

OUR LORD COMMISSIONS THE TWELVE APOSTLES

TEXT: MARK 3:13-21

Introduction:

1. Tonight we will look at the commissioning of the twelve apostles, their message, and their method.
2. Mark 3:13 says, “And He goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him.” Luke 6:12 tells us that before our Lord commissioned the twelve apostles, He “continued all night in prayer to God.”
3. Mark 3:14 says, “And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him.” Spending time fellowshiping with the Lord is an indispensable qualification for Christian service.
4. So we see here two important things: the Lord prayed all night before He commissioned the twelve apostles, and they spent much time with Him.
5. This training prepared them to carry on the work after our Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension.
6. The Bible does not identify “the mountain” (Mark 3:13).
7. Our Lord “calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him” (3:13). They obeyed the call.
8. This was a call to leave their comfortable surroundings and their jobs. It was a call to separate from those who were not committed to our Lord.
9. It was a call to take a stand for the Lord and to identify with Him.
10. It is probably not a coincidence that our Lord chose twelve men – this corresponds to the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve tribes.

11. Mark does not use the word “apostles” here. He says, “And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.”
12. Later on Mark says, “And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught” (6:30).

I. THE COMMISSIONING OF THE 12 APOSTLES

1. “And Simon He surnamed Peter” (3:16). Simon Peter was an impetuous, affectionate man with a big heart. He was a born leader. But he certainly was not a pope (or a priest).
2. “And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder” (3:17).
3. James, the son of Zebedee, was later killed by Herod. He was the first of the twelve apostles to die as a martyr (cf. Acts 12:2).
4. “John his brother” (3:17) is referred to in the Bible as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” He wrote 5 books of the Bible.
5. They are referred to as “the sons of thunder” – men of strong feelings who needed to be properly trained by the Lord (cf. Luke 9:49-56).
6. Andrew (3:18) was Simon Peter’s brother. “Andrew his brother” (Matthew 10:2). From John 1:40 we learn that Andrew was following the teachings of John the Baptist, and through John he met Jesus. It was Andrew who brought Simon Peter to Christ.
7. “Philip” (3:18) is not to be confused with the evangelist Philip who later served as one of the first deacons. “Philip” was a common Greek name.
8. This Philip brought Nathanael to Christ. John 1:45 says, “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in

- the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”
9. “Bartholomew” (3:18) is believed to be the same as Nathanael (cf. John 1:44-50).
 10. “Matthew” is the publican, also known as “Levi,” the author of the Gospel of Matthew (cf. Mark 2:14).
 11. “Thomas” (3:18) is also referred to as “Didymus,” which means “twin.” He is commonly called “Doubting Thomas” (cf. John 20:19-29). NOTE: See what happens when you miss the Sunday night service.
 12. Little is known about “James the son of Alphaeus” (3:18). But he has a great name! There were two apostles named James.
 13. “Thaddeus” (3:18) had the surname of Lebbeus (cf. Matthew 10:3). He is also known as “Judas the brother of James” (John 14:22; Luke 6:16). Back in Bible times Judas (Judah, Jude) was a very popular name. Our Lord had a half-brother named Jude. However, ever since Judas Iscariot it is no longer a popular name.
 14. “Simon the Canaanite” (3:18) is referred to in Luke 6:15 as “Simon called Zelotes” (“the Zealot,” i.e. dedicated to the overthrow of the Roman government).
 15. Last in the list is “Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him” (3:19). He is listed last by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John does not list the twelve apostles in his Gospel.
 16. An entire sermon could be preached on Judas alone. To save time I will not do that. However, let me just say a few things before moving on:
 - His name will go down in infamy (Mark 3:19) as the world’s greatest traitor and villain.

- He apparently fooled everyone except the Lord (cf. John 13:10, 11, 18, 21-30).
- The Bible clearly teaches that he went to hell (Mark 14:10, 11, 17-21).
- In many ways, Judas Iscariot is a picture and type of the antichrist (John 17:12; cf. II Thess. 2:3).

II. THE MESSAGE OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1. This was a transitional time in the early days of Christianity. Our Lord had just commissioned His apostles. The church had not yet been established. At this time, there were no church officers, no church ordinances, no Lord's Supper, etc. The Holy Spirit was not yet given, etc.
2. Many weird cults take Scripture out of its proper context and they go off the deep end. For example, they will read Matthew 10:1 & 8, and claim that all Christians should be raising the dead (Oral Roberts and Benny and others claim to have done this), and casting out devils, and healing the sick, etc. (cf. Mark 3:14, 15).
3. By the way, notice preaching comes first (Mark 3:14).
4. I do not want to spend too much time refuting the so-called "faith healers," but I do have one important question: Why don't these so-called healers and "miracle men" go visit the hospitals? (Answer: They cannot get a good offering there.) Why don't they try raising the dead?
5. Let us go to Matthew's account and look at the instructions given by our Lord to His disciples (Matthew 10:5-7). Is this for us today? Are we to avoid the Gentiles and only try and win Jews to the Lord? Of course not (cf. Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).

6. The Gospel went to the Jews first (Rom. 1:16). But they rejected it and the Gospel then went out to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-49).
7. By the way, concerning this misinterpretation of Matthew 10:1 and 10:8, for many years J. Vernon McGee offered \$100 to anyone who would come forward and be able to prove that they were genuinely healed by a faith healer and not one person contacted him.
8. Many others have made similar offers. Much of the charismatic tongues and healing movement is phony, and is driven by emotionalism.

III. THE METHOD OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

1. It is not hard to discern what was temporary and what is permanent. We just have to study the Bible. Second Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2. The Bible must be mastered. Just like a doctor or accountant or lawyer or architect or electrician or automobile mechanic or any professional who devotes himself to mastering his trade, Christians must devote themselves to learning the Bible.
3. An example: In Matt. 10:9, 10 our Lord told the apostles not to bother with money, or an extra coat, or shoes, or staves (a staff that could also be used as a weapon). But in Luke 22:35, 36 He said, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one."
4. We would not think of sending a missionary off without any funds today. The instructions in Matt. 10 were for a temporary mission.
5. What about today? What application is there for us today? The apostles were to go out preaching, house to house, city to city (Matthew 10:11-13).

6. But not everyone would receive the apostles. Those who rejected them were rejecting Christ. This certainly applies to today (Matthew 10:13-16).

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CONCLUSION:

1. V. Raymond Edman wrote, “Plato is alleged to have posted a warning over his door that only the learned could enter; Confucius concerned himself with the wise and the noble, and contemned (viewed with contempt) the plebian and the slow to learn; Mohammed chose crafty men of influence and ability to present his cause. Not so with the Nazarene, who chose ordinary men, everyday men, the kind one would find in almost any congregation, to teach and to train them that they might be His emissaries to reach others” (*Storms and Starlight*).
2. The Lord is no longer calling apostles, but He is still calling for workers – preachers, missionaries, and soulwinners.
3. Will you answer the call?

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