

The Servant Appoints Men

As we saw last week, the ministry of Jesus is in full swing. The common people of the area are following Jesus because He preaches the Word of God in power and because He is working miracles for the glory of God. The religious leaders hate Jesus because He refuses to play by their rules and because He exposes them for the hypocrites they are. Our Lord's days are filled with ministry and things are happening at a hectic pace.

Today's passage in Mark 3 finds Jesus taking some time out of His frantic schedule. He takes the time to commune with His Father and to choose the twelve men who will be His representatives to the lost sheep of Israel.

Mark 3:13-19

13 And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him.

14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,

15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:

16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;

17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder";

18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite;

19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him." Thus began the greatest adventure these men had ever known. These men were called to be Disciples and Apostles. Can you imagine what that was like? To be one of these twelve men who walked with God? I hope you can imagine it, in fact I hope that you are experiencing it, because although Jesus only had twelve apostles, He is still calling and appointing disciples.

Now when we think about the twelve Apostles, because of the way we have sometimes seen them depicted in art and stained-glass windows, you might think that these men somewhere just below God or just below Christ in their piety or even divinity. We sometimes assume that these are the highest and the most religiously ascended of all Christian masters.

But the truth is that these men are not other worldly, they are not nearly divine, they are even the cream of the crop among men. They were certainly not the most educated, the most highly skilled, the most gifted, humanly speaking. The truth is, they basically are distinguished by one thing, that is they are ordinary.

They are a very, very strange group, a very diverse group. You probably couldn't have pulled these men together any other way than God doing it for His own purposes. While at least four of them were fishermen, the others are so different

in the things that they did that there would be no reason to collect these men together, no reason for them to come together, live together, work together and minister together apart from the purposes of God.

They are perfectly ordinary men in every way. Not one of them is renowned for scholarship. Not one of them is renowned for his eloquence. They were outsiders from the religious establishment of Jesus' day. They didn't have any particular natural talents. They don't appear to have any particular intellectual talents. As you follow them through the gospel accounts you find that they were prone to mistakes and misjudgments and misunderstandings and bad attitudes and lapses of faith and bitter failure and argumentativeness. And Jesus remarked that they were slow learners, they were spiritually dense.

Yet in spite of all this, God used them to carry on the work of Jesus after He ascended into heaven that totally turned the world upside down. Through them Jesus laid the foundation of His church. And their ministry is still going on today and we are part of the impact of that ministry.

How did Jesus take twelve ordinary men and use them to change the world? I think we can see part of the secret here in Mark 3.

I. Jesus' Method in Calling Them (3:13-14).

How did He call the disciples? Remember, He had called some of them before. We've already seen this in the gospel of Mark back in chapter 1. We read of Jesus walking along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee and He calls Simon and Andrew and James and John, fishermen, and He calls them to follow Him, to be His disciples.

You'd never guess this just by cursory reading of the gospel of Mark but in comparing with the other gospels, probably some 18 months has passed by since Jesus began His ministry at the time of His baptism. We just saw in the previous passage that many people, multitudes followed Jesus. Jesus had more than just twelve disciples. But now Jesus is going to appoint twelve. He still sometimes calls them disciples, but really they will become apostles. These men are going to be the foundation of the New Testament Church. Paul will say that the New Testament Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This little group of men is the embryo of the New Testament Church that will grow and expand through all the world.

A. Jesus goes up a mountain.

Mountains are significant in the Bible. It was on a mountain that God met Moses and God called Israel into a covenant relationship with Him. Notice what Jesus does there. It's on this mountain that He summons those to be with Him. Mark doesn't elaborate on it, but the other gospels elaborate on it a great deal, Luke especially, that on this mountain Jesus spends time in prayer, and from Luke's account He spends the whole night in prayer. And He actually summons or appoints or ordains these twelve to be His disciples in the morning.

B. Jesus chose these men.

Verse 13, **"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him."** The choice is a deliberate choice of

Jesus. That was unusual for Rabbis in Jesus' day. Normally a disciple chose his teacher. That seems to be the way that John the Baptist had his disciples: They saw something in John, and they were moved by his preaching, and they became his disciples. It was a voluntary act of theirs. But here it's different. Jesus does this appointing. He calls them. He summons them. Jesus will later say to them, **"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit,"** (John 15:16). By a deliberate choice of Jesus, these twelve were appointed.

C. Jesus appoints twelve.

He chose twelve. Every Jew would know the significance of the number twelve. Twelve was the number of the tribes of Israel. It was a deeply significant thing that Jesus would appoint twelve disciples because it would say immediately that He was appointing a new Israel. Jesus is establishing a new people of God. He's establishing His Church.

With the coming of Messiah comes a new Covenant. With the coming of a New Covenant comes a new leadership. In choosing these twelve ordinary men, Jesus sends an unmistakable message to the leaders of Israel that God is starting something new.

II. Jesus Calls them to a Mission (3:14-15).

1. they might be with Him - intimate fellowship with Him, as oppose to being the crowd.
2. they are to be send out to preach – continue the work He has started
3. to have authority to drive out demons – given the power (resources) in the line of work.

Put it simply, Jesus calls us to follow Him so that we can

- (1) share His life,
- (2) share His work, and
- (3) share His power.

Disciples are called to 3 things:

A. Jesus Calls Them to Be with Him -- v14a

It all starts here. It all starts in His presence. The first thing we have to understand is that we are nothing without Him. We are powerless to change ourselves much less the world if we are not with Him. Several things happened to the Disciples by being with Jesus.

They came to know Him not just know about Him. They entered into a relationship with Jesus that was both personal and transformational. The truth is today that most of us know more about Jesus than we know Jesus. It is a great thing to know about Him it is a greater thing to know Him in personal experience. To know Him as a friend.

They came to follow Him where He went they went. They did not dictate the course they simply followed where He led and went where He sent them. They understood that it was Jesus who called the shots. We really want a God that will

conform to our image and idea what we have is a God who calls us to conform to His image. Paul tells us in Romans that we have been chosen for a purpose to be conformed to the image of His son. There is an old saying You are who you run with."

Learn from Him by following we learn we should know more today than ever about what God wants what His will is because we learn by following.

B. Jesus Calls Them to Preach -- v14b

Understand something with me to be a disciple is to preach. The word preach, here is the word *Kerusso* it means to be a herald, to proclaim, to preach. We often misunderstand and even misuse the word, preach. For us preaching is the act of doing what I am doing delivering a message. This is a form of preaching but it is far from the only one. St. Francis of Assisi said Preach always, if necessary use words." That is the truth of the preaching of the Gospel. There are three primary ways that we are called to preach or be proclaimers of the good news of Christ. The first is through our lifestyle who we are Our lives should be a constant testimony to the Gospel of Christ. In the sermon on the mount that we are studying on Wed. nights, the key verse to the whole of Jesus teaching is Matthew 6:8 So do not be like them" We are called to a unique lifestyle one that is not like our neighbors. Paul said it this way do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

The second is through Action what we do it's all well and good to talk about missions, talk about evangelism, talk about helping people but if we are not doing something we have missed the boat. John said this whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

The third is through words what we say I put this last because the truth is what we say is meaningless if our lifestyle and our actions don't back up the words. Our words only have power when there is proof to back them up. We have to earn the right to speak.

C. Jesus Calls them in Power -- v15

He sends them forth. The verb "to send forth" is the root from which we get the word apostle, because that's what an apostle is: somebody who is sent forth from the King to be a representative spokesman on behalf of the King of King's and Lord of Lord's. They would be "the sent ones." That's what they would be called, "the sent ones."

A few chapters later Jesus will send these men out with His authority. "**And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.**" Mark 6:7.

The preaching ministry of these men was to be accompanied by miracles. They were given the power to heal the sick and to cast out devils. These were "sign gifts". They were given this power to validate their ministry to the people they preached to. The people knew that Jesus was a Healer and that He had power over demonic spirits. When the disciples came preaching and demonstrating that

same power, the people knew that their message was real and that they were truly the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not need the sign gifts in the same way these apostles did to validate our message. Why? The sign gifts were designed to speak to the Jewish people to let them know that their Messiah had come, 1 Cor. 14:22. Today, our message is validated by the fulfilled Word of God and the testimony of lives Jesus changes by His grace.

Every time He saves a soul and delivers a sinner from the grip of his or her sins, He is validating His message. Every time an alcoholic or drug addict is set free, He validates His message. Every time a marriage is put back together He validates His message. Every time a redeemed saint of God can stand and give testimony to the live-changing, soul-saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ He validates His message!

I am saying that we are seeing greater miracles today than the disciples were able to perform! Every time these doors open; every morning when we rise; every day that we live is a powerful demonstration of the power and presence of our God!

After Jesus was raised from the dead and before Jesus He ascended into heaven this is what He told His disciples:

" Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." Luke 24:49

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8

Jesus disciples then and now are empowered by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. We are empowered to be His witnesses.

God doesn't need eloquence to reach people. He just needs a voice, your voice, with a living, vital connection to Him in prayer.

I like the way Luci Swindoll once put it. She writes: "A friend of mine was caught in an elevator during a power failure. At first, there was momentary panic as all seven strangers talked at once. Then my friend remembered the tiny flashlight he had in his pocket. When he turned it on, the fear dissipated. During the 45 minutes they were stuck together they told jokes, laughed, and even sang. [The Bible] says we are that flashlight. Just as the flashlight draws power from its batteries, we draw power from Jesus. As light, we dissipate fear, bring relief, and lift spirits. We don't even have to be big to be effective. We just have to be 'on.'" (Luci Swindoll, "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman; www.PreachingToday.com)

We just have to be connected to Jesus, and He does all the work through us.