

GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson Four

IN THE GOSPELS: The Twelve Apostles

Burden to Impart:

Twelve disciples were chosen by the Lord to be His Apostles. They were especially trained by Him so they could be His helpers.

Memory Verse: "...He called His disciples to Him; and He chose from them twelve, whom He also named apostles" (Luke 6:13).

Facts to Teach:

1. Many people followed the Lord Jesus: some out of curiosity (John 2:23-24), some to be healed or fed (John 6:26), and some out of love and faith. A small number followed the Lord closely and learned of His teachings and way of life. These became His "disciples" (Matt. 5:1).
2. As the Lord's ministry grew, He needed some fellow-workers to help Him speak to the people and share the burdens with Him (Matt. 9:36-38). The Lord was so burdened that He spent the whole night in prayer to God before He chose any helpers. Then, out of many disciples, the Lord chose twelve to be His "apostles" (Luke 6:12-17a). An "apostle" is "one who is sent" to fulfill some purpose.
3. These twelve were chosen and appointed by the Lord so that they might "be with Him" in a special way, and that He might "send them to preach" His Word (Mark 3:14). They followed the Lord wherever He traveled. They went with Him by foot and by boat. They watched His way of life and learned of Him (Matt. 11:29). They also suffered hardships and persecutions with the Lord. The Lord told them, "You are those who have remained with Me in My trials." For this reason they will also be rewarded with His kingdom and will "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" in the kingdom (Luke 22:28-30).
4. The twelve apostles not only learned from the Lord by His example and life, they also were trained by Him in many ways. Sometimes He would correct them for their mistakes (Mark 9:38-39) and rebuke them for their lack of understanding (Mark 8:33) and faith (Luke 8:25). He also trained them by waking them up at times to pray (Matt. 26:40).
5. They listened daily to His teaching. He taught the multitudes in parables, but He spoke to His Apostles plainly so that they would understand every word (Matt. 13:9-11). The Lord Jesus did not write a book of His teachings and give it to His Apostles. He taught them by speaking to them all the words that His Father had given to Him (John 17:8). They needed to know His Word and teaching well, for it was up to them to teach all of His disciples the things He had commanded them after He ascended.
6. Having been especially trained by the Lord in their way of life and in His teaching, the Lord could send out the Apostles to do His work and to preach God's Word. He gave them authority over unclean spirits and the power to heal every disease (Matt. 10:1-8).

Reference Materials

SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: In the Gospels—the Twelve Apostles

SCRIPTURE: Luke 6:12-16; Mark 3:13-19; Matt. 10:1-8

AIM: To help the children realize that they are being called by the Lord to be His apostles (sent ones). They need to be willing to be specially trained so that they can be His helpers.

MEMORY VERSES: Mark 3:14; 2 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17

BACKGROUND: When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, many people believed in Him and followed Him. Some believed in Him because of the signs or miracles which He performed (John 2:23-24). Some followed Him seeking to be healed of diseases and sicknesses. Some followed Him to be fed with physical food (John 6:26). But a small number followed Him to learn of His teachings and way of life. These became His disciples (Matt. 5:1).

CONTENT: The Lord’s ministry continued to grow throughout Judea and Galilee. When He looked out over the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them—the people had a great need because they were harassed and cast away like sheep without a shepherd. He told His disciples, “The harvest is great but the workers few”(Matt. 9:36-38). He needed some fellow workers to help Him speak to the people and share His many burdens with Him.

Then the Lord, out of many disciples, chose twelve to be His helpers or “apostles” (Luke 6:12-17a). (An apostle is one who is sent to fulfill some purpose.) The choosing of His helpers was such a serious matter to the Lord that He went out to the mountain to pray and, before He chose any, He spent the whole night in prayer to God. When it became day, He called His disciples to Him, and He chose from them the twelve, whom He also named apostles. The twelve apostles whom the Lord Jesus chose were:

Simon, whom He also named Peter	Matthew, the tax collector
Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother	Thomas Didymus (Didymus means twin)
James and John, the sons of Zebedee and cousins	James, the son of Alphaeus
Jesus (born to Salome, Mary’s sister)	Judas, also surnamed Thaddaeus
Philip	Simon the Zealot (or Cananaean)
Bartholomew, or Nathaniel (see Acts 1:13)	Judas Iscariot

The newly chosen apostles needed to be trained and prepared for the Lord’s work.

They were “with Him”. These twelve were chosen and appointed by the Lord firstly so that they might “be with Him” (Mark 3:14). They followed the Lord wherever He traveled. They went with Him by foot and by boat. They watched His way of life and learned of Him (Matt. 11:29).

They suffered with Him. They also suffered hardships and persecutions with the Lord. The Lord told them, “You are those who have remained with Me in My trials.” For this reason they will also be rewarded with His kingdom and will “sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” in the kingdom (Luke 22:28-30).

They were corrected and trained by Him. The twelve apostles not only learned from the Lord by His example and life, they also were trained by Him in many ways.

Sometimes He would correct them for their mistakes. In Mark 9:38-39, the Lord Jesus corrected John for his intolerance toward a differing believer. John had impetuously forbidden a man from driving out demons in Jesus’ name because he was not following them. The Lord Jesus said, “Do not forbid him...he who is not against us is for us.”

Sometimes He would rebuke them for their lack of understanding. In Mark 8:31-33, the Lord Jesus rebuked Peter for not understanding when He said He must suffer, be killed, and rise again in three days. He told him he was not setting his mind on the things of God but on the things of men.

Sometimes He would rebuke them for their lack of faith. In Matt. 8:23-27 and Luke 8:22-25, the disciples became afraid during a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee, expecting that they would perish. The Lord Jesus asked, “Why are you cowardly, you of little faith?”

He woke them up to pray. In Matt. 26:40-41, the disciples were sleeping. The Lord Jesus had to wake them up to pray. They were weak and didn’t realize how much the Lord needed their prayers.

He taught them to shepherd others by caring for their needs. In Mark 8:1-10, the Lord was moved with compassion for a great crowd because they had been with Him for three days and had not had anything to eat. He was concerned that if He sent them to their homes hungry, they would faint on the way, for some had come from a distance. The Lord Jesus fed them all with seven loaves and a few fish which were at hand. After they had eaten and were satisfied, He sent them away. There were about four thousand men, plus women and children.

They listened daily to His words and teachings. The Lord Jesus taught the multitudes in parables, but He spoke to His apostles plainly so that they would understand every word (Matt. 13:9-11). He taught them by speaking to them all the words that His Father had given to Him (John 17:8). The Lord’s words were not written down at that time, so the apostles had to listen and remember. They needed to know His word and teaching well, for it was up to them to teach all of His disciples the things He had commanded them after He ascended.

Having been specially trained by the Lord in His way of life and in His teaching, the Lord could send out the apostles to do His work and to preach God’s word. He gave them authority over unclean spirits and the power to heal every disease (Matt. 10:1-8).

APPLICATION:

1. The Lord’s need today is just as great as it was in the apostles’ time. He still needs fellow workers to preach His word and share His work and burdens with Him. At the Lord’s time, there were only twelve apostles. (At a later time, He sent out seventy.) But today all God’s children are called to be His apostles (sent ones) and helpers. We have been “sent” to our schools, our neighborhoods, even our families. We need to pray that the Lord Jesus will put a desire in our hearts to share the gospel with those around us.
2. As the Lord’s apostles, we also, just like the twelve apostles, need to be trained and prepared so that we can tell the good news of the gospel to those in need. We may be young, but we are not too young to begin our training.
 - a. The first, and most important, aspect of our training is to “be with Him”. We need to spend some time with Him to pray to Him and talk to Him and have a personal relationship with Him.
 - b. We may have to suffer with Him. There may be times when those we are trying to help will reject us or make fun of us. Remember that He will reward us.
 - c. We will be corrected by Him, mostly by those whom the Lord has put us under. Our parents will correct us a lot, as will our teachers. And the Lord Himself may correct us by touching us in our conscience. We need to accept all the correction.
 - d. He will test us to strengthen our faith. An apostle must learn to trust Him, to learn that He is with us to strengthen us and embolden us, especially in the gospel.

- e. We must learn to pray. We need to see how important it is to pray before we do things. Even the Lord Himself prayed before He chose the apostles. We shouldn't complain if our mommies wake us up in the morning to pray. This is like the Lord waking up His disciples. Or, sometimes, we may sense the Lord Himself waking us up and reminding us to pray.
- f. We should not be selfish and self-centered. We must learn to shepherd others by caring for their needs. For example, we should be watchful for new ones who come to children's meeting. We should be friendly to them, help them find their way around (to their classrooms, the restrooms, etc.) and make them feel comfortable. We should help them enjoy the meeting.
- g. The apostles listened to the Lord's word and remembered so well that two of them wrote gospels about the Lord Jesus, recording all His words and doings. We also, like them, need to listen carefully to His word—we should especially make sure to pay attention in children's meeting. We should also memorize His word (weekly memory verses) and read His word (the older ones should develop the habit of reading every day). Eventually, we will know His word well and we will be able to help others.

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