



God's High Calling

by Albert Hannigan

We read from Matthew chapter 10 verse 1 of the time when Jesus sent out his twelve disciples to minister to needy people. He gave them power to cast out unclean spirits and to heal people of all manner of sicknesses. That power and ability came from God alone. Without that they would have been helpless to minister to the many needs. We realize that we too need the anointing and power and the Life of Christ to minister to the many needs around us.

Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

In order for this to happen, we need to have a close relationship with Christ, for He says it is to those who believe in Me. It is by faith that we enter into the ministry that has been entrusted to us when we were prayed over by the presbytery.

In John 15:5 Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing." He is the source of life; He is the Vine and we are the branches." What a privilege to be attached and to be one with the Vine. For in Him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3).

Quoting from Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." There is nothing more reasonable and wise that we can do than to put ourselves into the hands of our kind and loving God.

Verse 2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." There is a leaving of the old behind, and an entering into the new. 2 Cor. 5:17,

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away, behold all things are become new." What a wonderful day it was when the realization dawned upon us that we were changed, born again, transformed, and that Jesus had come to dwell within. Now that Treasure, the very Son of God, came to live within our hearts. And though a great transformation had begun within us, nevertheless, at the same time, a great responsibility became ours, to let the Light of Jesus shine forth.

Verse 3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." The faith that we have comes not from ourselves, but is a gift of God.

Praise God for the faith that He has imparted to us by the riches of His grace, that we should catch a glimpse of Him and of heavenly realities.

Verse 4, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

Verse 5, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ,

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and every one members one of another.”

One of the most glorious truths that the Holy Spirit has revealed since He moved by His Spirit in 1948, was the truth of the Body of Christ. In our experience, before that time, we knew ourselves as individuals who were born again Christians. But now, glory to God, we realize He has made us part of the glorious Body of Christ.

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones"(Eph.5:30).

"He is the head of the body, the church:" (Col 1:18). "For His body's sake, which is the church:" (Col. 1:24 b).

To be members one of another makes our relationship so close. How can it be any closer than that. In John 17, Jesus talks of our relationship with the Father, and with the Son, and with one another. He prayed for us, verse 9, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Verse 10, "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Verse 11, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own Name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

Verse 20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;"

Verse 21, "That they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

There is no greater testimony to the world than to see that we as believers are one together, and with the Father, and with the Son. "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (John 13:35).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

God is doing a great work in our hearts. The process of making us one, and binding us together in the Spirit, can be a very humbling and even painful experience. It is hard for us to humble ourselves before God and before one another. Satan fell through pride, and so can we. Jesus is our perfect pattern and example. He made Himself of no reputation. Even though He was the very Son of God and the Creator of all things, yet He endured the reproaches of sinners. Though all He did was good, yet He was willing to go to the cross for you and me and to die and shed His blood for us who were sinners. "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:2, 3).

The rewards to you and me, if we follow the example of our dear Saviour, are beyond description. To think that those who are faithful will be called upon to rule and reign with Him in His kingdom. What a calling!

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). That is our high calling.

God richly bless you.

2011 North Carolina Camp Meeting

July 24 - 30, 2011

Wingate University, Wingate, NC 28174

Wingate University is located 35 miles east of Charlotte, N.C. on U.S. Highway 74 in the town of Wingate, N.C. If you are using MapQuest directions or a GPS system, please use the following university address: 315 E. Wilson St., Wingate, N.C. 28174.

Check-in time begins at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 24 at the student center across the street from the cafeteria. Parking for registration will be in the cafeteria parking lot. Meals will be served in the college dining hall beginning at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 24, followed by the first meeting at 7:30 p.m. The camp will conclude with the noon meal on Saturday, July 30.

Buildings are air conditioned. A gym and other recreational facilities are available.

Charges for Room & Board:

Age 0-3 No Charge

Age 4-6 \$24 per week or \$4 per day

Age 7 - Adult \$150.00 per week or \$30.00 per day

Family Rate \$600 per week or \$120 per day

Send Reservations to ncsummercamp11@triad.rr.com

or call: Keith Hurley - 336-314-1540 or David Health 336-841-0607

Flight arrangements should be made to Charlotte's Douglas International Airport (CLT). For Airport pickup contact Kim Kaufman at 704-583-0651 or email lkaufman@comporium.net If possible, please avoid rush hour arrivals at the airport, since major traffic delays are a problem then.

The High Calling

If God has called you to be really like Jesus in all your spirit, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put on you such demands of obedience, that He will not allow you to follow other Christians, and in many ways He will seem to let other good people do things which He will not let you do.

Other Christians and ministers who seem very religious and useful may push themselves, pull wires and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do it; and if you attempt it, you will meet with such failure and rebuke from the Lord as to make you sorely penitent.

Others can brag on themselves, on their work, on their success, on their writings, but only the Holy Spirit will allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others will be allowed to succeed in making great sums of money, or having a legacy left to them or in having luxuries, but God may supply you daily, be He wants you to have something far better than gold, and that is a helpless dependence on Him, that He may have the privilege of providing your needs day by day out of the unseen treasury.

The Lord may let others be honoured, and put forward, and keep you hid away in obscurity, because He wants to

produce some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade.

God will let others be great, but keep you small. He will let others do a work for Him, and get the credit for it, but He will make your work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious, He will let others get the credit for the work which you have done, and this will make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch on you with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings or for wasting your time, which other Christians never seem distressed over. So make up your mind that God will take you at your word: and if you absolutely sell yourself to be His slave, He will wrap you up in jealous love, and let other people say and do many things that you cannot do or say. Settle it forever, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that others are not dealt with. Now when you are so possessed with the living God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of heaven.

— Author Unknown

Apostolic ministry, and the calling of the twelve

by Andy Snoke

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,” (Eph. 2:19, NKJV).

God is the author of divine order. Divine order is written throughout our biological existence, and the laws of physics. The molecules of our body follow a specific “divine order” in order for them to operate. Our body systems follow a divine order as each member of our human body works in harmony with its self.

The mysterious infinite universe remains suspended by complicated laws of divine order written by the Author of creation.

His church, which is His body, is no exception.

The body of Christ is far more than simply a collection of individuals with a common interest. The body of Christ is an amazing display of saints divinely placed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, working in harmony with one another.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12, NKJV).

The foundation of the church is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. But as part of that foundation, the Lord has appointed apostolic ministry (Eph. 2:19).

Jesus initially appointed twelve apostles (apostle literally means “one sent”). The number “twelve” speaks of, or indicates, apostolic authority. The gospels are full of references to “the twelve” representing this apostolic authority.

Revelation chapter 7 and Revelation chapter 14 speak of a group of over comers that number 144,000. There is much that is not understood about these two chapters, but I believe that the number 144,000 (which is 12 times 12,000) speaks of an overcoming group of saints built on an apostolic foundation.

Jesus told the apostles that they would rule in the kingdom of God on twelve thrones.

“Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:27-28, NKJV).

The book of Revelation often mentions the “24” elders (Rev. 4:4) which is a multiple of twelve which seems to “speak” of elders on an apostolic foundation.

The number “twelve” speaks of apostolic authority, but never does it mean that there were only twelve apostles. In fact, there are 20 apostles named in the New Testament besides Jesus Christ. Bro. Hinchliff in an old Sharon Star lists these names as:

1. Matt 12:2 - names the twelve.
2. Acts 1:26 - Matthias is chosen to replace Judas as an apostle.
3. Acts 13:2, 14:14 - Paul and Barnabas are

sent by the Holy Spirit and are called apostles.

4. Romans 16:7 - Andronicus and Junia are mentioned as being of note among the apostles.

5. 1 Thes. 1:1, 2:6 - Paul names Sylvanus and Timothy as apostles with himself.

6. 1 Cor. 4:6-9 - Paul calls Apollos an apostle.

The purpose for the apostolic ministries

The apostolic ministry is part of what is referred to as the 5-fold ministry, which is ordained by God.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,” (Eph. 4:11, NKJV).

The purpose for the apostolic ministry, in very brief terms is as follows:

1. for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, (by the laying on of hands and gifting through prayer by the presbytery) (Eph. 4: 12),

2. for the edifying (building up, strengthening) of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (Eph. 4: 13).

The calling of the twelve

I have always been fascinated about Christ’s selection of the first 12 apostles. I am intrigued about their personalities, who they were, and what we can learn from their lives. These were real men made from flesh and bone, called and chosen by the Lord.

It is fascinating when you examine whom Jesus hand picked out of all of Israel to be part of the very foundation of the church.

The most amazing thing that all of the first called twelve apostles have in common, is how absolutely ordinary, simple, plain, unqualified and in most cases uneducated these men were.

A person would naturally think that if you were in charge of starting a worldwide, age enduring spiritual Christian movement, you would interview hundreds of the top candidates world wide to pick the absolute best. Jesus did not do this. He picked the most un-extraordinary men that He enabled by the Holy Spirit.

The power and impact of the twelve came not from natural talents or gifts, but from the presence of the Lord. As it has been often said: God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called.

Of the twelve that Jesus chose, seven of them were fishermen that most likely had grown up together in Capernaum. They had probably been friends since childhood. Four, and by some accounts six, of the twelve were brothers! One was a former zealot. A

IMPORTANT DATES

North Battleford Camp..... July 3 - 10, 2011

North Carolina Camp..... July 24 - 30, 2011

Pinelaw Summer Camp.....CANCELLED

Caribbean Summer Camp..... August 6 - 14, 2011

Caribbean Youth Camp August 16 - 19, 2011

Park Valley Labour Day Sept. 2 - 5, 2011

Winkler Family Camp Sept. 2 - 5, 2011

Hidden Acres Family Camp Sept. 2 - 5, 2011

New Jersey Fall Camp Oct. 14 - 16, 2011

North Battleford Young People's Nov. 10 - 13, 2011

Indiana Young People's Dec. 26 - 30, 2011

zealot was a radical sect intent on overthrowing the Roman government one soldier at a time. A zealot would be better called a “terrorist” of that day due to the practice of assassination by use of a dagger. One was a tax collector, despised by the Jews for collecting taxes on behalf of the Roman Government.

Of the twelve, why would Jesus pick up to half of them as family members? Why would he pick seven of them from the same area having known one another since childhood? Why didn't he spread out the mix a little?

I can't fully answer this, but it appears that the Lord's choosing has always been centered on family. The mother of John the Baptist and the mother of Jesus himself were cousins, making Jesus and John the Baptist second cousins. God has always favored families. You might say that God is truly the original “family man.”

Take a look at your local assembly. Do you see a lot of family? This is not an oddity; it seems to be the Lord's design and calling. I should add, that when reaching out with the gospel, you should start with your own family!

When choosing the first apostles, the Lord did not look at their “capabilities” but at their “availability.” He chose ordinary men for His great work, just as He chose you for your calling today.

Without going into great detail, permit me to share a few things about the twelve.

Jesus made His selection after spending a night in prayer. He may have placed many names before God, before He had a witness about the “twelve.” We don't know, but He might have been tempted to ask God, “Are you sure about this one?” In a similar way, when elders for local assemblies are called today, it is only after a lot of prayer and deliberation of the apostolic elders before the Lord, waiting for that witness.

“Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles” (Luke 6: 12-13, NKJV).

Peter

Peter was one of the most outspoken apostles among the twelve. He was full of enthusiasm, but did not always look at the big picture. One minute he is telling the Lord that Jesus cannot wash his feet, and the next moment he wants his whole body washed.

One moment he has the faith to literally walk on water, while the next moment he is saved from

drowning. One moment he is ready to take on the whole Roman army of at least 600 men that came to arrest Jesus at Gethsemane, even cutting off the ear of one named Malchus near by (undoubtedly aiming for his head!), and the next moment he denied Christ three times.

After Pentecost, Peter no longer relied on his own will power or enthusiasm; he relied on the power of the Holy Spirit. Before his Pentecostal experience in the Holy Spirit, Peter denied Christ before the few. After Pentecost, he would preach boldly to the multitudes and 3,000 would be ushered into the Kingdom of God with his first message.

Andrew

Andrew was the brother of Peter. Where Peter preached to the many, Andrew ministered to the few. Andrew is known for bringing individuals to Christ, not the crowds, but the ones. A kingdom can be built by bringing one soul to Christ at a time.

It was Andrew that brought Peter to Jesus by telling him that “we have found the Messiah,” indicating that they had been looking for Him. It was Andrew that brought the lad to Jesus with five loaves and two small fish to feed the multitudes (John 6:9). It was Andrew, with Philip, that brought the “outsiders,” the Greeks, to Jesus (John 12:20-22).

Andrew seemed to be content to be seen in the distance, not center stage. There is much that we can learn from the life and attitude of Andrew. There is much that can be accomplished when we concentrate on bringing “just one” soul to Jesus. The multitudes will come, one soul at a time!

James and John, the sons of Boanerges (Thunder)

James and his younger brother John were called the “sons of thunder” by Jesus (Mark 13:3). This may have been a veiled declaration of their feverish temperaments.

On one occasion, the two “sons of thunder” asked permission from the Lord to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans!

“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans (Author's explanation: the Samaritans were a mixed race offspring of Israelites from the Northern Kingdom), to prepare for Him.

But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from

heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village" (Luke 9: 51-56, NKJV).

Where, you might ask, was there room for love and compassion in the hearts of James and John? They were ready to wipe the Samaritans off the face of the earth!

These two brothers, most likely partners with Peter and Andrew in the fishing business, came from an affluent family. They are referred to as "the sons of Zebedee" whose father had hired servants (Mark 1:20).

Later, we find that James and John somehow get their mother to boldly ask Jesus that her two sons have the privilege of sitting on the left and right hand of Jesus in the Kingdom of God. It appears that the prospect of power, and position overshadowed their understanding that Christ has called them (us) to be servants.

"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

And He said to her, 'What do you wish?'

She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.'

But Jesus answered and said, 'You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

They said to Him, 'We are able.'

So He said to them, 'You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.'

And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many'" (Matthew 20: 20-28, NKJV).

John MacArthur, in his book "twelve ordinary men" says regarding James: "James wanted a

crown of Glory; Jesus gave him a cup of suffering. He wanted power; Jesus gave him servanthood. He wanted a place of prominence; Jesus gave him a martyr's grave. He wanted to rule; Jesus gave him a sword- not to wield, but to be the instrument of his own execution."

Both of these brothers needed a transformation from within, which is exactly what Christ did. I thank the Lord that James and John, and you and I can have a true "change of heart" by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

John is the only one of the twelve, who did not die a martyr's death. John died most probably in his nineties. This former half of the "sons of thunder" would in his later years be known as "the apostle of Love." In John's Gospel and epistles, he uses the words "truth" 45 times, the word "witness" 70 times, and the word "love" more than 80 times.

If there was hope for James and John, there is hope for you and me.

Philip

Philip for unknown reasons is known by his Greek name rather than his Jewish name. He had a seeking heart. As soon as he had found Jesus, he told his good friend Nathanael about Christ. He also tended to see the negative, instead of the positive. He would tend to see what could not be done, rather than finding a way to get things done.

"Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone one of them may have a little," Philip said to Jesus regarding the feeding of the multitude in John 6:7. He seemed not to understand that he stood before the Creator who was able to multiply what little they had into much.

After being with Jesus for some three years, and witnessing many miracles, Philip has the audacity to say to Jesus in John 14: 7, "Lord, show us the Father and it is sufficient for us."

History tells us that Philip was used mightily in spreading the gospel among the early church, as his faith was regenerated with the infilling of the Holy Spirit. I am sure we can all see a lapse of our own faith as Philip once did. If there was hope for Philip, there is hope for us!

Bartholomew also called Nathanael

Nathanael seemed to be a man that was faithful from the time he first met Jesus and throughout his ministry. Jesus honored Nathanael by saying in regard to him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!" (John 1:47). Nathaniel was an open book. What you saw was genuine and unpretentious. History suggests that Nathanael ministered as far as

Persia, and India.

Matthew also called Levi

It is difficult in our culture to fully appreciate how despicable the profession of tax collector was in Jesus day. To be a tax collector for Rome, and to be Jewish on top of that, placed you at the lowest level of society. To say that you were a tax collector placed you into the same lowly status as that of a prostitute, or a traitor.

Jesus even linked the status of these two professions together when He said, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the Kingdom of God before you” (speaking to the religious leaders of the day) (Matthew 21: 31).

And this is who Matthew was, when Jesus found him. Matthew would give a great feast after being found by Jesus, and he invited all of his tax collector friends. Even his disciples were offended when Jesus ate with Matthew and his friends. They said, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” (Luke 5:29-32).

Matthew may have invited the tax collectors to the feast because he had no real friends of any status. Only the lowest of the low, the most despised of the despicable were Matthew’s associates.

Matthew’s life changed in a moment of time. Two words fell on his ears, and his life, his profession, and his circle of fellowship all changed instantly. “Follow Me,” said Jesus, “Follow me.” It was enough for Matthew, no more explanation needed! Just two words. “Follow me.”

“As Jesus passed on from Capernaum, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and He said to him “Follow me.” So he arose and followed Him” (Matthew 9:9).

I find it so amazing that this brief singular description of what happened that afternoon comes from Matthew himself. He found no need to explain any more than what was contained in that single sentence of two words, “Follow me.”

You would think, that Matthew would never want to remind anyone of his dark past as a tax collector. Yet in his own gospel that bears his name, he mentions his own name only twice. First, the incident we just covered regarding his call from Jesus, and the second is when he lists the names of the twelve.

But when he mentions his name as one of the twelve apostles whom Jesus handpicked, he calls his own name “Levi- the tax collector” (Matthew 10:3). In humility, for all of history, he reminds us all where and who “he once was.”

Matthew would never make it as a modern day

“resume” writer. He was not one who could use glowing words to describe his accomplishments, his pedigree, his “calling” as an apostle. Instead, he reminds us that he is Levi “the tax collector.”

I pray that we may be as humble, and ready to do the King’s business immediately as Matthew was.

Thomas also called Didymus (meaning “twin”)

The scriptures record little about Thomas, but what descriptions there are refer to his doubting.

When the disciples had told Thomas that they had seen the resurrected Lord, Thomas replied: “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Thomas needed proof, and Jesus would personally give him the proof by appearing before him as the resurrected Lord. Thomas then replied with a tremendous statement: “My Lord and my God!”

History records that Thomas may have traveled and ministered as far away as India.

We all have doubts and a lack of faith from time to time. It is at these times the Lord will often send His reassuring presence to us, that we may also exclaim, “My Lord and my God.”

James son of Alphaeus

Very little is known about James, the son of Alphaeus. The scriptures record only his name, not his actions. The scriptures “hint” that James may be a brother to Matthew, or even a cousin to Jesus, but this we will never know for sure.

Though seemingly obscure from a historical point of view, James the son of Alphaeus, would be certainly known in the heavens. We can all be “obscure” in the eyes of the world, and still contain a mighty calling from God in His Kingdom.

Simon called the Zealot

Simon the Zealot, belonged, or once belonged to a radical political party known as the Zealots. The Zealots hated the Romans with their occupation of Israel, and had become violent outlaws, ready to die for their cause. The Zealots were often referred to as “dagger men” for carrying daggers under their clothing, used for assassination of Roman soldiers.

Jesus chose Simon the Zealot. This once violent minded Zealot, would carry the gospel of love and peace as far north as the British Isles before disappearing from history. Simon, as the other apostles, is proof that the Lord is in the business of changing hearts and temperaments.

Judas (not Iscariot), the son of James, also called Thaddaeus, and Lebbaeus

Judas life is also shrouded in relative obscurity. His small conversation with the Lord is mentioned in John 14:21-22. What little may be pieced together indicates a tender hearted servant.

Judas most likely took the gospel North into the regions of Turkey, where tradition says he was clubbed to death for the gospel.

Judas Iscariot

The name Judas Iscariot has become synonymous with the word “traitor” throughout history. The calling of Judas Iscariot is not recorded in the scriptures, but somewhere in time he chose to follow Jesus. And Jesus chose him.

Every opportunity to draw close to the Savior was wasted away, through his greed and lust. Once again quoting John MacArthur: “He had given his life to following Jesus. But he never gave Jesus his heart.”

Judas was a hypocrite of the worst kind. His hypocrisy was hidden from all except Jesus. When Jesus said that one of the twelve would betray him, no one pointed a finger at Judas (Matthew 26:22-23).

Judas was the treasurer, who traded the eternal Christ, for 30 pieces of silver. I find it so significant, that at the last supper, after Judas had left, prepared to betray Jesus, the Lord instituted the Lord’s Supper. We are given instruction during this holy time of remembrance and reflection to “examine ourselves” (1 Cor. 11:27-32). We examine ourselves, as we hold the bread in our hand, to see if there is any remnant of Judas in our heart. Is there any part of us that would betray the Master?

Judas had every opportunity to have fellowship with Jesus, and to follow him. Eternity became obscured with the temporal allure of money. You can hold a small coin two inches from your eye, and completely obscure your vision of the universe and all that is around you. Judas’s eyes had become blinded to the incarnate Christ, with the coins of earth.

Judas stands as the worst betrayer of mankind, and also as an example of where any of us can fall.

In summary, God has called, chosen, and established an apostolic foundation. It was important in the beginning of Christ’s ministry on earth, and it will continue right into the Kingdom of God.

But as in every calling, the Lord chooses that which is weak and incomplete as we have just learned from the study of “the twelve.” He makes us into what he would have us to be. Natural talents don’t matter, gifted personalities don’t matter. Only our obedience and faithfulness to His transforming power will make us a stone that can be used in His temple.

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 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; 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, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’” (1 Cor 1:26-30 NKJV).

CALLED HOME

Michael Peters, Elder
- St. Vincent, West Indies
May 12, 2011

(As research for this article, I acknowledge that I have used a variety of sources including: The Holy Scriptures, various fact sheets from the internet, past articles from The Sharon Star, and John MacArthur’s book titled “Twelve Ordinary Men.”)

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