

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: Jesus Appoints the Twelve, Mark 3:13-19

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INTRODUCTION: Today I will be preaching from Mark Chapter 3. The Book of Mark is a book of action. And, we believe Mark wrote this book to the Romans, who were people of action. And, so the focus is action more than words. Some of the other gospels focus on the words of Jesus. While Mark includes the words of Jesus, the main focus is action. So, we pick up in Mark Chapter 3, and in the first part, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. And, he was criticized for that. Then people started following Jesus, and the crowds became very large. We know by the way Jesus interacted with the crowd, he was not interested in celebrity status.

There's a book out now called *Not a Fan*, and the author writes about the difference between being a fan and being a follower of Jesus. So, Jesus did not want fans. What he wanted was disciples—true followers of his teaching, true followers of his vision for the world—the salvation that came through him, his death, burial, and resurrection. And, so, Jesus withdrew from the crowd, and he went up a mountainside. Look in verse 13 of Mark Chapter 3—

SCRIPTURE: Mark 3:13-19 ¹³ *Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.* ¹⁴ *He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach* ¹⁵ *and to have authority to drive out demons.* ¹⁶ *These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter),* ¹⁷ *James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”),* ¹⁸ *Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot* ¹⁹ *and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

EXPLANATION: Many years earlier, God took twelve sons of Jacob and made them leaders of tribes, and through them, God formed a great nation. Jacob's twelve sons were unique individuals, each with his own personality, and likewise, each

tribe took on interesting characteristics. Some were larger than others. Some were more eager to participate in warfare than others. And, some were more proficient in craftsmanship. Together, the 12 tribes formed a great nation. They became very large and very powerful. God gave them all the tools they needed to be a successful nation.

As with all nations, from time to time, the people rebelled, and God punished them. At some point, they rebelled more than they followed God, and in a manner of speaking, God gave up on them. They were overtaken by their enemies. The nation decayed and became powerless.

Then, here come Jesus, right into the middle of a nation which had decayed—right into a nation barely hanging on to its identity—right into a nation with no idea what its future held.

And what did Jesus do? He called twelve men—not to form a political nation like the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel—but to form a spiritual nation.

ILLUSTRATION: We have a class, which meets here in the sanctuary, called the Misfits. I've told some of you this before, but when I first came here, someone referred to a person as one of the Misfits. I thought it was an insult until I found out about the class. Think about it: The twelve disciples were all misfits. They were a group of people who would have never socialized together under normal circumstances. They didn't have the same earthly father as the leaders of the twelve tribes who had Jacob as their father, but this was a new spiritual nation where none of this mattered.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION: In the Book of First Samuel, we see the nations wanted a king. They no longer wanted to follow the leadership of the Lord through the theocracy, which had governed them for so long. What they wanted was an earthly king, a monarchy, and they hoped God would bless them through a king. Their first king was Saul, and there were problems with his leadership. Later, we'll see how God blessed his people through the kings, but it still wasn't as good as when God led the people through prophets and judges.

Now, with the calling of the twelve disciples, this new spiritual nation would have God as their king again.

Let's look at the twelve disciples:

Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter):

SCRIPTURE: In Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus asks, "*Who do people say that the Son of Man is?*" (v. 13). The disciples give various answers. When he asks, "*Who do you say that I am?*" (v.15), Simon Peter answers, "*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*" (v. 16). *Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter (Petros), and on this rock (petra) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (v. 17-19).

Peter went on to become a great disciple.

James son of Zebedee - and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"):

These guys were strong fellows. The scripture here defines the Hebrew word *Boanerges* because Mark was writing to Roman readers.

We know James and John were with their father by the seashore when Jesus called them to follow him (Matthew 4:21-22 and Mark 1:19-20). One time, James wanted to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan town, and Jesus rebuked him.

Andrew: (Simon's brother); He was called along with Simon while they were fishing, and Jesus told them he would make them fishers of men.

Philip: During the Last Supper, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, and this provided Jesus the opportunity to teach his disciples about the unity of the Father and the Son.

Bartholomew: We don't know much about him, but he was one of the disciples present at the ascension of Christ. He took the Great Commission quite seriously and took the Gospel to the West.

Matthew : He was a tax collector who worked for the Roman government. He had a secure job as long as he collected taxes, and he left it all. He was one of the witnesses of the Resurrection and the Ascension.

Thomas : He was called “doubting Thomas” (John 20:24-29). Thomas was not convinced when he heard about the resurrection, *But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe”* (v. 25). But, when Jesus appeared later and invited Thomas to touch his wounds and behold him, Thomas showed his belief by saying, *“My Lord and my God”* (v. 28). Then Jesus told him, *“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* (v. 29).

James son of Alphaeus: Here's another James, sometimes called “the lesser,” and there is some disagreement as to who he actually was. There are several men named James in the scripture. What I like about him is that some of us can identify with a person who is in the crowd...a person who does not necessarily stand out.

Thaddaeus: He is another we don't know much about.

Simon the Zealot: He is different than Simon Peter. The zealots were a group of Jews working on a plan to overthrow the government and return it to Jewish rule. They were also known as the “dagger men.” They were very serious about their mission, but when Simon became a disciple of Jesus, he laid down his plans for the return of the political Kingdom of God, and he joined the spiritual kingdom. I wonder what he thought when he first met Matthew, a former employee of the Roman government.

Judas Iscariot who betrayed him: We know about Judas.

APPLICATION: Let's just say Jesus has many disciples, but with these particular twelve, he called them apostles. Today's equivalent is something like that of an

apprentice. An apostle is one who Jesus sent out with a specific commission to accomplish a specific mission.

And, what was that mission? Verse 14— to have fellowship with Jesus and learn from him, to preach, and to cast out demons. That’s a pretty powerful mission, I’d say.

CONCLUSION: God used the original twelve tribal leaders to form a great political nation. And, later he called twelve men—very different men with different backgrounds, different education levels, and different perspectives—to form a spiritual nation.

And, that nation still survives and thrives today. We are a part of it. Think about it. Because of the twelve, we are here today.

Do you know what? You can join this spiritual nation today.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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