

The Mind of Christ - Lesson 66

August 7, 2020

Section 53

Welcome again to another edition on the Mind of Christ. I started this study back in 2010 when I decided to do a complete assessment of the Mind of Christ. I decided to go through all the things Jesus said and all the things He did, and do an in depth study of this so I could understand Him better. Paul said he wanted to know Christ and that was my motivation; I want to know Christ and so it was a great, great study for me. It lasted seven years and it produced 21 journals. So about a year and a half ago, some people asked me if I would begin recording some of the things that I'd found in this study, and I decided to take the study from my journals themselves. It is an in depth study; it is not easy; it is complicated sometimes. It is one of those studies where you would best do a couple of things: Have your Bible handy, and be ready to "pause" at certain points in order to think about what is being said and then, maybe, study it further because it is meat; it's not milk and it must be slowly digested. Like I said, it took me seven years to digest this and I'm still processing much of what I studied.

I decided to follow A. T. Robertson's "Harmony of the Gospels" where he divided the life of Christ into several sections, so I am on section 53 of the "Harmony of the Gospels" and this is a place where Jesus chooses His apostles. This is the selection of the 12 that He designates as apostles. The story is found in two accounts of the gospels; one is in Mark and the other is in Luke. Matthew and John do not record this incident. So we will read from Mark and Luke in order to see our text.

Mark 3:13-19

And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. ¹⁴ And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, ¹⁵ and to have authority to cast out the demons. ¹⁶ And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), ¹⁷ and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder"); ¹⁸ and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Luke 6:12-16

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. ¹³ And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; ¹⁵ and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; ¹⁶ Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

One of the things that is amazing to me is that Jesus did so much of His ministry before selecting the twelve. We've covered a lot of ground so far and we're just now getting to the point where Jesus chose the twelve. I believe we're about at least a year into His ministry, so the whole time He actually trained the twelve as a group was probably the last couple of years of His ministry.

These disciples who followed Him from place to place; we can only be sure of certain ones who were named up to this point. We know that Jesus chose Peter, Andrew, James and John and told them to follow Him even though He hadn't yet designated them to be apostles. We also, may have at this point, have Nathaniel and Matthew also being called, so at most we only have about six of the twelve that have, in any way, surfaced on our radar up to this point. But it doesn't mean that the others were not in the crowd of the disciples or of those who had stated their allegiance to Him. In fact, the very text we just read indicates that.

Luke begins with Jesus spending all night in prayer to God on the mountain. He will also, next after this, deliver His famous Sermon on the Mount after this all-night prayer vigil. So there are a couple of things that we see in this prayer vigil Jesus had all night on the mountain. One is that the next day He is going to select His Apostles. Second, He is going to deliver His most famous sermon that is in the Gospels, "The Sermon on the Mount".

At the end of the Sabbath, Jesus went to pray and from the text we see that it was 1. It was deliberate, very intentional going out to this place to pray. 2. It was an isolated place. 3. It was for a long period of time. 4. It was requiring great discipline to pray without sleep coming off the previous days' events. 5. And, of course, the prayer is addressed to God.

Seeing that He came down and chose His twelve apostles and delivered His first major, recorded address, we can only surmise that that was what He was praying about. So why did the choosing of the twelve and the Sermon to follow require such a night of devotion?

Ephesians 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. So God's household is built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets with Jesus as the cornerstone; this dwelling where God lives by His Spirit.

The apostles would play an important role in the formation of this new temple; the church. Paul, who becomes part of this elite and unique group, later tells Timothy that **our task** is to *entrust what has been given to us to faithful men who will be able to teach others, also*.

Acts chapter 1 makes much out of the Apostles being witnesses (1:8 "you shall be my witnesses") and later in **Acts 1:21-22**, the necessity of the apostle who would replace Judas, he must be a witness, especially of the resurrection of Jesus. ²¹ "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— ²² beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness *with us* of His resurrection." These, except for John, were, as witnesses, were martyred for their faith, or for their testimony. **1 John 1:1** stresses this role of witnessing. Paul had a special witness of Jesus on the road in Arabia (**Acts 22:6-11**) and in the third heaven (**2 Cor. 12:2**), and also stresses the witnessing work in **1 Cor. 15:1**, "the Gospel Paul preached". Jesus made it clear from **John 5:37-47** that human witness was an aid to people being saved, but that He knew that the witness of the Father was sufficient for Him.

So in the choosing of the twelve, Jesus was choosing witnesses. He was choosing people who would be with Him, who could testify to what He did and what He said. Now, did these twelve know this day and this designation would change their lives forever? It would actually bring about great joy and intense suffering. They were being appointed to one of the most significant roles ever given by God to man. ***Could Peter, John, and Paul ever imagine so many boys being named after them?***

Well, from disciples to apostles; from learners, in a sense, to graduates. Sent out; yes, Jesus was not finished with them yet. He had a lot more to teach them but He was designating them as people who were ‘**sent out**’. The process was calling, choosing and then naming. The calling was broader than the choosing and the naming. **Many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14)**.

In this case, Jesus calls His disciples. Those in this location were those who were accustomed, at this point, to follow Him on His circuit. The broader theme of calling people by the gospel is ‘to come to His banquet’ as in Matthew 22, and goes out to everyone. But in **Acts 2:39**, He says that the promise is for you and your children, and all who are “far off”, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself. ***This is the broader calling***. But there was a special calling for these apostles. In **this**, we see the calling of the Gentiles; they were the ones who were “far off”. The **calling** is a **major theme** of Scripture.

The Calvinists make the calling selective to those who Jesus died for ... those previously chosen or elected by God for salvation. The Scripture makes clear that the call is to all who have heard His voice ... those who have ears to hear. Only those ‘listening’ can be effectively called.

Calling lends to selection or choice. In this case, the choice of “**the twelve**” was sovereign, and it was exclusive. It was based on those who had answered the call to discipleship. Jesus, from **that** group, chose twelve. Now some of them had been previously called specifically, though, perhaps, all of them hadn’t. We just don’t have the record.

But from the pool of disciples, twelve were separated out for Apostleship. Of course, the number 12 is significant for the new Israel, those through whom a new progeny will emerge, the “new Children of Israel” and a new “12 tribes” to carry the message to be a light to the Gentiles. So there is a correlation between the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles.

The word apostle “apostolos” (αποστολος) means “one who is sent; an ambassador”, a messenger, one who has been commissioned by Christ. It means “from” and it means “to send, to send off, to send forth”.

Why does God use agency; or agents, angels, prophets, evangelists, or teachers? He has every ability to do it Himself. Even the incarnation, with the exception of the physical death and resurrection, could have been accomplished without agency. But He uses people to get His work done. Agency is such an integral part of God’s work. It seems it must proceed out of His character.

The word is used of others beyond the Twelve as we see of Epaphroditus in **Phil. 2:25**, who was their messenger, so he could be called an apostle, but not in the sense that the 12 were called apostles. **John 13:16** gives us this principle. Neither is the one who is sent greater than the One who sent him. In **Luke 11:49** Jesus says it is the wisdom of God who said, ‘I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute.’ In **Revelation 2:2** ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false...’ The Ephesians put some so-called apostles to the test and found them to be false. There can be false prophets as well.

Mark said that He appointed 12. The word “appointed” with a wide meaning, means *to make* or *to do*. Jesus is bringing about the 12 from common ordinary men. Mark says he did this with three purposes in mind...to *be with* Him, to send them out to *preach*, and to have *authority* to cast out demons. That was the reason He *called* them and that was the reason he *appointed* them.

The process of training the apostles was one of *being with Jesus*. Later in **Acts 4:13** this will be one of the distinguishing marks of the “uneducated” and “untrained” men. **Now as they** (the counsel of rulers and elders) **observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.** They marveled and began to recognize that they had been with Jesus. Something happens when you spend time with Jesus. What happens is *transformation*. (Read 2 Corinthians, chapters 3 and 4).

Jesus “modeled the message” and revealed the Father by word and deed. This traveling band of brothers and students were slowly changed by spending time on the road in various situations with Jesus. John wrote this in **1 John 1:1-2** “**what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life**” ... this personal, direct contact with the Word of Life made them witnesses.

The second part of their training was to send them out to preach. To send out is “apostolos” (αποστολος), our apostle word. The word ‘preach’ is “keruso” (κηρυσσω) meaning to *herald*, to *proclaim* or to *publish* or *announce*. They will be as John the Baptist and Jesus did. They are going to ‘announce’ the Gospel, the Kingdom, and the Christ Messiah. They will get the word out, serving as witnesses as well. From their previous vacations, this is a major retooling. We will see that they are given supernatural help to do this. Human agency to get such a precious and essential message out should amaze us. God is showing such confidence in these twelve men.

The third purpose of their calling was to be able to cast out demons. For this, they would need authority. The word is “exousia” (εξουσια). It means authority, privilege, force, capacity, competency, freedom, or mastery. This would be no small task if for no other reason than to build within these men, the faith and the tools of prayer and fasting needed to tackle these dreadful creatures that we call demons.

What must these 12 have been thinking as they hear their job description? And what must Jesus be thinking to choose 12 uneducated common men for such a task?

1 Corinthians 1:21 comes to my mind. “God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” Then Paul goes on to say, ²⁶“For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no man may boast before God.” **1 Cor. 1:26-29**

Then in **2 Corinthians 4:7** Paul says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves”. Jesus did *not* want the strength and the power to be in the messenger or the vessel due to some earthly credentials but in the message itself and the Person of the message ... Jesus Christ. Could this be what Jesus was thinking?

The ways the lists of names are given are slightly different if you look at them in Mark and Luke. The lists are a little different. I'll try to make this clear. It can be a bit complicated. Mark talks about *Simon*, and then he adds, ‘to whom He gave the name *Peter*’. Luke talks about Simon simply saying ‘whom He also named Peter’. Then Mark talks about James, the son of Zebedee, while Luke simply adds to that ‘and Andrew his brother’. (Of course, ‘and Andrew his brother’ is connected with Peter because Peter’s brother was Andrew.)

The third one mentioned in Mark is ‘John, his brother’, again associated with James the son of Zebedee; and to them He gave the name Boanerges which means “Sons of Thunder”. Then in Luke, the third name it says is simply ‘James’.

The fourth name in Mark is ‘Andrew’. In Luke, the fourth name is ‘John’.

For the fifth disciple, Mark says ‘Philip’ and Luke also has ‘Philip’ as the fifth one as well.

For the sixth disciple Mark has ‘Bartholomew’ while Luke has him as well.

The seventh apostle in Mark is ‘Matthew’, and Luke also names ‘Matthew’ as well.

The Eighth one in Mark is ‘Thomas’, and Luke also has ‘Thomas’.

The ninth one in Mark is ‘James the son of Alphaeus’; Luke has him as well.

The tenth apostle in Mark has ‘Thaddaeus’ and Luke has ‘Simon who was called the Zealot’.

The eleventh in Mark is ‘Simon the Zealot’, and in Luke it is ‘Judah the son of James’.

For number 12 Mark has ‘Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him’; and Luke says ‘Judas Iscariot who became a traitor’.

Now again, I know that is very complicated but I encourage you to go back and look at the lists in Mark and Luke and compare them.

I surmise that ‘Thaddaeus’, and ‘Judah, the son of James’ are the same person.

In **Acts 1:13** there's a list in another order. It reads “Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James”; and then, of course, Matthias was added in **Acts 1:26**.

Since the apostles had a thing about ‘who is the greatest’ I wondered how this figured into the listing. Peter is always first, and Andrew, James and John are always next in every list. In **John 1:43** Philip found Nathaniel. Was he one of the twelve? If so, which one; probably Bartholomew.

In the list we also see some changes as in Simon who became ‘Peter’, and James and John who were called ‘Sons of Thunder’. Then there are a couple of distinctives as in ‘Simon the Zealot’ who was obviously a zealot who was very much like Barabbas who was trying to overthrow the Roman government; and then of course, Judas who was called “a traitor”.

In two cases the parentage was given in regard to the Sons of Zebedee and the son of Alphaeus. So this was Jesus’ special *band of brothers* who occupied that special relationship and special mission. This too, goes to the heart of Jesus’ thinking.

As a Rabbi, He had the choice of how He would educate these men. He chose to have a traveling band who learned by doing on-the-job training and by receiving teaching on the road. This was not typical for Jesus’ day for a class of students. Their training would last about two and a half to three years. Actually, perhaps, they may have had more as a group for about two years, and it will forever change their lives.

Well, that’s the summary of the choosing of the twelve. Obviously, as we go on, we will see individual ones who are highlighted in the gospels where Jesus interacted with them. Some of them, though, are never mentioned again specifically, and so that’s very interesting as well. But these are the men who Jesus is going to pour His life into. He is going to ‘disciple’ them. He will make disciples who will then go out to make other disciples. So, how Jesus works with these men is important for us to understand how we, too, can imitate Jesus in this disciple-making process.

I hope this has been beneficial to you. I would encourage you to go to our website at <https://www.centralsarasota.org/> where you can find many resources there to engage in different ways in other things that we’re doing at the Central Church of Christ. I encourage you to do that.

Until next time, I thank you for joining us.