

He Uses The Common Ordinary Men

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. The title of this message is He Uses the Common Ordinary Men.

Now we've been looking at the apostles and if you have one of these sheets of paper here, I'm going to go over about 13 things and I don't know if we'll even get to this other stuff.

We'll just look at it, but what happens is the Lord uses just common, regular, ordinary men in the story.

And as I was studying today and looking this up, you know, it's hard to find stuff about some of these guys. I mean, they just don't, they're basically not in the Bible.

They are not in the Bible and that screams several things to us. Why aren't they in the Bible? I mean, they get their name listed and that's about it.

[0 : 57] Some of these guys, honestly, we don't know hardly anything about it. Then a funny thing is, I didn't know this till today, to be honest with you. Thaddeus, back in that language, basically meant mama's boy.

The guy's name is James Levinus or whatever, and Thaddeus. And one of them meant the breast baby and the other one was heart baby. And so I don't know if that means the guys are all walking around saying, come on, mama's boy, let's go.

I don't know what's going on. But then you got a, then you have a zealot who is kind of, these guys, they're the guys that carried the curved daggers and went around killing people.

They're like the terrorists of their day. And he gets saved. And Matthew is the opposite end of the extreme because Matthew, he lines up with the Roman government. And, and old Simeon, he's like the guy who wants to kill that kind of guy.

And God puts all of them in the same church. So that means we can have a policeman and a lawyer in the same church. Can you imagine that?

[2 : 05] That means, that means we could have a guy who overeats and a doctor going to the same church or some health nut. You know, somebody's really into it. In other words, it's just amazing how God picks up different people and he uses them.

And it's amazing. We're just going, we're going to look at some scripture, but it's amazing how sometimes we strive to be out in front and we want to be known and we want our name written in there.

And yet the majority of the apostles hardly make the Bible. In fact, as Matthew writes 28 chapters and there's almost nothing about old Matthew in the Bible. Can't find out much about old Matthew.

And then Bartholomew, Bartholomew may be Nathaniel, maybe. But they've been arguing about that for 2,000 years. John MacArthur said, oh, he's definitely Bartholomew.

And Nathaniel, the same guy. So I looked up at other guys and they said, there's some guys going to tell you he's definitely the guy. But to be honest with you, no one has any idea if he is or not.

[3 : 04] And those who say he is are just saying that because they want to. And so I think maybe, you know, John MacArthur wrote a book about it. He needed something to say about Bartholomew so he found Nathaniel so he could hook that up.

You know, who knows? Might be, might not be. But here's the big thing. Why in the world did God put them in, writes their name on the doors in heaven, makes them the foundation of the church, and we don't know anything about them.

Maybe it says that God uses regular, everyday people and you're okay. There's not a lot of Peters in the church. Not a lot of, not a lot of James and John and Peter in the church.

There's not a lot of those caliber of men. There's more people like Bartholomew. I was listening this afternoon. I get tired sometimes when I'm, when I read and study all day long, I get pretty tired.

And so I went back and I was getting ready to take a shower and get ready to leave. And Betty said, Betty, she works, you know, I just sit around. And so I went back and I said, she said, man, I'm tired.

[4 : 11] I said, me too. I said, she'd been cleaning windows and cleaning the house. And I said, I've been reading, man. She said, well, you did catch that raccoon. I caught a raccoon in my backyard today. I had become the hunter.

I've got a possum, a raccoon and a groundhog so far. And if you send your cat over, I'll catch it too. I have killed two of them and the trap did. And I let the other one go.

I took him to brother Hugh's yard and I let the raccoon out. I took him to Cherokee County. Anybody live in Cherokee County? You're safe. I took him over and I just let him go. He took off running. I think he's going to enjoy that. But, but that's the only thing I started with.

So I'm watching these preachers and they're talking and they're talking about how God has some really high powered people. And then there's a bunch of these regular guys that can only run 500 or less in church. You know, the truth is I'm one of those guys and you probably are too.

So there might be some comfort we can take from. Look, if you would, at Ephesians 2 20 and notice how big these apostles are. It says, and are built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets.

[5 : 16] Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. He builds a church and said, man, I'm doing it on what the apostles and the prophets have preached and taught. These guys are big stuff. I've used them, but Jesus is the chief cornerstone.

And yet we don't know hardly anything about them. I'm getting ready for Sunday morning's message. Fact is, I am ready. And that's what I did most of today. And it's amazing.

John the Baptist, his whole ministry is, I'm not him. I'm not him. I'm not him. He's the guy. He's the guy.

He's the guy. And they even send a delegation out to investigate him. The Jews send out people to investigate him. And when they do, they say, who are you? And he said, well, I'll just go ahead and tell you I ain't him. And they said, well, you sure you're not him?

He said, I'm not him. And they said, well, maybe you're Elijah. He said, nope, not him neither. And then they say, well, maybe you're the prophet. He said, nope, not him either. And then he turns to another crowd and he says, that's him. And he turns to two of his disciples and said, that's him.

[6 : 16] So that's really the goal of a church, isn't it? Not me. It's him. So anyway, then in Matthew 10, just let me read you the names of these guys.

And I won't be able to pronounce them all. The names of the 12 apostles are these. The first Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, and James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother. Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the publican.

And that's an interesting note to me there. Matthew's writing this. And he says, yeah, I know who I am. I may be getting to write 28 chapters of the Bible.

One of the biggest gospels. I may be able to write it, but I know who I am. I'm just the publican. I'm the guy that did wrong. Probably the nastiest sinful guy prior to Christ in the group.

And he doesn't forget that when he writes it down there. But James, the son of Alphaeus and Labaius, whose surname was Thaddeus. Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

[7 : 17] So here's some lessons. And they're all written right here in your little thing. And I'll just go over these. And then we'll get to the Bible in a minute. These are actually taken from the notes that I have. And I'm sure they'll get this up on the internet.

If you want to look at everything I have in my notes, you'll get that. But number one, look at this. God used mostly men who love the scriptures who were apparently seeking him and searching the scriptures.

Everybody but Judas Iscariot. It's an interesting thing. If Nathaniel is Bartholomew, if Nathaniel is Bartholomew, who I don't know if he is or not, they go and they find him.

And when Philip walks up to him, he said, Hey, Philip, we found the guy that Moses and the prophets talk about. That indicates something about Nathaniel and Philip.

And it happens with some other guys. Why are they so ready to accept Christ? Why are they so ready to believe? Well, we know that at least Philip and Nathaniel, they evidently have had a conversation.

[8 : 18] He runs up and says, We found the guy that the prophets talk about. He's the Christ. Christ, that kind of indicates that sitting around the campfire or at the house around the coffee table or the kitchen table, they've been having a discussion and they've been talking about Jesus.

They've been talking, well, not Jesus. They don't know who it is yet. But they've been talking about him because they've been seeking him. There's only one guy, obviously, that had no real interest in the Bible. That's old Judas. He's not saved.

But everybody else is saved in this group. That just brings, that brings to mind this right here. You know, I hope you are people of the book. Now, what does that mean when I say that?

I know you believe the Bible, but everybody believes the Bible and nobody ever read it. You know, it really kind of works like that thing you do on the Internet. How many of you ever on the Internet click, I accept the terms and conditions?

How many of you ever click those? How many of you read those? John, you probably read them. John probably reads every word. But you know how I do it, don't you? I just look for where do you accept.

[9 : 20] And later on, when they say, you accepted that you're going to jail, I'll say, I didn't know it. They said, it said, did you read it? And you said, I accept. And I'd be like, yep, if that's what it said in there.

Because I never do. And that's kind of how I handle it. If I want the program, I just said, accept, accept, accept. If they say, read down here and click on this spot, I just go find that spot, click, go down and click.

I'm pretty bad about it. Is that how you do the Bible? Is that how you do the Bible? I believe the Bible, but I don't know what the Bible says. Then I'd like to ask you this.

How often does the Bible come up in our conversation? I think it would be a wonderful thing if when the men— Now, I grew up, and sometimes I wonder if maybe today's society changes some of this.

But if it does, we probably ought to work it unchanged in some of it. But, you know, my granddaddy, he ended up having a TV in his house, I think, a year or two.

[10:17] With no cable. There wasn't cable. And it was out in the hills of Tennessee, and there wasn't any good signal. And he didn't like it anyway. The only thing he ever listened to was Christian radio. And there wasn't much of that, but there'd be some programs that came on.

And he knew right when so-and-so would be preaching. And he'd go in and turn that on. But if you'd be sitting in my granddaddy's house, there would be discussions of the Bible. Literally. I've sat with my granddaddy, and this was one of his things.

He loved to discuss the doctrine of the church. What's the church? When was it founded? Who founded it? How did they found it? What's it about? What are you supposed to do at the church? And sometimes my mother would be—my granddaddy could get under her skin a little bit.

That was her dad, you know. And she would say, go in there and keep your granddaddy busy. And I'd say, what do you want me to do? She'd say, ask him about the church. He loves to talk about the church.

And so I'd go in there and I'd say, granddaddy, what about doctrine of the church? That's all you got to say? For the next two hours, you got a lecture on the doctrine of the church. You know, some of that ought to happen among us. Some of that ought to happen.

[11:19] Maybe not the doctrine of the church. Maybe you could talk about something else. But we ought to be people of the book. We ought to be wanting to know Jesus and wanting to discuss him. Number two, the men Jesus chose to use all had problems but got victory over who they were and had been except for Judas Iscariot.

Now, this is an interesting thing. Let's take Matthew. You do know that, you know what a publican was? That's a tax collector. And you know how it worked.

Basically, these guys were told to collect money and they could get a commission on the money they collected for the government. But they often collected extra money. They just charged double or triple or anything they wanted to do.

I mean, they knew they had power and so everybody hated them. The fact is, in the Bible, when it lists publicans, it puts them on the social level of prostitutes. They were not good guys.

They probably cheated everybody. Gave the government. They were the mafia types of their place. And this guy is going to go on and God is going to let him write 28 chapters of the Bible.

[12:28] God is going to use it to write 28. God brought him from that. And what I really think is interesting is you got Simon the Zelotes, which is a zealot. And that's a guy who is like tea party fanatic.

That's a guy like fundamental political group. I mean, this is Ron Paul's army guy. This is the guys from Minnesota that want to carry guns and shoot everybody.

And their group was known for going and finding people that lined up with the Jewish people that lined up with the Roman government and killing them.

They were known for just saying, all right, you're a Jew and you want to be disloyal to the Jews? We'll kill you. Carried their curve knives. They were known for, we don't care what anybody, kill us if you want to, but we stand.

They were just militia types, you know. And yet here they are in the same group. You got the zealot with Matthew in the same church, serving God, two opposite ends, two opposite kinds, the same church.

[13 : 35] Then you got a crybaby in there. I mean, you, oh, Thaddeus, at least that's what his name means. He's the whiner of the group. Then you got, which one of the seven dwarfs has a cloud above his head?

You know? Anybody know? I don't know those dwarfs. Yeah. Oh, that'd be a good one. Who did we call that the other day? Scott. Scott Newton is, what is it?

Eeyore. Eeyore. He's the donkey that everything's on. The children's story, everything always goes wrong. Well, you know, that's old Thomas. You know, the fact is, when Jesus says, I'm going up to Jerusalem, Thomas's answer is, oh, all right, we'll go die with you.

All right. Now, it's like one of the commentators said. He said, man, he's a brave guy. He could have took off and ran, but he didn't. He at least stood his ground, but he knew. All right.

Let's go die. Now, Jesus dies, and all the other fossils seem to get together. Thomas is off somewhere, sulking in a corner, sucking his thumb, got his feelings hurt. And then Jesus shows up, and he don't even show up at the meeting.

[14 : 48] He's got his feelings hurt too bad, I guess. And all of a sudden, Jesus shows up, and when they come in, they say, Thomas, you ain't going to believe it. And Thomas said, you're right. I ain't going to believe it. I ain't believe in nothing.

He said, unless I touch him, I don't believe it. Don't care what you guys say. But God put all of them together. That's what's beautiful about a church, isn't it? You know, we're a bunch of weirdos.

Everybody in this room is strange but me. And you. And I'm really worried about you. But God uses us and works in our life.

That's a pretty exciting thing. Third thing. God shows us who they really were. He doesn't leave us believing that they were flawless. We see real men with real problems just like us.

Now, isn't that pretty interesting? If the Catholic Church had written the, if the Catholic Church or the Baptist Church, by the way, so you know, I'm not just saying them.

[15 : 44] If they had written the New Testament, it would have been blemish free. We'd have seen a bunch of really saintly good guys with no problems, no bad attitudes, no past. They'd have just all descended from the lofties and been good guys.

And God said, no, let me just tell you what jerks they were. Let me just go ahead and lay it out there for you because they all served God because of grace. It was all God being good to messed up regular people.

And that's what we are. And that'll encourage us. That'll excite us that God could use us like that and put us in the ministry. Number four, from Nathaniel, we learn to be honest, transparent, and open.

If Nathaniel is Bartholomew, which I'm not sure he is. But Jesus said, you're a man in whom is no guile. The word guile means no deceit, no trickery, no deception, no nothing hidden.

I mean, old Nathaniel's like, hey, I am what you see. You get what you see. I'm not hiding anything. I'm just open, vulnerable, transparent.

[16 : 48] They all were. I mean, Peter is, let's be honest, Peter's like one of the greatest guys. If you could imagine a great preacher, that'd be Peter. But the Lord flat out just lets us know every one of the poor boys bad spots.

There's two things about that. Number one, I ought to be able to love you when I know your bad spots. Because I know that charity covers a multitude of sin. I ought to be able to love you because Jesus loved them.

He knew it. He didn't even hide it. He didn't try to gloss over it and act like it wasn't true. He just let it go. So he wasn't trying to hide it. Fact is, he made it very clear who people were.

So I ought to be able to love you and work with you. You ought to be able to love each other, work with each other, love me. Because we're not all we ought to be. And the more you know me, the more you're going to find out I'm just not that great a guy.

And the only thing I can do is point you to Jesus. Also ought to help me to know that I could be used. Big idiot. Messes up a bunch. I can be used.

[17 : 50] It also ought to help you. Sometimes I think one of the problems in a church is after you've been down the line just a little bit, you forget where you came from.

And you try to act like you never were. And you try to sanctify yourself. You are a saint, but you want to forget where you were. I was preaching away.

And there's a guy in Peru. His name is Walter. And all the guys that have been there know Walter. He's a good guy, I think. And I was preaching. And I said, there was a guy came in and he was a drunk.

And God saved him and changed him. God could save and change you. And Walter's sitting there. There's probably 200 people in the room. And Walter's talking about, yeah, that was me. Just like that, right in the middle of the service.

I mean, he's not the least bit. I mean, like, yep, that's me. Somehow, I think somewhere along the way, we tend to want to make ourselves look good. But look at what Paul did.

[18 : 51] Every time you talk to Paul, it's pretty obvious Paul's like the man. And he would say, chief of sinners. Chief of sinners. Chief of sinners. Maybe some of that holier-than-now attitude that we can tend to develop.

I'm not saying anybody's doing it. But maybe some of that, we could be a little more transparent. And a younger guy could learn, hey, I know where you are. I've been where you are. I know what it's like to mess up like you're messing up.

And God's helped me through that. And I certainly can't be judgmental of you because I've been down the same road. Number five, we learn to believe quickly what Jesus says, though that was hard for the disciples from the beginning, except Nathaniel.

You know, Nathaniel's a wild man. Nathaniel, when Jesus says, I saw you under the fig tree. Nathaniel goes, wow, okay, you're God. Okay, you're God.

Now, in chapter 14, Philip and Thomas show us the father. They still ain't got it. And everybody else at the last of the story is all running and hiding, including, I guess, Nathaniel or Bartholomew.

[19 : 57] They had a problem believing. But I think there ought to be something childlike in us that says, hey, I'm just going to accept the Bible. I'm just going to accept the Bible.

I was reading quotes by Spurgeon today. I have a reading plan, a whole bunch of books. I was reading some quotes, and he made the comment that too many people try to get too smart and not just accept simple truth.

Too many people try to get too smart. He said, some of you would like to dig in your original languages. He said, you know I believe in that. He said, but some of you like to do that so much that before it's over, you're not even sure what you believe.

He said, you should just believe. I really want to be childish like that. I remember when we were in college, we were in a college that had denied the fundamentals of the faith.

And a friend of mine named Steve and I were there. And the professor called him in. He showed him that Jesus couldn't be virgin born. That's impossible. And he was showing us and he was academically proven, you know, this just isn't possible.

- [21 : 05] And a whole lot of the other stuff. And he was showing us how that the, you know, when Jesus turned water into wine, it was just because the old wine was still in the pours and the water got in it and it all mixed. And he's explaining it all to us.
- And my buddy Steve was just a wild man, just foolish. And he looked at him and said, well, I'll just tell you the truth. If God said two plus two is five and science could prove to me it was four, I'd still go with five.
- And the professor said, I can't do nothing with you and Steve. He said, that's right. And we walked out, but that's where we need to be, isn't it? I mean, you know, just believe the Bible.
- We're Christians. We're believers. That's who we are. So believe quickly. Let's see. I think I'm into number six. Thank God for our past.
- Our past doesn't matter. Matthew's got a horrible one. I think I've gone over that enough. Thank God our past doesn't matter. Anymore. I love the fact that you and I are new creatures.
- [22 : 04] I mean, I can look around this room and if we knew each other's story, I don't know if any of us would stay in this room with anybody else in this room. And somehow, some of us are a little more into that, but we know we're messed up.
- But you know what he said? Hey, I took care of your past. I made you a new creature. Number seven, instead of being embarrassed about our past, what has happened to us in salvation, we should invite our friends like Matthew does. That's a pretty interesting one.
- You know, Matthew's like scum. Fact is, you know, Jesus will have it held over his head that he ate with publicans and sinners and others, basically for the rest of his ministry.
- And you know why he does it, don't you? Levi, which is another name for old Matthew, he throws a feast and he invites all of his friends. And I can imagine they're coming over there thinking we're going to party big time like we always party.
- And when they get over there and everybody's sitting there eating and they're having a good time, he says, hey guys, you ain't going to believe this, but I have made a change. I've gotten saved and God's done something new in me.
- [23 : 02] And the guy that did it says, fellow Jesus, would you come up here, Jesus, and have at it. And he's not embarrassed to tell his friends who he is. And he's not embarrassed when he writes his name in the book to say Matthew the publican.
- And it's amazing. You know, we are new creatures, but sometimes if we're not careful, we can get kind of sanctimonious. Rahab the harlot still listed as Rahab the harlot. She wasn't a harlot.
- Not anymore. But she was saying, hey, I'll not forget where I was, I'll not forget where I came from and what happened. God uses doubters who tend to be pessimistic in their disposition. I like that.
- Thomas, you know, none of this is for sure, but they say Thomas went to India carrying the gospel. Historically. Not in the Bible. But old Thomas, the doubter before it's over, I think he's probably not so much a doubter.
- He probably tended to have a little bit of a pessimistic attitude. Because it's kind of like sometimes it's in our genes a little bit, you know. It's like some of us come from pouty, whiny families. And some of us come from fighting, fussing, mad families.
- [24 : 07] And some of us come from them laughing, happy families all the time. But Thomas, the pessimist, Thomas, the guy that's a doubter, goes on and supposedly, historically does a great work for God.
- It is interesting. You know, Jesus knew who he was. He knew who Judas was, so he knew who Thomas was. And he brought them all in. He brought them all in.

That ought to thrill us that God even uses them. God's men are often not recognized on this earth. Number nine. I say that because I actually have about 17 pages of notes here.

I took every Bible verse I could to find all these guys' names. Because I'm covering a whole bunch of them. I'm only left one to go over next month, and that's Judas Iscariot. But a lot of the guys, the only time they're mentioned is in the list.

And Bartholomew, maybe he's Nathaniel. Maybe that works. And, you know, I'm not going to argue. I know I'm not as smart as the guys that write the commentaries. But maybe that works. But Simon Zelotes, man, we can't find hardly anything.

[25 : 08] You can't find about these guys. Matthew writes a whole book and hardly ever mentions himself. But isn't that kind of like John when John the Baptist said, I must decrease and he must increase.

And it's not about us getting recognized. It's not about us getting recognized. Sometimes in church, preachers are really bad about it. I've got a problem with it. We want recognition.

Givers want recognition. Bible teachers want recognition. It's the human nature to want to be seen. And the Bible pretty well says, well, I didn't even put my main 12.

I don't even tell their stories. So yours probably ain't going to get told. Isn't that pretty wild? I want to be remembered. Okay. We'll write you a name on a door and going into the New Jerusalem.

That's about it. Somebody will walk up and say, now, who's that Thomas guy? He's one of the 12. We're here to see Jesus, not him. It's not about us. Number 10, even when they are honored, it is that they are associated with the one doing the work.

[26 : 11] It wasn't about them. It was about the one. Number 11, Jesus regularly used common, weak, unknown background people. Jesus regularly used common, weak, unknown background people.

Why should I desire or expect anything different? Now, this is a confession of my sin. This is some Nathaniel, no gal, some just honesty.

As a young preacher, my goal was to be the big preacher and to be recognized and have my name in the sword of the Lord and other places to be known. And I remember going to Hammond, Indiana.

And like the biggest name preacher was up there. And so I got out at the service station. I said, you ever heard of Jack House? And the service station person said, no, I don't think he's from around here.

And he was only a handful of blocks that way. And he had this mega church. Somehow, sometimes we over-inflate ourselves. We want to be the Mr. Potter in town or we want to be old George.

[27 : 19] We just want the story to be about us. But the story is about Jesus and not us. Number 12, God put together a team of extreme differences. I think I talked about that enough.

One of the men seems to have been the baby of the group, maybe even a whiner. And I just think that it's interesting that his two names mean that.

Heart child, breast child. And his name in the listing is James and these other two names. So he's got three names. In fact, as one of the early church fathers gave him another name, which in Latin meant three names.

Said he was the guy that had three names. And, but, you know, isn't that amazing? And in the church and the point was that there was even a whiny person.

Everybody's family has that uncle whose thumb you pull. Everybody's family has that guy who cuts his toenails and lays them on the coffee table.

[28 : 23] And everybody else in the family is like, you animal. And I'm talking about at Christmas dinner, you know.

I mean, he's there, got his shoes off. You know the guy. You are him. I mean, you got an uncle like that. But here's the wild thing. That's what a church is. I just want to be, I'll go to other verses.

I'll, we'll go somewhere. But let me just show you. That's what a church is. I really like, I really like cinders in the church. And I'll tell you why. Because, you see, what happens is in our church, we have all kinds.

And we, you don't need to really try to be like the other guy. I mean, some of us are extremely straight laced. And some of us are extremely the opposite of that, loose. And, I mean, you're like oozy-goozy, flow around.

Some of you are extremely emotional. Some of you wouldn't know emotions if they bit you. I tend to be that guy. I can laugh, but I don't cry. I really don't cry much. That's just not me. Brother Tony could cry at the drop of a hat.

[29 : 22] And he drops the hat. And me, if I start crying, you'll find me trying to hide. I mean, I'm just, you know. But see, here's what God does. He puts a church together. You know what the beauty of a church is?

You need that uncle. You need my retarded sister in your family. Because she helps you learn some compassion. She helps you learn how to get along with people. I used to be so embarrassed by her.

My parents had sent me, I had to go to town and take the car. I'd get to drive the car, but they'd say, you got to take your sister. It's like, I want to find a place to leave her. Do you have any idea what it's like to be 16 and have your 14-year-old retarded sister in the car with you?

Everybody's looking at you. And everybody's always pointing. And, you know, jokes are made. But you know what happened?

That really, what happens? That really helps you. It helps our missionaries. It helps you. It helps everybody else. It helps us know that God puts us all together and forms a church out of us.

[30 : 27] And that's a beautiful thing. So I think it's pretty interesting that, I think it's pretty interesting how Jesus put the church together. Last thing, and I'll quit with this one.

There's even a Judas Iscariot in the church. That's a wild one, isn't it? I'll be honest with you. Had I been putting the church together, he would not have been part of the church.

If I'd have known. Now, I may have, I've had a lot of Judases. I mean, the bad kind. There's two Judases in the list, by the way. In fact, it's when they're listing the names of apostles, sometimes they say, Judas, not Iscariot.

And then Judas Iscariot. Because there's the good Judas and the bad Judas. Judas was a great name until Judas messed it up. But we're going to have some people among us that aren't really of us.

And, you know, and sometimes they're even going to look like the best one of us. I always told the missionaries, you know, you know, you realize that they wouldn't have made Judas treasure.

[31 : 30] You know who you make the treasure of a church, don't you? You make the most honest, characterized, principled, integrity. That's who you put the money with.

When I was on the mission field, I was on the mission field. And, you know, you're training all these brand new people in a church. And then the church takes up these offerings. And they're not much, but it's all those people got to give.

And this is back in 1988. And the dollar was in trouble. The country, most people in my church made less than \$25 a month. And we've taken up these \$3 offerings.

And I put \$2.90 in them. And we take up these offerings. And now who are we going to give that money to? Who are you going to let carry the money? And for a long time, I said, y'all count it, y'all write it down, and I'll just carry it.

Because I didn't want to trust anybody. So Jesus and the apostles, let's just say the apostles, they let Judas carry the bag. And he was a thief even while he was alive. Even before all that comes out, when he doesn't want them giving the money to let the ointment be put on Jesus' feet, he said we could have given it to the poor.

[32 : 37] And the Bible says, yeah, if he got it in the bag, he'd have been stealing it. That's what the Bible says about him. What's that say about our church? What's that say? Well, you know, if Jesus had one Judas out of 12, we probably got more than one.

That means that we never decide how people are saved by how they look. Because Judas would have looked good. We don't decide if people are saved by all their outward appearances because Judas would have passed the test.

And we always live and walk with Jesus because maybe this Judas will get saved. Now that one is the betrayer and his story is over.

But there's a lot of guys that move into church. And here's the sad situation now, and this is it, but you need to work at this. Good people get in the church and get baptized.

And go to church and become Sunday school teachers, maybe even pastors, and they never have been born again. That's why we believe in discipleship. You know what that discipleship does?

[33 : 42] It drives it home. Look at this page. Let's study that. And the person's liable to go, wow. It's not just pray the prayer real quick, sign your name real quick, sign your. Let's take them through discipleship.

You need to get involved in that. You need to say, I'm going to help people. You say, well, so-and-so in the church really gets on my nerves. Good. I wonder if Matthew and Simon ever had any personality issues.

I wonder if when they got to discussing Obama, if Matthew and Simon were getting mad at each other about that. Think on it a second. You know, Matthew might have said, well, the pilot's not that bad a guy.

I mean, I take money to him all the time. He's not that bad a guy. I don't know what could have gone on. But, you know, we're going to have that kind of junk going amongst us. But we want to share Jesus. So if you are able, you should get with Brother John and you should get involved in discipleship.

If you get to where you can teach, if you're not there. And if you can teach, be teaching others. Become students of the book. Because we want to build a church that brings honor to his name. Amen.

[34 : 45] Thank you all very much. God, I love you. And I thank you for the chance to be with these men. I pray you'd bless them. Bless the church. Bring honor to your name. And I give you glory for all you do. In Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for listening to this message by Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information on Vision Baptist Church, log on to www.visionbaptist.com. At the website, you can also find more audio and video recordings.