

Jesus calls the twelve Apostles. – Dave Rogers – 17/10/10

Today we are back in our series on the life and teaching of Jesus, and we come to the calling of the 12 Apostles in Luke 6.

Luke 6

12In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: 14Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, 16and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Jesus Ministers to a Great Multitude

17And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, 18who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

Lord Jesus we thank you for this moment in History when you chose the 12 apostles. We ask would you speak to us from this account, so that we may learn from you and be changed to be more like you and serve you. Amen

Here we have Jesus at a pivotal moment in his ministry, the promotion of 12 of his followers to Apostles.

Jesus had hundreds of followers, but a time had come where Jesus needed a leadership team, a bunch of men that he could spend more time with, passing on his wisdom and understanding. Jesus needed a leadership team to build on what he was starting after he left them.

Jesus knows his followers, they had already spent time with him, seen miracles and learnt from him.

So what is the difference between a disciple and an apostle?

Well simply a disciple is a follower. People who follow someone are disciples.

An Apostle is a little different; the word apostle means sent ones. Apostles are sent to start something. Apostles will have people who follow them.

The Apostles would be the foundation of the church. This is a very important moment as I said earlier; Jesus was choosing those men who would be the foundation of his church.

So what did Jesus do? Did he hold an X-Factor style audition to see which of his followers would be the best choice? Did he hold a gruelling interview process to find out who would be His Apprentice, like Lord Sugar? You're fired – You're Hired!!

Of course not! Jesus didn't need to do these things. What Jesus did was pray. He went to the mountains and prayed. And not just for a few minutes or even an hour and a half, he spent the whole night in prayer with his father in heaven.

So what do we think went on that night as Jesus prayed?

Did he spend the whole night agonising over who he should choose and asking the father to tell him. Personally, I don't think so. As we see in Mark's telling of the story Jesus chose whom he wanted. I believe Jesus knew who the Apostles would be, he knew their gifts, abilities and flaws. Jesus knew his men.

So if Jesus knew who his 12 apostles would be, why spend the whole night in prayer?

I'd like to bring out 6 reasons Jesus prayed.

1. Jesus had a relationship with his father. Prayer is talking to God. If you are in relationship with someone you talk to them. Jesus had been constantly communicating with the father.
2. Jesus was an example to us. If Jesus needed to pray and talk to God the father, how much more do we need to.
3. Jesus had a heart for his men. Jesus had spent time with these guys, he valued their friendship. He wanted the best for them and he interceded for them. We can get an idea of what he might have prayed from John 17

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. 12While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. 13"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within

them. 14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus loved these guys; he saw them as gifts from God the father so he prayed for them.

Who were these 12 men that Jesus prayed for? We know about 5 or 6 of them but the others are almost anonymous and only mentioned in the calling of the 12. But Jesus knew them, you might feel as if you are insignificant or anonymous, but Jesus knows you, and he doesn't want you put yourself down. God has a plan and purpose for all of his followers, not just the famous ones!

4. Prayer is not praying for what we want but what God wants.

Prayer is the means by which God has chosen to accomplish his will, and Jesus prayed into being God's plans for these 12 men that night, plans that we have now seen fulfilled. When we pray for people we pray into being God's plans and purposes for them, such as unsaved friend or family, when we pray for them to know Jesus, we are definitely in God's will for them.

5. Jesus knew what was riding on these 12 men.

These men would be the foundation of the church. These were the men Jesus would send to start his church. They would become his apostles, his sent ones.

One of these men would help fulfil the most important moment in all of history, Jesus death and resurrection. Judas would eventually betray his friend for 30 pieces of silver. How Jesus must have agonised praying for Judas Iscariot knowing what he would do, and what Jesus himself would have to go through. He also knew he would commit suicide.

6. Jesus knew that prayer matters and makes a difference when it comes to God acting. When we call upon the Lord he has promised in his word to answer, if we don't call upon the Lord, he has promised us nothing.

What was the result of Jesus night in prayer, 12 were chosen to be apostles. 1 betrayed him others ran away, another denied him 3 times, and Jesus was crucified on a cross to take away the sins of the world.

But as Jesus rose again, hope reigned, he restored his men, and when he returned to his father's right hand and sent his spirit, these men were filled with the power they needed to share the message of Jesus Christ. These men did become the foundation of the church. They did get things wrong, and most of them stayed in Jerusalem even after they were told

to go into all the world, and God had to raise up people like Paul, Barnabas and Timothy to spread the word beyond Jerusalem and Israel into all the world and the church was established and later on they did fulfil their commission and many ended up as martyrs.

The church is the hope of the world, Jesus knew this. His plans and purposes would be fulfilled by his church, 11 of these 12 men would be its foundation.

Friends we are part of that church that Jesus is building.

This church in Ascot is part of Jesus plan and its foundation wasn't a couple of 100 years in the past, but 2000 years ago, as Jesus spent a night alone with his father in prayer. Jesus has a plan and purpose for us, he wants us to be his people here in a dark world, he knows we need his spirit to empower us; he has given us dreams and visions of things we can accomplish.

Jesus knows what is at stake for his church to reach out to the community around us.

Jesus is alive, at the father's right hand, and he is praying for us just like he prayed for his apostles because he knows what is at stake. As we pray we tap into his prayers for us so that we can see his will done in all the things we do. like parenting explored, and we run various different ministries, as we endeavoured to reach out to those who don't yet know him, as we try to build a church on biblical principles not tradition.

The results of Jesus prayers were not instant, the prayers Jesus prayed that night had a long term life time effect on the whole of human history.

Do we pray with the long term in mind? We live in a culture that wants things yesterday. Jesus shows us how to pray into the big picture.

e.g. nf Prayer and fasting – 25 years ago 100 pastors praying – only country relationship with is India – now many hundreds of pastors are praying as we are involved in dozens of nations. And now even planting churches into eskimo population of north Russia. It works!!

Friends we believe God has spoken to us about being a church that is modelled on the early church, and a church where prayer is at the foundation, not a peripheral activity. We believe we have been called to become a community of prayer so that we can achieve and see amazing things happen.

This is not something we are seeing through a mist, God has spoken, and we want to respond to his clear call. Friends please come with us give it a go! We are working out how we get there, and how we make opportunities for us to pray as a church. We don't have all the answers, we don't know exactly what it will look like, please feedback constructively to us and help us be obedient to what God has called us to be. It will be hard work, and we need to press through together and not give up. Please bear with us as we try things and tweak things to bring prayer to the heart and foundation of all we do as a church.

When we do this I believe God will respond just as he did to Jesus prayers on that mountainside some 2000 years ago and he will build his church so that the gates of hell will not prevail, and many will come to know the God the father as we become the church that Jesus set into motion with the call of 12 followers whom he sent to be his voice in a dark world.

Lets stand.