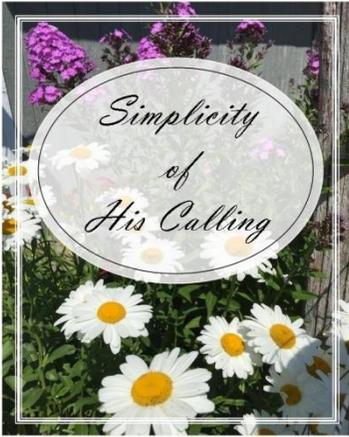


Simplicity of His Calling (Mark 3:13-19)



How many of us can name all twelve of the Apostles? These twelve men had a tremendous impact on the world, and yet, I admit, I'm hard pressed to remember them all off the top of my head.

In Mark chapter 3 we find the list, and we're told that Jesus went up on a mountain and it was there that He summoned those whom He would choose to be "The Twelve": Simon (whom He named Peter), James, the son of Zebedee (not to be confused with Jesus' brother James) and his brother John (not to be confused with His cousin, John the Baptist), Jesus called those two brothers "the sons of thunder", wouldn't we like to know why that was? There was Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, another James (this James was the son of

Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, and another Simon (this one a zealot), and last and least, Judas Iscariot. Twelve men. His Apostles. Men that He **"appointed... so that they would be with Him, and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons."** Men who were His closest friends, that saw His miracles firsthand, that heard His parables and the answers of those parables, men who lived life walking with Jesus. They weren't of nobility, they weren't all highly educated men, even. They were fishermen, tax collectors, political and religious zealots, doubters, and even a thief and betrayer among them. Just men. From all backgrounds. All called.

Called by Jesus to be *with Him*. Such simple words, but with such great meaning, I read this and I think, goodness, what an amazing thing. These different men, summoned by Jesus, the Man the multitudes followed, and He would say to each of these men I want YOU to come be WITH ME, and I want you to know Me, to learn from Me. He'd already called them to follow Him earlier on, and they had, but this was different. They had been summoned to the inner sanctum of Christ Himself to be set apart for a new and specific work.

As a child, I heard His call to come follow Him. Oh, it wasn't audible as these twelve were blessed to hear, but He called. My young heart knew it. I was blessed all the same. He does that for each one today. He calls us to be with Him and to know Him, and in His Father's plan and His Spirit's power He even calls us to do specific things for Him. Gifting us with various gifts.

I thought it interesting that ALL twelve were called to preach, and yet we only have recorded words from Matthew, Peter and John in the Bible. These verses tell us that ALL had the ability to preach. ALL had the ability to cast out demons in Jesus' name. ALL were empowered to do so, but not all got the notoriety, as some of the others did. Not all are as easily remembered some 2000 years later even though they were with Jesus as a blessed friend.

In this day and age, that began with Martha Stewart Living, and moved to Pinterest and DIY, all presenting larger than life expectations for us to be SuperWoman; with technology making it easy for all of us to be writers and bloggers, I think there is a great danger in getting caught up in the idea of our "calling" being something grander, something bigger, something with notoriety even, when, sometimes His calling is simply to be the best godly woman, wife, or mother to the children He has blessed us with. His calling may be to simply serve Him in our daily grind through our actions and reactions to life being controlled by His Spirit. His calling may be to be the best friend to our neighbor, to love our enemy, to forgive the fallible.

Simplicity of His Calling (Mark 3:13-19)

The simplicity of His calling is to be with Him. When that is our focus, then His Spirit can direct us with where and when He wants to use us next.

Perhaps He has called you to something more specific but you can't figure out just what it is yet. I have felt that longing, I know what it's like to sense Him wanting me to do something, like you're on the verge of something big, but not knowing what it is. Trust me, when He it's time, and He wants to reveal it, He will. When it comes to living out any part of His plan for our life, *His timing* and *our preparation* come by walking with Him. If it's in His sovereign plan for your life, He will reveal it when the time comes.

Many years ago I was blessed to be a part of a once a month women's gathering called, Treasures. It was a mini-retreat of sorts that our women's ministry team put together, and I was to be the speaker each month. Just before we were to begin our first month, a group of us went to a Women of Faith Conference. What a great weekend of worship, with dynamic and encouraging speakers. It was amazing! Powerful! So overwhelming that during one of the breaks between those incredible speakers, I went to our Women's Ministry Director and said to her with deer-in-the-headlight eyes, "I can't do that!" and pointed at the stage. She, in her matter-of-fact sweet way, looked me square in the face and said, "You don't have to do that (as she pointed at the stage). You just have to be YOU. We don't want 'that', we want what God wants to do through you (as she pointed at me)."

That first session, I was to teach on the sovereignty of God. I had struggled for weeks on which passage to use. Originally starting out in Psalm 103, I just really didn't want to use that as my text, so I tried a million ways to use another text, but every time I ended up back at Psalm 103. Finally, a day before the first Treasures was to take place, I surrendered and said, "okay Lord, You are the Sovereign One, I will do whatever You lead me to do, and I guess Psalm 103 is it." I finished the study notes and showed up the next morning ready to go with what I hoped was the right message. My only question still before God was, "do I read the whole chapter? or just pick out certain verses?" Those questions remained as we started our morning, and our worship leader began to lead us in worship. She said she had been reading her devotions that morning and the passage she read was so good that she ended up reading the whole chapter to her husband. It so impressed her that she felt she should just share it with us as well, and she began to read the entire chapter of Psalm 103. Yes, our God is sovereign. He had every aspect of our morning in His control. He was so good to affirm that, yes, in that moment I was doing what He had called me to do. And yes, tears fell as I realized His blessing in the process!

We may never be called to speak to thousands, we may never do anything that 2000 yrs from now people will remember our name for, but trust me, we have ALL been called. He calls, and in simple childlike faith we accept our need of a Savior, and the simplicity of His calling is to be with Him, to know Him, and do whatever it is that He empowers us to do. If we live in that mindset, it removes all anxiety that we will miss out on His calling for our lives. It's simple. Be with Him today.

Father, Thank You that You call us, Your desire is that all would heed the call. Help us to walk with You daily, alert to when and what and where You would have us serve. And if there is something that You specifically choose us to do, help us Lord, empower us, to do all as unto You. Thank You for making it so simple to be with You. In Christ's name I pray, Amen.