

Choosing The Twelve

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[0 : 00] Every four years, except for 2020, since 1896, nations from around the world have gathered together in one place or another for the Olympic Games.

And as you know, every country has its own Olympic committee that goes to great lengths to ensure that its very best athletes are chosen to represent the nation.

And for nearly 100 years of that time, participation in the Olympic Games was limited to collegiate or domestic league amateurs.

In other words, professionals weren't allowed to participate. So these Olympic committees would have to study those who were performing or competing collegiately or in certain local leagues throughout their nations to find someone that could represent them.

But in 1992, as some of you will remember, the International Basketball Federation allowed professional players to participate in the Summer Olympics for the very first time.

[1 : 17] And it was a team from the United States that consisted of a group of men that many have considered to be the greatest sports team to ever be put together, ever.

It was replete with superstars like Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson and Larry Bird and Charles Barkley and Patrick Ewing.

And we could go on and on and on. And maybe the one that we would say really shouldn't have belonged on the team was Christian Laettner. But they needed one collegiate player and Duke was the only place that had someone available.

And so Christian Laettner joined the team as well over Shaquille O'Neal, actually. What was amazing about this team is that they were absolutely unbeatable. They defeated every opponent on average by 44 points a game.

Not that they scored 44 points, but they beat everyone by 44 points a game. And actually, 30 years ago this week, Sports Illustrated, the issue for February of that year, 1991, had a picture of a few of the players on its front cover.

[2 : 32] And they dubbed the team the Dream Team. It was the very best that basketball had to offer, not only in the United States, but actually all around the world.

And so from 1991 until now, that term has become something that we recognize quite often. Even if you don't like basketball or sports in general, you know what people mean when they say the Dream Team.

Hopefully you know what they mean when they say the Dream Team. Well, the passage that we're studying today, this text, was also involving the selecting of a group of individuals that by human standards was more of a nightmare than it was a dream.

In fact, one of the Gospels' themes, as you study through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, one of the themes that characterize the way that they deal and talk about and write about Jesus and His ministry is they write about Him as the King who was establishing His kingdom on earth in power and in authority.

And if we were to imagine that Jesus was going to put together a team of men or individuals or whoever that would help Him to establish this kingdom, that would inaugurate this kingdom on earth, we would assume that that team would be made up of individuals who were brilliant, strong, loyal, along with many other adjectives that we may assign, that they would be worthy of that calling.

[4 : 05] But the men that Jesus actually chose were uneducated, they were weak men, and they were completely unreliable.

In fact, consider Jesus' life. Specifically consider His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the night of His arrest. It's leading into His crucifixion.

These 12 men have been with Him for nearly three years. One of them at this point has already betrayed Him, which is why He's being arrested. And you would think, surely at least, Peter would continue and try to be there and support the Lord and do what he could, but what the Scripture tells us happened is that all of them forsook Him.

All of them. Now, we focus often, when we're thinking through this time frame, we think a lot about Judas' betrayal, right? We acknowledge that. We always think about that. We think about Peter's denial because it's just so prominent in this gospel story, right?

And we appreciate that so much because of his restoration. What we don't often think about is the fact that the other 10, they ran too. In fact, the Scripture says they all forsook Him, every single one of them.

[5 : 25] This team of people that Jesus had put together, they were completely unreliable. But Jesus wasn't trying to build a dream team. But He wasn't choosing the best out of what was available.

He was selecting individuals that He Himself would transform. He was going to transform them from nothing. And He was going to use them mightily in His purpose and in His plan.

And this is a common theme in the Scriptures, isn't it? God specializes in taking insignificant people from insignificant places and making them unbelievably useful in His purpose.

If you had heard the rumors about the significant events that were taking place in Galilee and decided that you were going to go to Capernaum and check out Jesus and what was going on, you'd have been completely underwhelmed by the team that He had assembled.

But consider for just a moment, all the people that have come to know Christ as Lord and Savior over the last 2,000 years, the gospel has transformed millions and millions of people, including us.

[6 : 39] We have been transformed by this gospel message that Christ died for our sins, that He rose from the dead, that He is transforming us by the power of His Holy Spirit. And of all of that, through 2,000 years, it all gets traced back to these 12 misfits.

Because they're the ones that Jesus started with. It's a motley crew, it really is. But God used them. And so we may read through this in Mark chapter 3, similar to the way that we read through verses 7 through 12 last week, and we think, really, what really is there here for us to understand?

But we're reminded, what Paul wrote to Timothy, that all Scripture is profitable. All Scripture is of profit to us. And this simple calling of the 12 apostles is profitable for us as well.

I want to kind of wrap our thoughts around just three words. Calling, commissioning, and then warning. Calling, commissioning, and warning. Let's first look at the calling in verse 13.

Would you read it with me again? And he went up into a mountain, and called unto him whom he would, and they came unto him. That second phrase there, called unto him whom he would, it's emphatic in the Greek.

[7 : 53] It literally means he summoned those that he wanted. So it wasn't an arbitrary thing. It was very, very specific. It was a specialized call. Let's look, he went up into the mountain.

There's a dramatic shift. If you were here last Sunday, or maybe you listened to the audio online, there's a dramatic shift in the context between the summary scene in verses 7 through 12, and then what is taking place here with the calling of the apostles.

The chaos of the crowds in Galilee stand in stark contrast to this progression of purpose, really is what it is, in the ministry of Jesus that's taking place on the mountain.

But Luke adds a note here that Mark omits that I think is significant for us, and I'd like to just briefly take a moment to look at it. In fact, would you turn with me there? Luke chapter 6. I want you to see it.

Luke chapter 6. In Luke's account, he also records both of these events together. He just reverses the order. The emphasis is not on, you know, which came first.

[8 : 58] They're not necessarily dealing chronologically. The emphasis is on presenting these two scenes together to see the contrast between the crowds and then the small group that Jesus was actually investing more time in.

Look at Luke chapter 6 and verse number 12. And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain, and what did he do? To pray.

And he continued all night in prayer to God. And this is significant for us to understand, I think. Not so much for the sake of Jesus and what he was doing, but the model, the example that he gives to us here.

The Gospels often present Jesus as going into seasons of earnest prayer just before monumental moments in his life and in the Gospel narrative.

And we've seen him do this already a couple of times in the Gospel of Mark. If you'll remember back in Mark chapter 1, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and there was this amazing scene surrounding that.

[10:00] And then immediately the Holy Spirit drove him into the wilderness. Well, what did he do in the wilderness? For 40 days he fasted and he prayed. He was tempted of Satan in that, which is significant to the prayer and the fasting as well.

But he fasted and prayed. Well, what was that? That was a preparation stage for his public ministries beginning in Galilee. It is after he returns from that time of fasting and prayer that Jesus launches into this public ministry.

And it says in verse 15 that he went about in Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. Repent and believe the good news. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And then we see it again later on in Mark chapter 1.

After Jesus had had that day in Capernaum where all of those people were coming to him to be healed, and he healed Peter's mother-in-law, he got up early before dawn, and he went out into a solitary place.

And what did he do? He prayed. Well, what was he praying about? To leave Capernaum. He had every reason to stay. But his prayer is actually what led him to leave, which was a significant part.

[11:07] And of course, we study the life of Christ. We see this time and again. The most important, perhaps, being in the Garden of Gethsemane. Just before Jesus is arrested, just before he is crucified, what does he pray?

Not what I will, but what you will. And what's that all about? Prayer's not merely about making requests to God. That's a dynamic of it.

But it's not the sum of it. Prayer, in summary, is aligning our hearts to the will of God. That's what it is.

Now, I'll tell you what my tendency is. My tendency is to make a decision, to act upon my will, and then go to the Lord in prayer if I need some help to make it right because something really messed up in the process, right?

Most of us are that way, aren't we? We get in the business of life, right? And things are happening. You don't have time to stop 100 times a day and pray about every decision and things like that, right? And so you go through and you make all these decisions, and before long, you're not really giving any consideration to the Lord's will or to the Lord's heart and what you're doing.

[12:15] And then something just blows up on you, right? And what do you do then? You immediately go to the Lord. Lord, I'm really going to need your help here. I don't know what's going on. And what's going on is that you didn't spend any time in prayer to begin with.

You were acting on your will. You were never having a moment to where you could align your own heart with the will of God. Oh, what a difference it would make in our lives if we first aligned our hearts with God in prayer before we made a decision, before we made that decision about a relationship or before we made that decision about a career, before we made that decision about our money or whatever it may be.

perhaps our weakness in prayer is actually a sign of how little we desire the will of God over our own. But Jesus modeled something very different than that.

And here again, as he is just on the cusp of calling his 12 apostles, what did he do? He labored earnestly all night in prayer.

Well, back to Mark chapter three. We're told in verse 13 that he called to him those he desired and they came to him on the mountain that is.

[13:32] Now out of all of Jesus's followers, he only called 12 of them on the mountain. And I wanna be careful here. I wanna be careful to hold intention the fact that these men had a unique purpose in the work of God, but that they do not represent an elite group of Christians that consists of the most committed followers or committed believers.

That's not really what's happening here. Jesus had a lot of followers at this point, a lot of disciples, even is what he would have called them. The calling of these 12 men wasn't about looking amongst this group and saying, okay, these are the cream of the crop and they're kind of rising to the surface.

So I'm gonna choose them. That's not what's happening. They weren't an elite group of Christians. They weren't an elite group of believers. But God did have a very specific purpose for these men. And we gotta hold those two things in tension as we go through. It's helpful for our understanding, especially as we apply this passage to our own lives. But sometimes we get the idea that there is a difference between a believer and a disciple.

But the scripture makes no such distinction. The call to salvation is the same as the call to discipleship. It's one and the same.

[14 : 53] The uniqueness of these men in this passage is that they were being called to apostleship, not to discipleship. There was a specific purpose that God had for them.

But even still, their apostleship, which is something that did not continue beyond these men, was a matter of calling, not personal value.

Again, Jesus didn't look at them and say, okay, these are the best. I'm gonna go with them. No, it was just a matter of he called them. He called them and then he was gonna do the work to make them into what he wanted them to be.

And James Edwards helps us here. The emphasis in Mark, he writes, is not on designating a special category of super followers who are distinct from others. This is made evident, he says, by the fact that the word apostle occurs only once for certain, and that's in Mark chapter six, whereas the word disciple or disciples occurs 45 times in the gospel of Mark with still other expressions for Jesus's followers.

And here's what I'm getting at. These men weren't the only people following Jesus. They weren't the only disciples, but God did have a specific purpose for them. The common denominator between these men, as we've mentioned already, is that they were utterly ordinary.

[16 : 17] There was actually nothing significant about them. And we constantly have to come back to this question, why then, if Jesus had all of these followers, if there were all these people that were truly believing in him, why did he choose these men?

And the scripture just doesn't tell us. We don't know. It just says that he did. And then we learn something from that, that it's not actually what they could offer him.

It's what he would do in and through them. Though their purpose was unique, the call and the commission of these 12 men represent all people who have and will follow Christ.

They did have a unique purpose in the beginning stage, this beginning era of the church. But what Jesus called them to, what he commissioned them to do, is the same for the rest of us.

And so that's why we care about this passage. These men represent us as believers. Their call is the same that Jesus issues to us.

[17 : 23] Their job, their role is the same that God has given to us. In fact, Paul wrote that they laid the foundation for us.

Think about it in Ephesians chapter two. Paul wrote, so then you are members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple of the Lord.

Do you understand that illustration? There's a cornerstone, that's Jesus. That starts the whole thing, all right? Has to start with him. He's the cornerstone. If that's not there, nothing else is gonna work out in this construction process of the church, right?

And so Jesus is the cornerstone. And then how did he lay the rest of the foundation? With these 12 apostles. Each one of them representing a foundation stone. And then what happened from there? Every single believer, every person that knows Christ as savior is a living stone that then is put on this foundation of Christ and the message that the apostles preach.

These apostles, these disciples, we're not an elite group. They are representative of all of us. Jesus calls us the same way he called them. He commissions us to the same task that he commissioned them.

[18 : 43] Now we noted in our study of, in chapter one of Jesus's call of the fishermen in Galilee, that rabbis did not typically call students to follow them, as I understand it.

Instead, students chose to follow a particular rabbi in the same way that we would choose to go to a particular college or a university. It's not so much that we are recruited to that as we make a choice. And rabbis, from what I understand, were careful not to give the impression that their person themselves superseded the law.

In other words, the student had a focus on the law, not on the teacher. So the student chose who they were going to learn from, but the end goal was not to be like the teacher.

The end goal was to learn the law and to understand the law and to move forward. That is very different than what Jesus does though. These men didn't choose Jesus.

[19 : 43] Jesus chose them. And what did he call them to? Notice verse 13. And he went up into the mountain and he called unto what? Him.

He called unto him. This calling of discipleship and salvation, for that matter, is not like we just are in this realm of choosing religions and trying to find some philosopher that we want to kind of pattern after to get to the greater good of learning the ideas of life.

That's not what this is. Jesus has this authoritative call. He calls us not to the law. He calls us to himself. Do you see the distinction in this?

And that's probably why some of the Pharisees really struggled with him because this was so unordinary. This was unusual. Jesus wasn't calling these men in order to teach them the law. He was calling them to himself.

He wasn't saying, come and learn the law with me. He was saying, come and be with me. Come and watch me. Come and follow me. Come and learn of me. Why? Well, this is a nod to his identity.

[20 : 51] He wasn't just a teacher. He wasn't merely a rabbi. He was the one that wrote the law. He was greater than the law.

And the call that Jesus extends to us is just the same. He doesn't call us to a system of religion. He doesn't call us to Christianity. That is as a religion.

He calls us to himself. I thought about him studying this week. There was a song that we sang a lot when I was growing up. You probably know it.

It's called Softly and Tenderly. Do you know that song? Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.

See on the portals. He's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me. Do you know the chorus? Come home, come home.

[21 : 56] Ye who are weary, come home. Come home. Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, come home.

This call is extended to every believer. No person will ever follow Jesus without him first initiating this call. So these men are representative of us in that Jesus has issued his call and each one of us must respond to that call.

But then he's also commissioned us beyond that call. Commissioned us to a task. That's the second point. Commissioning. Look with me at verse 14. And he ordained 12 that they should be with him and that he might send them forth to preach and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils.

But once Jesus called these men up onto the mountain, what took place? What was it all about? Mark says he ordained them or he appointed them. There's purpose in this. It's not merely a formality.

It had a distinct purpose. He wasn't asking them for companionship. He was appointing them to apostleship. Jesus reminded his disciples of this in John 15.

[23 : 38] John chapter 15 and verse 16. He said, You did not choose me. I chose you. And I appointed you. And here's what he said. That you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.

So Jesus' call to salvation and to discipleship and then by extension, at least for these 12 men to apostleship, this call is not in a vacuum.

It's not purposeless. It's connected to the rest of life. He calls to salvation in order that he may transform and then commission us, commission these men and then to commission all believers to a particular task.

Jesus has called us to himself in order that he might commission us for his purpose. And what is that purpose? That we would go, that we would bear fruit and that that fruit would abide.

Well, there's three things here in these verses that I think show us exactly. It actually becomes pretty evident. It's not just the typical preacher coming up with three things. There really are three things here. Look at verse 14.

[24 : 46] What's the first thing that he was calling them to do or commissioning them to do? To be with him. To be with him. And he ordained 12 that they should be with him. The foundational

element of discipleship is time spent with Jesus.

Now, listen. True discipleship is a relationship before it is a task. Discipleship is a relationship before it is a task.

We often think as disciples that we have a job to do and we do. We have a calling. We have a duty even, you could say. But before we ever get to the task, we are called to a relationship.

And the biblical idea here behind discipleship refers to an apprentice. It's someone who would learn his trade over a number of years by living with and observing his master.

We don't have very many things in our culture that are equivalent to this. Perhaps the closest thing is a residency program perhaps in the medical profession.

[25 : 53] These 12 disciples, they traveled with Jesus for years. They lived with him. They saw him. And he left his mark on them. In fact, in Acts chapter 4, Peter and John are preaching to the Jews.

And this is what verse 13 says the reaction of the Jews were. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished.

They were amazed at what they knew and what they understood. And then it says, and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. What was the significance of Peter and John here? They didn't have a formal education. They didn't go to the rabbinical schools. None of them did. None of these men did. But they had been with Jesus. And Jesus had left his mark.

And in that, he sets forth the pattern for discipleship for all of us. That we are not called first to one another. We are first called to him.

[26 : 58] To be with him. And here's the amazing thing about it. Relationships go two ways, right? Good ones do at least. Jesus wanted them to be with him because he wanted to be with them.

Did you catch that? Jesus called them to be with him because he wanted to be with them. Now think about salvation. What is happening in conversion?

We are separated from God because of our sin, right? And then through Jesus, there is this ministry of reconciliation that Paul calls it, I think maybe in the Colossian letter.

What is this reconciliation? Sinful man being reconciled to a holy God. Well, how does that happen? That happens through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Because of Christ, we are then reconciled to God.

Well, that's on God's initiative, not on ours. He initiates that. He initiates that relationship. He has redeemed us because he wants us.

[28 : 01] And he calls these men to be with him, not just because he wants to show them the ropes, but because he wants to be with them. He wants to have this relationship with them. He is setting right.

In this example, he is setting right, setting right what was broken in the fall. And what did time would Jesus do for these men? They were transformed.

Think about the list here. Look at verse 16. Simon, he surnamed Peter. Simon was the leader of the band. We often see that.

Jesus gave him a different name. Petra, rock, Peter. Jesus didn't give Peter that name because Peter was stable and strong.

He was actually the opposite of that. He wasn't stable at all. He had no control. Think again on the night of Jesus' arrest.

[29 : 01] What does Peter do? He just immediately reacts, right? He immediately reacts and cuts a guy's ear off. And I don't think he was aiming for his ear. He's just really bad at it.

He was brash. It was earlier that night that Jesus said, all of you are going to forsake me. And Peter, Peter rejected Christ's statement. Great follower, wasn't he?

He said, though all of these guys, he points to the other 11, though all of these guys turn their back on you, I will never turn my back on you. And what did he do later that night? Denied him three times. Peter was not a rock.

He was not stable. And after that, he went through a series of really being defeated spiritually and Christ restored him from that in John chapter 21. What was the purpose in nicknaming him Peter? Peter, it wasn't because he was a rock. It was because Jesus was going to make him into a rock. This was pointing Peter to what Jesus was going to do with him. And that's exactly what he became.

[30 : 02] You get into the book of Acts and it's Peter, the representative of the apostles on the day of Pentecost that preaches this message of the gospel and 3,000 souls come to Christ. It is through Peter that these men were led to preach the gospel all throughout the world.

He became the rock. But then look at the next verse, verse 17. James, the son of Zebedee, John, the brother of James. He gave them a nickname too. This nickname was Bonaerges, sons of thunder.

This wasn't because that's what Jesus was making them into though. It's actually the opposite here. This is what he was transforming them from. Now think about it. Remember there's a time in the gospels that John was upset about a particular town's rejection of Jesus.

And John tells Jesus, why don't we pray to the father that he send down fire from heaven to consume them? Like he's a son of thunder.

Sure. He didn't mess around. But how do we know John now? He's actually the apostle of love we refer him to. Why?

[31 : 11] Because Jesus transformed his life. Being with Jesus did something for him that no textbook could ever do. Being with Jesus made a difference in his life.

Think about these other men. You've got Andrew on one side who is like the eternal optimist. Every time you see Andrew he just immediately believes and tries to bring other people to remedy a situation. On the other end you have Thomas who's the eternal pessimist.

Who though he was loyal to an extent still said well we might as well go with Jesus to Jerusalem and all die with him. He was just an eternal pessimist. And Jesus brings these two people together.

And then you've got Matthew the tax collector and Simon the zealot the political radical man that would have sooner murdered Matthew than actually live with him for three years.

Jesus brings he transforms their life. He taught them. Why did he teach them? Because he had a purpose. What was that purpose?

[32 : 10] Well Acts tells us again Acts chapter 1 and verse 8 Jesus says you will be my witnesses. Jerusalem and Samaria and all around the world.

Time with Jesus. He taught them truth. He taught them doctrine. He taught them who he was. He trained them. He said watch me.

They saw how he interacted with people. They saw how he cared for the needs of people. They saw his mannerisms. They saw his love. They witnessed all of these things and then Jesus periodically would send them out like on these little mini missions.

And they would go and preach and they would come back and report to Jesus. He trained them for their purpose. How did all that come to be? Well it's just because they were with him. They were with him. You say what does this have to do with me?

We don't have the privilege of walking through Palestine with Jesus. That's the uniqueness of the call for these men. We don't have that opportunity. We have something different.

[33 : 16] We have the scripture. You say how can I be with Jesus? You were Jesus through his word. Jesus told the Pharisees one time he said you go to the law you go to the scriptures believing that in them you have eternal life but I'm telling you that what the scriptures are about they testify of me Jesus said.

He said it doesn't matter where you turn. You go to the Old Testament guess what you're going to find? Jesus. That's its purpose. You go to the gospels you see Jesus. You go to the epistles you see Jesus.

You want to be with Jesus? Get in the word. It's a living book. Hebrews tells us that it is it is a living book that it is sharper than any two-edged sword it pierces to the dividing asunder.

It reads the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. That's what it does. Jesus does his work through his word. That's why when we come to church on Sunday we're committed to the word.

That's why we spend so much time praying that the word would increase and prevail in our lives because that's how we spend time with Jesus through the word. You say I don't feel like I know him well.

[34 : 20] I don't feel like I have this understanding and I don't feel like I have this training to do what he's called me to do. Well just get with him. Just spend some time with him every day in the word.

And guess what? He's going to transform you too. Because that's what he does. He doesn't call us because we're capable. He calls us and then he transforms us into what he wants us to be.

So they were called to be with him. Secondly, they were called to preach the gospel. This just makes sense, doesn't it? They were called to preach the gospel. Look at verse 14. And he ordained the twelve that they should be with him and that he might send them forth to preach.

Preaching was Jesus' primary purpose. So it doesn't come as a surprise for us that it was to be the priority of his followers as well. While he remained on earth, they preached the gospel of the kingdom that he was preaching in chapter one.

But once he ascended back to heaven, their message was to be about the crucifixion and resurrection. Flip with me to Acts chapter 10. Would you just do that quick? I know I've had you turning a lot, but it's just good.

[35 : 26] So turn to Acts chapter 10 with me if you would. Acts chapter 10. Look down with me at verse 39. So Peter has gone to this Gentile man named Cornelius and he begins to preach the gospel.

And listen to what Peter says in verse 39. He says, We are witnesses of all things which Jesus did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem whom they slew and hung on a tree.

Him God raised up the third day and showed him openly. Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God.

Even to us, Peter says, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. I saw him with my own eyes. I witnessed it. And he commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the living and the dead.

To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. What was it they were supposed to preach?

[36 : 42] This is it. This is it. That Jesus is the son of God. That he died for the sins of man. That he rose on the third day.

And that all who come to him in faith will receive forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. that's the message. That's what Jesus had taught them. That's what he had taught them not merely in his own teaching but through the example of the prophets.

Did you notice what Peter said? That even the prophets witness of this and he just goes through what? Not his own thoughts or ideologies. He goes through the word.

And as he preaches the word he inevitably preaches the gospel and Cornelius and a bunch of other people get saved and they receive the spirit and they are baptized in that moment and it's amazing. Guess what?

This wasn't a commission only for these 12 men. It's a commission for you. It's a commission for me. That we take this same gospel and we share it.

[37 : 48] Somebody told me recently that you'll never find evidence in the New Testament of the church exhorting people to evangelize. Well that's foolish. Jesus himself said in Matthew 28 all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples. It wasn't just the disciples the 12 that were gathered at that moment. There were lots of people gathered around when Jesus made this statement.

Go therefore and preach the gospel. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded. And then he gives this great promise.

I'll go with you. Isn't that the worst thing about evangelism? Is you're worried that you won't know what to say and you're worried that you're going to be asked a question that you won't be able to answer and then you're just scared because people are just sometimes malicious and you're not sure if you want to stick yourself out there like that.

But then you think back to this promise. Jesus says go so it's a matter of command. He commissions us to do it as believers but then he says look I'm going to go with you. I will help you.

[38 : 56] And what you'll find is the more that you share the gospel it's amazing Marty. It's amazing how when you share the gospel Jesus helps. He brings to your mind exactly the verses that otherwise beforehand you wouldn't have been prepared to share but he brings them to your mind.

Why? Because you've been with him. You've been with him. And in the process of that he's given you a burden to share and then he's also taught you what to share and I should share this truth.

He brings it on and then sometimes people are going to be aggravated and they're going to ostracize you for the message and guess what? He's still with you. He's still with you. To the end of the age he says.

We could go on and on in the New Testament but look this wasn't just a call for these men. This is a call for every one of us. Anyone who names the name of Christ preach the gospel. Thirdly to do good and oppose evil.

To do good and oppose evil. Look with me back at Mark 3 verse 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils.

[40 : 00] Now the Holy Spirit did empower these men to do supernatural things. Healing sicknesses we see it in the scripture casting out demons. In the gospels it was an extension of Jesus' ministry.

In the book of Acts it was a sign of this apostolic age in which the Holy Spirit was empowering these men as a proof of the gospel.

Now God doesn't call us to heal people and he doesn't call us to exercise demons. You'll never find that in the New Testament anywhere. How does this apply to us? Do good and oppose evil.

There's plenty of instruction in the New Testament for that. I can't heal anybody but I can help them. I can see a need and try to make a difference in their life and the resources that God has given me. I can't cast out a demon but I can stand firm on the truth of God and stand against the cultural evils of our day. Both of these things are accomplished first when we faithfully share the gospel.

[41 : 10] It's just by nature how it is but Jesus did much more than preaching. Preaching was his purpose but he put a significant amount of time and effort into helping people loving people opposing the evil of his day.

James Edwards again disciples are not simply defined by what they stand for but also what they stand against. They're commissioned to confront demonic and evil powers however they manifest themselves and to confront them not only in thought but in word and action.

Remember what James said in James chapter 2 what good is it my brothers if someone says he has faith but does not have works can that faith save him?

That is the important thing there. Can that kind of faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food and one of you says to them go in peace and be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body what good is that?

So also faith by itself if it does not have works is dead. It's dead. What's God called us to? We'll be with him share the gospel and then do good.

[42 : 26] Do good and oppose evil in whatever way it may manifest itself. As we close I just want to say discipleship is not about what disciples can do for Jesus but it's about what Jesus will make of disciples.

You say I've come to Jesus because I have so much to offer him. No you don't. You may have a lot to offer me. You may have a lot to offer our church but there's nothing you can offer him.

But the grace of Jesus is exemplified in the fact that he wants you anyways. No matter what your qualifications he'll transform you into what he desires for you to be.

The commission given to these men is unique. There's no doubt about that. We are not apostles but they're representatives of every disciple. Church we have a call to be with Jesus to preach his gospel to do good and to oppose evil.

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