

The Paradox of Prayer and Providence (Luke 6:12-16)

1. The Interaction of Prayer with Providence (v.12-13)

“And it came to pass” (5:1, 12, 17; 6:1, 6) links this account with the episodes in Jesus’ ministry up to this point, as there is mounting tension between Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus went “to the mountain” to pray.

Prayer: From two Greek words: *pro* (toward, facing, before) and *euchomai* (speak out, utter aloud, express a wish). It can include verbal or nonverbal communication with a definite aim.

- Prayer is the alignment and submission of the petitioner’s will to God’s revealed (command) and decreed will (sovereign).
- Prayer can include petitions, supplications, or a requesting of wisdom on behalf of the supplicant or for others (Phil. 4:6-7; Jas. 1:1:2-8).
- Jesus going up the mountain and praying is consistent with the theme of His ministry. Of all the Gospel writers, Luke notes Jesus praying to His Father before significant events (5:16; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; 22:32, 40-46).

Only Luke mentions this “all-nighter” before Jesus selects, commissioned, and empowers the twelve. Luke does not demonstrate the relationship between the length of prayer, holiness, sanctification, and spiritual maturity. Something else is going on at “the mountain.”

Jesus’ prayer was of a different kind than ours:

- There is an inward mystery in Jesus’ prayer and mode of direct revelation as the eternal, incarnate Son possessing two natures: God and man.
- As the eternal Son, He possesses all fulness of deity as God, co-equal with the Father as the distinct person of the Son. He has been, and always will be, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, with no variation in His deity. Through the incarnation, He laid aside His divine prerogatives to depend on the Father (Jn. 5:19, 30; 8:38; 12:49 and enablement of the Holy Spirit while still possessing His eternal attributes as God.
- As the second Adam, He is able to sin and able not to sin. He is not omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent in His humanity. Jesus’ ascension to the mountain all night in prayer demonstrates His humanity, as His humanity grew in stature and wisdom (Lk. 2:40). Jesus of Nazareth, as a man, was lacking and, consequently, was dependent on God (Father) for something.
- Jesus, as the Son of God, chose not to access His omniscience even though He possessed it entirely. His humanity learned something on the mountain, but not His divinity.
- We are unsure whether He: presented, as a man, all the disciples following Him (who were more than 12 at the time) or prayed for strength, wisdom, discernment, etc. We are unsure of the details of the “all-nighter.” Only Luke mentions that He prayed before choosing the inner twelve.
- Jesus’ humanity gained something and learned something in this perplexing prayer engagement “all night” (10-12 hours).
 - Everything recorded that He prayed for has happened, and will happen, for all of Jesus’ prayer is in direct alignment with God’s will of command and will of decree: His divine will as the Son, His human will as the second Adam without sin, the will of the Spirit, and the will of the Father are all in direct alignment.
- No one can share what Jesus, possessed as the incarnate Son, prayed on the mountain.
- When we pray, we do not receive any additional revelation through signs, wonders, miracles, visions, or audible voices. When we pray, the Holy Spirit retrieves, brings to remembrance, and empowers His Word that we have stored in our hearts.
- When Jesus went up to the mountain all night, something was given, affirmed, or provided that we will not experience.

- As the God-man, there is a unique, relational, and revelational dynamic between the incarnate Son, with two wills (human and divine) filled by the Holy Spirit and simultaneously dependent on the Father.

Prayer is a mysterious partner to providence. For Jesus, His prayer aligns with God’s will of decree and new divine revelation. In contrast, our prayers are according to God’s will of command or decree with no further additional divine revelation.

2. The Selection from Prayer in Providence (v.14-16)

- Jesus is praying for the selection of the twelve. He already had many disciples following Him—more than 12 (Lk. 10:1-12).
- When “day” came (after 6 AM), he selected (called) twelve called “apostles.”
- The number “twelve” frequently occurs in Scripture: there were twelve patriarchs/twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 35:23-26; 49:1-28), twelve men, one from each tribe in Israel, who placed twelve stones in the Jordan before the conquest of Canaan (Josh. 4:2), Solomon’s personal guards comprised of twelve officers (1 Kg. 4:7), Ezra appointed twelve priests (Ez. 8:24), the twelve apostles, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, will sit in judgment over Israel in God’s coming kingdom (Rev. 21:12-14).
 - A disciple means “learned one” or “student.” There was little difference between a disciple and a servant in the first century. While the disciples have left everything to follow Him, they are not doing anything: they follow Jesus, walk behind him, talk to one another, and listen to His teaching. Their only task is to follow Him with little participation.
 - An apostle is “sent forth” and “commissioned” to represent another. It refers to a delegate, commissioner, or ambassador sent out on a mission with the authority of the one who sent him. In Greek culture, *apostolos* was used as an admiral of a fleet sent by the king on a particular assignment.

Simon (Peter): impetuous and unreliable and a disciple of John the Baptist before following Jesus (Jn. 1:35-42)—martyred 64 AD. Andrew: previously a disciple of John the Baptist (Jn. 1:35-42)—martyred 60 AD. James and John: previously fishermen (like Peter and Andrew)—James was martyred 44 AD. Philip: thickheaded, calculated, and an earnest inquirer—martyred 68 AD. Bartholomew (Nathaniel)—martyred 68 AD. Matthew: a tax collector—martyred 60 AD. Thomas—martyred 72 AD. James, Son of Alphaeus—martyred 62 AD. Simon (called the Zealot): may have been a political nationalist—martyred 61 AD. Judas, Son of James (most likely Thaddeus)—martyred in 65 AD. Judas Iscariot: his name means Judas, son of Kerioth; he was the only Galilean in Jesus’ inner twelve—committed suicide.

Only Jesus can call, qualify, and change people to be fit vessels for Him. He displays His power in man’s weakness, so He receives the praise (1 Cor. 26-30; 2 Cor. 12:1-10).

Points of Application: