

“Jesus Chooses the Twelve”  
(Luke 6:12-16)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning,

We saw Jesus declare Himself

To be the Lord of the Sabbath –

Reminding us:

That He is God –

Only God has authority over the Law.

When Moses –

The first law-giver –

Spoke,

He said, “Thus says the Lord.”

But when Jesus –

The second Moses/Law-giver –

Speaks,

He says, “You have heard it said,

But *I say* to you.”

We saw that as the Lord of the Sabbath,

He wasn't taking it away –

We still need rest from our work –

Nor was He changing how we observe it –

We still need to meet together

For the spiritual refreshment

Worship and fellowship gives us –

Rather, He was correcting

The misinterpretation of the scribes and Pharisees:

God gave us this day to be a blessing,

Not to make us go hungry,

Or to keep us from helping others:

We are to rest,

But we may still show mercy.

#### B. Preview.

This evening,

Jesus turns His attention

To calling together His inner circle –

His twelve apostles –

The men He would train

To carry on His work,

When His time in this world

Had come to its end.

We see three things in our passage:

Jesus gave Himself to pray before calling the twelve (v. 12);

Who these men were that He called (vv. 13-16);

And that His call to each wasn't the same (v. 13).

#### II. Sermon.

##### A. First, Jesus first gave Himself to prayer before calling the twelve (v. 12).

This was a very important decision:

There were many who followed Jesus/many disciples,

But He would choose only twelve of them

To become His apostles –

Apostle means messenger, one who is sent.

There were apostles of the church –

But there were only twelve apostles of Jesus Christ:

Those Jesus chose to be with Him;

Those He would invest Himself in;

Who would be eyewitnesses of His miracles/teaching;

Whom He would send out to preach, do miracles,

And cast out demons in His name;

Who would represent Him;

Some of whom would write Scripture;

Most of whom would carry on the work after Him;

Whom He would send into the world to preach His Gospel.

Before He called them,

He went off to the mountain

To seek His Father, to pray for wisdom (James 1).

Luke tells us He spent the whole night in prayer.

Again, Jesus gives us another example.

Where do we go when we need wisdom?

Especially for a very important decision?

We'd be foolish not to go to God's Word –

That's where He reveals His wisdom –

But we should also ask Him for it –

Believing He will show us:

James, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (1:5-8).

We should pray:

For the wisdom we need to glorify God,

Desiring that He would show us,

And we should keep praying until He does.

B. Second, when morning came –

Having received His Father’s answer –

Jesus chose the twelve.

Luke lists them in six groups of two:

Likely because Jesus often sent them out in pairs.

Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,

“Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.”

The first two are Simon and Andrew.

Jesus gave Simon the name Peter –

Which means rock or stone –

Also Cephas (John 1:42),

Which is Aramaic for the same –

Because for the most part,

It describes his character –

It's true he would run away

With the rest of the apostles

When Jesus was arrested,

That he would deny Jesus three times,

And hide after His crucifixion.

But after the coming of the Spirit,

He would preach to the conversion

Of 3000 on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41),

Be the first to bring the Gospel

To the God-fearing Gentiles (Acts 10),

Write two books of the NT,

And be the source of Mark's Gospel.

Andrew was Peter's brother –

The only thing we know about Andrew –

Apart from what the disciples did during Jesus' ministry –

Was that he was one of the first two to follow Jesus

After John the Baptist pointed Him out,

And the one who introduced Peter to Jesus (John 1:40-41).

The second pair is James and John,

Who were also brothers –

These were the sons of Zebedee,

Who were also called the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17),

Because of their character:

They were the two who asked Jesus on one occasion,  
 If He wanted them to call down fire from heaven  
 To consume the Samaritan town that wouldn't receive Him (Luke 9:54) –

This is the James who would later be killed by Herod (Acts 12:2);

John is the disciple Jesus loved,  
 Who reclined on Jesus at the Last Supper,  
 Who wrote the Gospel and three letters bearing his name,  
 And the book of Revelation.

The third pair is

Philip and Bartholomew (John 1:43-51).

Philip is the one Jesus would later ask  
 Where they could buy bread for the 5000 (John 6:5);  
 The one the Greeks would ask to bring them to Jesus (12:20-21);  
 And the one who would ask Jesus to show them the Father (14:8-9).

He's also the one who –  
 After Jesus called him to follow –  
 Went and found Nathanael,  
 And brought him to Jesus (John 1:43-51).

Bartholomew is Nathanael:

Bartholomew is more like a last name –

It means the “son of Tolmai,”

Just as Barjona – Simon's last name – means “son of Jonah.”

Nathanael is his given name –

The one of whom Jesus said, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” (v. 47).

The fourth pair is Matthew and Thomas.

Matthew we’ve already met:

He’s Levi, the tax collector;

The one who wrote the Gospel of Matthew.

Thomas is the one

Who earned the name, “doubting Thomas,”

Because he didn’t believe

When the disciples said

They saw Jesus after the resurrection (John 20:25).

He’s also called Didymus (John 11:16; 20:24)

Which is Aramaic for his Greek name, Thomas,

Both of which mean “twin” –

Likely because Thomas was a twin.

The fifth pair is

James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot.

James was likely the brother of Levi/Matthew.

“As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, ‘Follow Me!’ And he got up and followed Him” (Mark 2:14).

We don’t know much more than this

Except one historic record indicates

That he was stoned by the Jews for preaching the Gospel.

Simon is called the Zealot –

Either because of his zeal for religion,

Or because he was a member

Of a sect of Jews called the Zealots

Before he was called by Jesus –

Both may be true.

Finally, there is Judas the son of James and Judas Iscariot.

The first Judas was also called Thaddeus (Matt. 10:3);

We don't know anything more about him.

The second is Judas Iscariot –

Whom we'll get to in a moment.

These are the men Jesus called

From His disciples to be His apostles,

Whom He would use to lay the foundation

Of the New Testament church.

We may not be apostles,

But we are disciples:

Jesus has also called us

And given us the task

Of continuing the work He began,

But in a different capacity:

Let's strive, as they did, to be faithful to our calling.

C. Finally, the call to each of these men wasn't the same.

It was in one sense: it was a call to apostleship.

But for one of them, it was for a different purpose.

In each list of the apostles in the Gospels,

Judas Iscariot is always last,

Because he was the one who would betray Jesus.

Luke writes, “And Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor” (6:16).

The fact that he was *chosen*

Can be confusing, if we don’t understand

That the same word can be used in different ways.

Jesus chose Judas:

But that doesn’t mean he was chosen

In the sense Paul speaks of in Ephesians 1:4,

“Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.”

He was chosen for another reason:

That he might be the one to betray Him.

Jesus said on another occasion, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” Now He meant Judas *the son* of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him” (John 6:70-71).

Judas was passed over in God’s mercy –

He was left in the same condition

In which he came into the world:

With the heart of a devil –

The same as the scribes and Pharisees who hated Jesus,

The same as everyone who is unconverted –

Which is why the devil used him

To betray Jesus to the Jews (John 13:2) –

That the Jews might hand Him over to the Romans,

That He might be crucified.

The Lord told us much earlier

That His Son's betrayal

Would be at the hands of a close associate –

As we read in Psalm 41 –

This is the way it had to take place;

Jesus said as much in the Upper Room:

“I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have chosen; but *it is* that the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.’ From now on I am telling you before *it* comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am *He*” (John 13:18-19).

Does this mean Judas didn't have a choice?

No. He had a choice.

God never forced him to do anything against his will.

He chose freely to hand Jesus over to His enemies

For thirty pieces of silver,

Because that's what he wanted to do (Matt. 26:15).

God's election/choice doesn't override

Our ability to choose what we want –

The Father didn't force us

To come to Jesus against our will –

He simply opened our eyes to our need

And changed our hearts

That we might see Jesus' beauty  
So that we might come to Him freely  
Because that's what we wanted to do –

That's what He did for the eleven –  
But not for Judas.

God has sovereign right over the clay –  
Over all He has made –

Paul, "So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?" (Rom. 9:18-21).

The whole lump of clay –  
The whole human race –  
Is fallen and deserves hell –  
But God can and has chosen some of it  
To make into vessels for honorable use  
Through the work of His Son,  
That He might use them/us  
To magnify His grace.

Let's never forget the pit  
From which He dug us –  
We owe our salvation entirely to Him –  
Let's allow this to motivate us  
To serve Him even more. Amen.