

## Mark 3:13-19

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to drive out demons.

<sup>16</sup> These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), <sup>17</sup> James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), <sup>18</sup> Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

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## MONDAY: MARK 3:13-19—THE TWELVE APOSTLES

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This short scene depicts Jesus calling his twelve apostles. We rarely look closely at how any of the gospel writers tell it. One would think it is important, since it is Jesus’ more formal call of the twelve apostles. When you think of “apostle” what comes to mind? Who are they and what do they do?

“Apostle” is not a particularly “Christian” term. In the ancient world “apostles” were common. The word described chosen ambassadors “sent out” on behalf of someone, or even a naval fleet “sent out” by the Roman empire. A disciple is a “learner” or student. Disciples in the ancient world followed a certain leader, teacher, or school of thought or group. Disciples took upon themselves the instruction of the teacher or group, identifying with its way of living. These twelve men are spoken of as both in Mark (Mark 14:12-17).

Is there a difference between calling these twelve “apostles” and calling them “disciples”? What’s distinctive about these twelve as “apostles”? Would you speak of yourself as an “apostle”? What are the main differences between us and the twelve?

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## TUESDAY: MARK 3:13-19—GOING OUT TO JESUS

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Mark reports that Jesus went up on the mountain. It is there he called these apostles. Mark says “they came out to him.” The Greek verb denotes the idea of departing or separating. The same verb is used in Mark 1:35 (of Jesus going out to a deserted place) and in 1:42 (of the leprosy departing from the man).

What picture does verse 13 paint for you? Describe what you imagine going on in this act of calling apostles.

In the versions of this scene in Matthew (10:1) and Luke (6:13), neither has the short phrase “they came out to him.” What does this “going out” suggest about the nature of apostleship or discipleship? What did they leave or separate from in the act of going out to Jesus? Can you speak of your own “going out” in following Jesus’ call?

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## WEDNESDAY: MARK 3:13-19, ISAIAH 41:9-10—JESUS CHOOSES

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In Mark it says that Jesus called to himself “those whom he wanted.” This is interesting. Mark does not disclose *why* Jesus chose who he chose for this purpose. The point is that *Jesus* chose.

What do you take away from this little detail?

This scene raises an important question: does this choosing pertain only to these twelve apostles? Can one be a follower of Jesus on one’s own initiative, apart from Jesus’ choosing?

Do you believe Jesus has chosen you? What makes that easy to believe? What makes that difficult to believe?

Read Isaiah 41:9-10 out loud. What impact does this have on your faith and life?

## **THURSDAY: MARK 3:13-19—CHOSEN FOR A MISSION**

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While Mark does not tell us why Jesus chose certain individuals, he does disclose why Jesus chooses a group of twelve men and calls them apostles. From Genesis on, we see that when God ‘chooses’ someone, that choice is never just for the sake of that person, alone. We see this in God’s call to Abram, both a personal connection and a call to a purpose, in Genesis 12: “all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you”.

What are the two reasons why Jesus chooses apostles? Read Mark 1:38-39. How does the purpose or mission of these apostles relate to Jesus’ own purpose?

Mark says that the apostles were chosen “so that they would be with him.” What insights might this give us about Jesus? What does this tell us about being an apostle of Jesus?

How does being “with” Jesus flow into the mission to preach and cast out demons? Was this mission only for these twelve, or is it for us as well?

## **FRIDAY: MARK 3:14, GENESIS 12:1-3—HE CHOSE TWELVE**

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Jesus chooses *twelve* apostles. Israel had *twelve* tribes. Most interpreters recognize a connection between these. The question for us is *how do we describe this connection?* and *what does it mean for us?*

In the Old Testament, Jacob’s twelve sons become the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. In God’s plan, they represent the entire people of God through whom God would fulfill promises made to Abraham. How might Jesus’ selection of twelve apostles relate to this? Is there continuity, discontinuity, or both?

It is noteworthy that Jesus does not select eleven apostles, so that including himself there would be the number twelve. One scholar observes that in doing this Jesus is making a clear claim about his own status. What is that claim?

## **SATURDAY: MARK 3:16-19—SILENT APOSTLES**

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Except for Peter, James and John, Philip (Acts 8), Thomas (John 20), and Judas, we know nearly nothing about the other six apostles. But, it would be very shortsighted of us to think that the other apostles did not have some impact in the world around them. This suggests a couple of things for us...

These twelve were hand-picked by Jesus! They lived with him. They ate with him. They slept in the same rooms. They had first-hand experience and instruction from this Jesus who revealed God in the flesh! Yet, we hear very little about the individual identities and accomplishments of most of these people—how they went on and lived as apostles in Jesus’ name. No one has written biographies of them. But it’s not as if they did not matter. Where, then, does the emphasis lie?