

Sunday, April 30, 2023 | Everyday Disciple

Week 3 | Luke 6:12-16 | "Twelve Ordinary Men"

A couple weeks ago, we resumed our study of Luke's gospel account by starting a series called "Everyday Disciple." In it, we'll explore a part of Luke's writing that gives us a peek into the day-to-day activities of Jesus' ministry. And, in doing so, we'll discover what it means to be like Jesus in everyday life.

The first two messages revolved around the Sabbath. We've learned that Jesus is the "Lord of the Sabbath." And, in doing so, we understand that this means the Lord is **inviting his followers to rest in his presence**. But also, Jesus' example on the Sabbath demonstrates that it is always lawful to do good. So much so that to withhold good, when it is in our power to do it, is actively promoting evil.

Today, we'll be formally introduced to the Twelve Apostles. Considering that there is now a group of Jews who is starting to oppose him, it only seems appropriate that the Lord should choose a special unit out of his own followers. Though the religious leaders were making plans to deal with Jesus (cf. Lu. 6:11), he had amassed quite a following. By and large, the Lord's ministry had been received positively. But his following had grown to such an extent that it was time for him to choose out the disciples a select group who would act as leaders within this new growing community. Later in the Book of Acts, they will all (save for Judas Iscariot) become the twelve pillars of the Church. And through these men, the four corners of the world will be reached with the Gospel.

READ: Luke 6:12-16 (ESV)

¹²In these days he [Jesus] went out to the mountain to **pray**, and all night he **continued in prayer** to God. ¹³And when day came, he **called** his disciples and **chose** from them twelve, whom he **named** apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, ¹⁵and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who **became** a traitor.

I want you to notice *three* things...

i. Jesus prayed all night before making a decision (vs. 12).

Prayer was an important part of Jesus' decision-making process. In fact, at decisive points in his life, we'll find the Lord praying (cf. 3:21; 9:18, 28-29; 11:1; 22:41). But it's worth pointing out that nowhere else do we find Jesus praying for such a long period of time.¹ And, because of his example, the early church made it their habit to pray during important moments (cf. Ac. 1:24; 6:6; 13:2-3; 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6).

ii. Jesus chose twelve men from the disciples (vs. 13).

The selection of twelve men was not an arbitrary decision. It had a purpose. It demonstrated that what Jesus was doing had continuity with God's dealing with his people in the O.T. Just as there were twelve tribes of Israel, so there were twelve apostles.² Far from being something new, Christianity is rooted in Judaism. Though, to be clear, it is not a replacement of Judaism. As Rom 11 makes clear, God still has a plan for Jews. Instead, the Church is a continuation of everything that God started with Abraham. In fact, eventually, the Apostles will act as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel in the last days (cf. Matt. 19:28; Lu. 22:29-30). And after the Lord has created the new heaven and earth, he will also make a new Jerusalem and the foundation for the city's walls will be etched with the names of the twelve apostles (cf. Rev. 21:14).

iii. Jesus named the Twelve "apostles" (vs. 13).

The term "apostle" is a transliteration of the Greek word **ἀπόστολος** (ah-pos'-tow-los) and it literally translates to "the sent one."³ This, in of and of itself, doesn't seem significant. After all, can't we, in a sense, say we've all be sent by God? Doesn't that make us all apostles? The short answer is no. Though we may call ourselves "followers of Jesus," "Christians," or even "disciples," we must ***never*** call ourselves "apostles."

Though this term literally means "the sent one," it is used in a much more specific (and therefore less generalized way) that excludes everyone but a handful of Christians. Throughout its use in the N.T., "apostle" means something akin to terms "ambassador" or "delegate." And while, yes, though every US citizen is, in a way, an "ambassador" for America, there are really only a handful of people who've been officially approved or indorsed but the US government to act as formal delegates. And it is in this sense that we must understand the term "apostles."

¹ Nolland, John, *Luke 1:1-9:20*, The Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 35A, (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan, 2000), p. 269.

² Bock, Darrell L., *Luke 1:1-9:50*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Academic, 1994), p. 541.

³ Morris, Leon, *Luke*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentary, (Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity Press, 1988), p. 145.

Jesus' selecting from a pool of disciples and giving them a special title, sets them apart from others who were following Jesus. They were entrusted with Jesus' authority and commissioned as his mouthpiece.⁴ Later, we will learn when the Apostles were looking for Judas' replacement, they wanted someone who had traveled with Jesus from the very beginning and could be an eye-witness to everything from Jesus' baptism to his resurrection (cf. Ac. 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:5).⁵ As such, anyone who claims to be an apostle today is either ignorant of the Scriptures or is trying to deceive someone. There are no new apostles today.

So, what's the takeaway?

Ordinary people are given an extraordinary purpose when they follow Jesus.

Simon Peter – The Rock of the Church who preach on the day of Pentecost and thousands will be saved.

Andrew – The one responsible for bringing his brother to Peter (cf. Jhn. 1:40-42).

James – The first apostle to be martyred (cf. Ac. 12:1-2).

John – The Beloved Disciple and care-taker for Jesus' mother. Author of the Gospel of John, 1-3 John, and Revelations.

Phillip – It seems whenever he's mentioned, he's bring someone to Jesus (cf. Jhn. 1:43-45)

Bartholomew (aka Nathaniel) – Known for his faith (cf. John 1:48-51).

Matthew (aka Levi) – The tax collector and author of the Gospel of Mathew (cf. Lu. 5:27-32).

Thomas (aka Didymus) – Though known for his doubt (cf. Jhn. 20:24-29), ought to also be known for his courage (cf. Jhn. 11:16).

James the son of Alphaeus – Nothing is known.

Simon the Zealot – Nothing is known save for, perhaps, he was either "zealous" for the things of God, or, he was an actual "Zealot," which is to say, he was a Jewish rebel who actively opposed Rome. Zealots were known to have fomented rebellion during the fall of Jerusalem and Josephus places much of the blame for that event on this group. Should this latter theory be the case, it is significant that within Jesus' select band of brothers, there was Levi the Roman Tax Collector and Simon the Jewish Rebel.

⁴ Nolland (2000), p. 266.

⁵ Garland, David E., *Luke*, The Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan, 2011), p. 273.

Judas son of James – Nothing is known.

Judas Iscariot – Should Iscariot be an indication of where he hailed from, this would make him the only disciple who was not a Galilean as “Iscariot” could mean “of Kerioth” which was a city south of Jerusalem. Knowing what Judas does later, it is a significant point in favor of the reliability of Scriptures that he is named among the disciples. The early Christians would’ve been tempted to strike his name from the books not only out of embarrassment but also because it might’ve been a point against Jesus’ claim to be God. If he knew everything, why did he choose Judas? But, yet, Christians from the very beginning preserved this fact. And, as John shows in his account, Jesus choosing Judas was proof that Jesus was God (cf. Jhn. 13:18-19).

READ: John 1:43-51 (ESV)

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” ⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” ⁴⁷ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” ⁴⁸ Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” ⁵⁰ Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹ And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”

Video Description

Everyday Disciple | Week 3 | “Twelve Ordinary Men”

TEXT: Luke 6:12-16

Today, we'll be formally introduced to the Twelve Apostles. Considering that there is now a group of Jews who is starting to oppose him, it only seems appropriate that the Lord should choose a special unit out of his own followers. Though the religious leaders were making plans to deal with Jesus (cf. Lu. 6:11), he had amassed quite a following. By and large, the Lord's ministry had been received positively. But his following had grown to such an extent that it was time for him to choose out the disciples a select group who would act as leaders within this new growing community. Later in the Book of Acts, they will all (save for Judas Iscariot) become the twelve pillars of the Church. And through these men, the four corners of the world will be reached with the Gospel.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: