

## **Mark 3:13-19**

### **Calling Disciples**

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## **Introduction**

Mark transitions from the popularity and power of Jesus to focus on a select group of His disciples.

These twelve men, some of whom Mark has already introduced (1:16–20; 2:14–15), were personally chosen by Jesus and all but one will become His apostles. They will be His legal representatives and royal ambassadors to Israel and the world. These men will be used to found the church.

2

## Mark 3:13-19

And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. <sup>14</sup> Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, <sup>15</sup> and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: <sup>16</sup> Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; <sup>17</sup> James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”; <sup>18</sup> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

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## Jesus' Calling

Mark 3:13

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When Jesus selected the Twelve, He was making a statement of judgment on Israel's unbelief. The caretakers of apostate Judaism had totally rejected Him. The Sadducees resented Him for cleansing the temple and exposing their system of greed and corruption (John 2:14–18). The Pharisees and scribes wanted Him dead for opposing their Sabbath observances and for claiming equality with God (John 5:18). Even the Herodians agreed that Jesus was an agitator who had be eliminated (Mark 3:6).

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When the leaders of Israel rejected God's Son, God rejected them. The Pharisees and scribes, along with the Sadducees, had demonstrated their unworthiness as the shepherds of Israel (cf. Ezek. 34:1–10). The religious nobility and rabbinic academy of Judaism was unqualified to represent God. They misrepresented the Old Testament and corrupted the people. They thought they were enlightened about God, but in reality they were “blind leaders of the blind” (Matt. 15:14). They perceived themselves to be the protectors and purveyors of God's Word, when in truth, they had substituted the traditions of men for the commandments of God (Mark 7:6–13).

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The old system needed to be removed and replaced. Jesus did so by selecting a group of twelve nondescript laymen, none of whom came out of the religious establishment.

Jesus knew the religious hatred would eventually lead to His death, as the Father had planned (Acts 2:23–24; 4:27–28). The cross was looming nearer. As Jesus set His face toward Calvary, He also made preparations for what would happen after His death. Who would carry on the message of the gospel to the world after He, the Messiah, had been killed? The answer to that question started with these twelve men.

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None of the Twelve turned in an application or submitted a résumé. These men were not the religiously or educationally elite, they were common working people. However, they were the ones Jesus Himself selected. The passage makes it clear that Jesus chose who He would train and empower to preach the gospel and establish the church. Mark notes, **“And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted.”**

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Knowing the importance of this selection process, Jesus isolated Himself up on the mountain and, according to Luke 6:12, **“spent the whole night in prayer to God.”** Only after a full night of communion with His Father did Jesus summon those whom He wanted. In much the same way that He had earlier called Peter, Andrew, James, John (1:16–20), and Matthew (2:14–15), Jesus now commissioned those five men, along with seven others, to be His apostles. It was not that they volunteered, though they did not come unwillingly (cf. John 6:37).

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## Jesus' Purpose

Mark 3:14-15

Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,<sup>15</sup> and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.

Mark states Jesus' three basic reasons for calling the 12.

The first is "**that they might be with Him.**" Up to this point, these twelve men had followed Jesus as part of a larger group of disciples. It was time for them to be pulled in closer to Jesus from the larger group. Over the preceding months, Jesus focused much of His time on the crowds. Moving forward, He would increasingly concentrate His attention on the training of these twelve men. They would be trained as His apprentices. These twelve men would be responsible for the spread of the gospel and the establishment of sound doctrine, laying the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20). For the remainder of His earthly ministry, Jesus intensely invested Himself in preparing them.

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Second, Jesus appointed these men so "**that He might send them out to preach.**" They were trained to be the first generation of heralds of the good news of salvation, following in the footsteps of their Lord, who Himself proclaimed the gospel of God (1:14). Jesus was a preacher, as was John the Baptist and the Old Testament prophets before Him. The disciples were to follow in that legacy of preaching the truth of the gospel.

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Jesus also gave the twelve authority **“to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons.”** Matthew 10:1 adds that they were also given the power **“to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”** In order to authenticate their position as His representatives, Jesus gave them authority in both the physical realm (over disease) and the spiritual realm (over demons). Like Jesus Himself, their message was confirmed by the supernatural signs that they performed by His power (cf. John 3:2; 2 Cor. 12:11–12).

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## Jesus' Men

Mark 3:16-19

Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter;<sup>17</sup> James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”;

<sup>18</sup> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite;<sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

This list contains the same men as listed in the other Gospels.

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Notice that none of these men were theologically trained. From the world's eyes, they were nothing special and would have been viewed by the religious elite with contempt. These twelve were common people. Some were fisherman, one a tax collector, another a zealot. They were a diverse group with different personalities, talents and abilities.

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From a human standpoint, these twelve men were uneducated, untrained, and uninfluential. God's used these weak and imperfect instruments to declare His grace and glory. Before their lives were over, they will be used to turn the world upside down (cf. Acts 17:6). That Jesus could use such ordinary vessels to accomplish His great purposes underscores of His sovereign power. Jesus took a dozen ordinary men and transformed them into the powerful foundation stones of His church (cf. Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14).

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## So What ...

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

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## So What ...

I hear people say that “God could never use them.” Satan deceives people into seeing only that shortcomings and failures. That focus is wrong!

Please notice that **Jesus called** the 12 and that **they chose to respond and come to Him**. Jesus is still calling people today. Is He calling you? Will you listen to His voice and come?

For some He may be calling you to stop trying to prove your goodness and prove your worth. He wants you to admit you have done things wrong (sin) and come to Him and experience the grace and restoration of His Salvation. Like the disciples He is calling you **“to be with Him.”**

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## So What ...

To others He may be calling you to obedience and service. Satan tries to get us to focus on our “ordinariness” and our “failures”. We fail to realize that nothing depends upon us.

God called the twelve to transform the world. God is still calling us to do the same.

God is changing the world one life at a time. Can you find the courage to witness to that neighbor or friend that God has placed on our heart?

St. Francis of Assisi stated, “**Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.**”