

August 31, 2003  
AM Service  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Why These Guys?”

Luke 6:12-18

12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon,

Jesus was faced with an important decision. Out of all followers He had (and He had many), whom would He designate to be His apostles? Of the many who were curious about Jesus there were a smaller group of disciples. Disciple means “learner.” It indicates those who were following the teachings of Jesus. From this group of disciples, Jesus was going to choose just twelve to be apostles. The apostles would be the ones He would spend most of His time with and become very intimate with. It was an extremely important decision because the ones He chose would be the ones to continue His work and spread His word after He had ascended into heaven. Apostle means “One sent forth.” The word was also used to describe Jesus and His relationship to the Father. He was the One sent forth from God the Father. Later the 12, who would be closest to Him, would be the ones sent forth by Him to continue His work. The spreading of the word that Jesus was the Savior of the world; the responsibility of telling the world of salvation in Jesus; the job of establishing the Church of Jesus Christ would be left in the hands of these twelve men. What do you do when you are faced with an important decision? Usually we gather all the facts, we check for information on the web, we seek advice from the experts, ... oh, and we may also pray a 5 second prayer. The thing we often do last Jesus did first. And He didn’t spend 5 seconds, He spend the night in prayer. When are faced with difficulties we should seek divine guidance and comfort in prayer. [Note: Jesus although divine was also human and had to suffer the same things other humans suffer. He too had to pray and He too had to deal with the temptation to doubt and to question when He had a decision.] Imagine if Jesus would have gone about His decision the way a manager of a new corporation would today. (Read letter from “*Jordan Management Consultants*”).

This illustration brings out another point. Not only would a modern consultant firm not agree with the method Jesus used to select the 12 they would not have agreed with the 12 He chose. Of all those who were seeking out Jesus; of all the disciples or learners who were following His teachings; why in the world did He choose these 12 men. As the letter indicates they had bad tempers, poor leadership qualities, they were negative, and some even had bad reputations from incidences in their past.

Surely of the 100’s perhaps 1000’s of followers there were more qualified men. Why these guys? They didn’t have great skills except to be fisherman (at least most of them were fisherman). They were not well educated. They were not religious leaders or spiritual giants. So why them? What did Jesus see in these 12 guys that, after a night of prayer and direction from the Father, He decided to choose them over all the others?

This made me think of the anointing of David to be king in the OT. Looking at that will give us a clue as to what made Jesus decide to pick these guys. (1 Sam 16:1-12)

16:1 The LORD said to Samuel [a great Hebrew prophet and the last Judge of Israel], "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." [The person whom Samuel anointed as first king of Israel turned out to be a poor choice. Saul was handsome, likeable, and tall. But he had a tragic flaw that led ultimately to his own ruin. He disobeyed God. . . (1 Sam 15:18-26).](from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers) [So the Lord told Samuel that He was going to have him anoint a new man for king from among the sons of Jesse.]

2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

4 Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

5 Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab [Jesse's oldest son] and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. ***The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.***"

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab [his second son] and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." 9 Jesse then had Shammah [his third son] pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

There is a song about this choosing of David and the chorus of the song says (something like), "When everyone else saw a shepherd boy, God saw a king!" ***Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.***"

John 2:23-25

23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. 24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. 25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

Jesus knows the heart of men and women and Jesus looks at the heart – not the outside, not the accomplishments, not the successful life, not what, humanly speaking, one has on the ball, but the heart.

That's our first clue as to why Jesus choose the twelve He did to be designated apostles.  
Let's look at the original calling of 5 of the twelve:

Matt 4:18-22 (the calling of Simon / Peter, Andrew, James and John)

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 20 At once they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Luke 5:27-28 (the calling of Levi / Matthew)

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

Did you notice that in the case of all of 5 of these men, when Jesus said, "Follow Me" they immediately left everything and followed Him? That wasn't the case with everyone He called to follow Him:

Luke 9:59-62

59 He said to another man, "Follow me."

But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family."

62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

In contrast to the first examples of those who immediately left everything to follow Jesus, these had excuses. One said, in effect, "I will follow you but first...(something is going to come first before following Jesus) first let me wait until my father has lived his life. When he dies I will follow you." The second seemed to think of following Jesus as something that was going to be hard and sad and just no fun at all. He even thought he would never see his family again. So he wanted to go back and say good-bye for the last time to them.

Jesus knows and looks at the heart and what He saw in the 12 that He did not always see in others that He called to follow Him was a willing heart. God wants our faithfulness. And anyone can be faithful. Jesus has chosen you to serve Him. Jesus has chosen you to be the one He will work through. And all you need is a willing heart. God calls all people. No matter what your education, skill, ethnic or religious background, successes or failures in the past, no matter what good or evil you have done in the past ... God calls all people. And all He says is "follow Me" and all He asks for is a willing heart.

I pray for a church of faithful follows of Jesus, who are willing to be led by the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that we never let Jesus down? No, and neither did the apostles always do the right thing, but they had willing hearts. I don't want a church with the name of Jesus on the outside (the Nazarene) I want a church with the nature of Jesus on the inside... stamped on our willing hearts.