?" Proclaiming the message is a matter of delivering your testimony - the Good News, how Christ changed your life, and the spirit of the Lord within you. We ask the question "What would Jesus do?" Consider this "What did Jesus do?" Jesus selected his followers to go out to proclaim the message. The followers of Jesus are to proclaim the message of Jesus. When you ask "What does Jesus want me to do?" The answer is subjective. Jesus wants me to be good, be nice, turn the other cheek, do unto others, etc. However, the question "What did Jesus do?" is concrete. We know from the Gospels what Jesus did. Jesus selected his followers to go out to proclaim the message.

He also gave them authority to cast out demons. Most of the mainline protestant denominations don't have exorcism. It is my understand that some Pentecostals and fundamentalists do. I'm open to it if anyone knows of a situation where it is needed, just let me know. Judas Iscariot is listed early in Mark as the one who betrayed him. This we all know. Anyone who has read the Gospel will know this. However, Mark calls out this specific characteristic early in the Gospel.

They went home. I wonder how many times I have preached and taught that Jesus is homeless. If my memory serves me correctly, it wasn't that long ago. But here Mark it is specifically stated "Jesus went home." Yes, Jesus had a home in Capernaum. We don't know if he owned a home or lived with disciples. What we do know is that he spent most of his time away from home; preaching, teaching, and healing.

Jesus had a crowd problem. Even in the beginning of his ministry Jesus had a crowd problem. Jesus went to the lake with a crowd problem. Jesus went up the mountain with a crowd problem. Jesus went to the other side of the lake with a crowd problem. Jesus went outside of Galilee with crowd problem. We see here in Mark the crowds presented such problem that they were unable to eat.

We face choices today. Like the 12 disciples you were chosen by Jesus. You did not raise your hand and say "Please let me be the chair of board, or committee member." You did not say "please let me serve every Sunday when someone is absent." Or "Let me serve instead of sitting in the pews." You were chosen by Jesus. You did not spend hours in prayer begging for the chance to serve "Please...please... please pick me. No, you are someone the Lord has selected. You are faced with a choice to follow Jesus as a disciple or be a bystander.

You are chosen. You are selected to do the Lords ministry. Sometimes people say "No." But it is not the church that is calling you, it is God calling you.

Now let's look at Jesus and the people he chose in the Bible. He had to deal with impulsiveness, anger, cynicism, and betrayal. But he chose them anyway. God chooses imperfect people for ministry. The Lord chooses us in spite of our inadequacies. The Lord has chosen you. The thing is - do not look at your inadequacies or that of others - look at Jesus, look to Jesus, and follow Jesus. We are recipients of God's grace. We are called to serve the Lord. We are called to proclaim the message. The question remains - How do we respond to God's grace?