



Lesson Four ~ June 16, 2020

Jesus' Relationship with His Twelve Apostles

Luke 6:12 – 16: *In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

Simon Peter

Peter is first in every list of the apostles (first among equals) and plays a prominent role in the gospels. He was a native of Bethsaida a town on the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus condemned Bethsaida.

Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Matthew 11:21)

He and his brother Andrew were fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. They were disciples of John the Baptist before coming to know Jesus.

John 1:35 – 42: The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

Andrew

Andrew was Peter’s brother and a fisherman, too. He was the one who brought Peter to Jesus. Can you think of other people who are well-known Christians who were brought to Jesus by someone unknown?

Jacob (James) The Son of Zebedee

James (Jacob) was the brother of John. Jacob (James) was the first martyr among the apostles.

And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword (Acts 12:2).

James is not a Jewish name. In the 1611 *King James Version* of the Bible, the name ‘Jacob’ was replaced by the King’s name, ‘James.’

John the Son of Zebedee

John was also a fisherman. He wrote the Gospel of John and four other books of the New Testament. Can you name them?

James and John with Peter made up Jesus’ inner circle of the disciples.

Philip

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida (John 1:44). Probably a fisherman.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel is probably the same person mentioned in Matthew as Bartholomew. Bartholomew is not a name. He is actually *Bar Talmái* (the son of Talmái).

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." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" 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." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (John 1:45 - 49)

Thomas

Thomas is famous for doubting the disciple's testimony of seeing the risen Christ.

Matthew

Matthew was author of the first gospel. He is known as the tax collector. Also called Levi in Mark.

James the Son of Alphaeus

The "son of Alphaeus" distinguishes him from the other James, the brother of John. He may have been the brother of Matthew who was also a son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14).

Thaddaeus

Thaddaeus is only mentioned in Matthew's gospel. He is probably Judas the son of James mentioned in Luke and Acts. They may have decided to call him Thaddaeus, in order for there to be one Judas among the twelve. Or after the betrayal of Judas Iscariot he could be that he did not want the stigma that would be attached with the name Judas.

Simon the Cananean or the Zealot

This word is not derived from Canaan nor Cana but from the Aramaic word *qanan* meaning "zealot" or "enthusiast" The name refers to his intense nationalism and hatred of Rome.

Judas Iscariot

Judas is mentioned more often than any of the other disciples except for Peter.

Summary

While here on earth Jesus chose twelve disciples to be his intimate pupils. However not all of them were prominent. We know almost nothing about Simon the Cananean, Thaddaeus, Nathaniel and James the son of Alphaeus. We do know that they were a diverse group of individuals coming from different walks of life.

Would you have wanted to be chosen as one of these twelve apostles?

What was Jesus calling them to?

- Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.
- You cannot serve God and money.
- Forsake the love of money and the pleasures of the world.
- Deny yourself.
- Serve others.
- Take up your cross and follow me.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39)

Would you want to follow someone who said you had to lose your life for him?

What would "take up your cross" mean to these men?

Would this invitation have attracted you?

What did these disciples have in common?

“In my observation, in fact, the disciples’ most obvious trait seems to be their denseness.”
Yancey, “The Jesus I Never Knew” p. 99

Matthew 17:16-17: And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” And Jesus answered, “O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.”

Matthew 16:11: How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Mark 9:32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

John 8:27: They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father.

John 12:16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

John 20:9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

“Why does Jesus invest so much in these apparent losers?” Yancey p. 99

Mark 3:14: And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach.

That they might be with him. Jesus needed their friendship, their companionship.

That he might send them out to preach.

Luke 9:1 – 6: When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

Jesus gave them power to heal. How would you feel if you could truly heal someone?

Jesus knew that their impact on the world would happen after he rose and ascended, and the Holy Spirit would come upon them. Then these eleven men would change the world by going out and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

John 14:12: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

“Oddly, as I look back on Jesus’ time from the present perspective, it is the very ordinariness of the disciples that gives me hope. . . I cannot avoid the impression that Jesus prefers working with unpromising recruits. . . From such a ragtag band Jesus founded a church that has not stopped growing in twenty centuries.” Yancey p. 99 and 100