

# The Calling of the Twelve, An Example for You

Matthew 10:1-4

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## **Introduction:**

Last week, I began chapter 10 in my sermon series on Matthew's Gospel.

- Up until now in this gospel, Jesus has been doing all the work of the ministry.
  - He has been doing all the preaching and all the healing...
- But in chapter 10, a change takes place:
  - Jesus calls the twelve disciples to join Him in His work.
  - Up until now, they have been disciples—
    - but they have not been apostles—
    - those who are sent out to do His work in His name.
  - To equip them for this work
    - He gives them power to heal all sicknesses and diseases in His name, and to cast out demons.
    - He also sends them forth to preach the gospel.

Jesus is preparing these men to be His witnesses to the entire church!

- He is giving them to convey to the whole world how He, the Son of God, came in human flesh...
  - how He went about preaching and healing and casting about demons,
  - how He was crucified, died and was buried,
  - and how on the third day He rose again from the dead.
- The witness of these twelve is to stand through all the ages, preserved in the Bible for every succeeding generation.
  - And not only are they to declare the bare facts of His life and death and resurrection...
    - but they are also sent to proclaim what these mean to us!
  - They are sent to proclaim that His death was an offering of Himself as a sacrifice to take away our sins,
    - and that His resurrection was God's acceptance of that sacrifice...
    - and that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but will have everlasting life!

- And to them it was given to convey all this information to us without error...
  - Christ gave them the Holy Spirit to cause them to remember and to explain all that He said and did.
  - Therefore, the words they and those who worked with them have left in scripture come to us by divine inspiration, without any corruption or error and ought to be received as the very Word of God.

We looked at the Lord's gracious gift of these apostles last week.

- But I told you that there is also another way to look at the calling of the twelve...
  - Not only are they a gift to be received with thanksgiving,
    - but they are also an example from which we may learn about our own calling.
  - Not that we have the same calling—
    - They are unique as eyewitnesses of Christ, given to set forth once and for the gospel of our Lord...
      - This ministry is never to be duplicated by us, but rather received with thanksgiving!
    - Yet, we can also learn a lot about our own calling in Jesus Christ by looking at their calling as an example to each of us in our calling.

Let us consider then, the calling of the twelve apostles as an example for us.

**First of all, observe that the Lord's calling is very plain and clear.**

- There was no confusion about it at all...
  - Jesus called twelve specific men and told them in very clear terms what He wanted them to do.
    - There were no mysterious impulses or messages in the clouds...
    - He simply spoke to them in plain language.

Learn from this that the Lord speaks with great plainness to all who desire to do His will.

People often seem to think that “finding God's will” is a very mysterious and difficult thing...

- But long ago Moses declared that it was not so difficult at all.
- In Deuteronomy 30:11-14, He said:
  - Deut 30:11-14: For this commandment which I command you today *is not too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us

and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

It is our Lord's way to speak very directly and very clearly about what He wants us to do.

- He has no difficulty in making His will known to us with words,
  - for He is the one who gave us language in the first place—
  - So what does God call you to do?

Well the apostle John has boiled it all down for us.

- In his first epistle, John declares:
  - 1 John 3:23: And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

There are two things here that God calls every one of you to do.

First, He calls you to believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

- You cannot please God unless you trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation.
  - Until you believe on Him, you are still in your sins—without God's forgiveness.
    - All that you do will be defiled in His eyes until your sins are washed away.
    - But as soon as you believe,
      - the blood of Jesus cleanses you from all your unrighteousness and you are reconciled to God.

And then the second thing once you have believed is that you should love one another.

- God's will after you have believed is that you give your life for others in imitation of Christ who gave His life for you.
- You are called to serve others according to your place...
  - As a husband, to love your wife,
  - As a child, to honour your parents,
  - As a retailer, to be fair and honest,
  - As a neighbour to humbly serve those in need,
  - As a labourer, to do your work with all your heart for the glory of God and the good of others.
- This is all so very clear...

- Yet it is our sinful tendency to want to move past this to seek God's will in other ways...
- But surely there is enough here to keep us occupied forever!

TRANS> The Lord's calling is not at all difficult to understand.

- The things that are most important to Him are clearly stated for us in His word.

But let me guess what many of you are thinking...

You are thinking,

- "Yes, of course, we know those things are God's will, but what about the other things that are not so clear?"
- "What about the question of my calling in the sense of what kind of work I should do or if I should marry?"
- "Those questions are not always quite so easy."

That is true enough

But I cannot stress to you enough that you must begin with the foundational things.

- You must begin with the things that are the most important and that God has clearly expressed to you...
- And you must never try to move beyond these things.
  - Your focus is to remain on faith and obedience.

If you don't begin with these things, nothing else you do will please the Lord.

- Too often people get so focused on these secondary questions about their particular work that they leave the basic principles.
  - They lose sight of the fact that the whole purpose for their work is for their neighbour.

Nevertheless, I realise that the disciples' calling in Matthew 10 is, in fact, concerning these more secondary things that are not expressly stated in the Bible.

It has to do more with those questions like:

- What sort of work should I do?
- Jesus is calling them to a specific vocation.
  - It is not fair to say that Jesus will come to us and tell us just what He wants us to do as He came to these men and the prophets.
  - That is one of the ways that their calling is unique and not to be imitated by us.

- But you do learn here that God does make clear to us everything He wants to know...
  - As I showed you last week, the scriptures are perfectly sufficient to give you all you need to do God's will.
  - If it is not in scripture, then it is not that important for you to know.

So how may we use the scriptures to get show us our specific calling as far as the kind of work we do?

- In short I would say by following the general guidance of the scriptures...
  - But now let us consider what some of that guidance is...

Begin with elimination of all that is contrary to God's commandments given in scripture.

- For example, it is not the will of God for you to become a bank robber or a strip dancer or a sorcerer...
- If you are a woman,
  - it is not God's will for you to go into the ministry because the Bible says plainly that a woman is not to teach in the church.
  - Each of you must evaluate your calling to see if it is in accordance with God's word.

Secondly, you should consider your abilities.

When you remember that you are called to love your neighbour,

- this informs you that you should look to do what you can to benefit your neighbour.
- If you are trying to do something that you are not gifted to do just for the money or the prestige,
  - you will bring frustration to yourself and little blessing to others.

God, in His providence, gives you certain abilities and gifts to serve others.

- Not everyone is able to do everything.
- One person is cut out to be a rocket scientist,
  - another to be an artist,
  - and another a brick layer.
- God made you the way you are and gave you the gifts you have.
  - Accept that and serve Him with gratitude.

Of course ability also has a certain connection with opportunity.

- You may have the gifts to do something, but not the opportunity—
  - you may not be able to get a job in a particular field or find someone suitable to marry.
- If that is the case, it is not God’s will—at least not now...
  - You must be content to do something else that you **are** able to do.
  - Don’t go on unemployment just because you can’t do all that you consider yourself capable of doing.
  - God wants you to be serving and diligent in some sort of calling.

Thirdly, apply the principles of wisdom from God’s word to your decision.

- Ask yourself if a particular job would be good for you given what you know about yourself and your weaknesses...
  - If you know you are prone to lying, it is probably not wise for you to become a used car salesman...
- Likewise, you must ask yourself if a particular job is conducive to those things you know you are clearly called to do...
  - For example, you may have a strong desire to be writer, but you honestly don’t believe you can support your family doing that...
    - You are clearly called to provide for your family, so you need to evaluate whether that is a proper job for you if there is something else you can do that **would** pay the bills.
    - A man may find one job easier than another, but he needs to sacrifice in order to provide for his own to the best of his ability.
  - If a wife and mother is considering a job, she and her husband must evaluate how compatible that job is with her primary calling from God to be a keeper at home.
    - If it hinders her from doing what God has called her to do in the home, she should reconsider...
  - If a man believes that he is called to be a jungle missionary
    - he should evaluate whether that is compatible with marriage...
    - If being a jungle missionary means abandoning his wife and children then he should either refrain from marriage or do some other kind of work.
    - The same is true if you are looking at a sales job that takes you away from home eleven months of the year.

- You must apply wisdom to see how what you do will affect other areas in your life.
- Can you fulfil your covenant responsibilities to your wife and children if you take that job?

Fourthly, consider your desires

God not only gives you gifts and abilities, but also certain desires.

- It is legitimate to ask, “What do I want to do?”
- The scripture recognises this as a legitimate aspect to determining your calling.
  - For example, even in the calling to become an elder in the church, the Bible says,
    - 1Ti 3:1: This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.
- Likewise with marriage, one of the ways you know you are called to marry is when you have a strong desire for marriage.
  - The Bible says so.

At the same time, you must not let desire be a snare to you as so many do today!

One way this is done is by making desire everything so that it trumps the considerations of wisdom and even of God’s commandments!

- This should never be the case!
  - It doesn’t matter if you want to be a fashion model and have the “gifts” for it—if it involves parading around in immodest apparel, it is not God’s calling.
  - Nor is it ever God’s calling to marry an unbeliever, no matter how much you may **desire** to do so and no matter how much you be “in love.”

A second way desire can become a snare is when a person never gets on with pursuing a calling because “I don’t know what I want to do.”

- It may be there is nothing you want to do...
- If that is the case, then it doesn’t matter what you want...
  - God calls you to serve your neighbour diligently—somehow.
  - You must find a way and get on with it.

TRANS> But what you must also remember about God’s calling is that it is not mysterious and intangible.

- That which matters about your calling is very clear from God's word...
- And when you get down to particulars, it comes down to your desires and judgement.
  - God is not as concerned about whether you are a baker or a carpenter as He is about whether you trust His Son and love your neighbour as a baker or carpenter.
  - In your efforts to serve Him in your calling, your goal should be to glorify Him and to do good to others.
    - What means you use to do that is not the great concern.
    - Remember that God's calling is plain.
      - If you are all puzzled and confused about God's calling,
        - it is probably because you are not focused on what is most important in your calling.

TRANS> So you first of all that God's calling is plain...

- But what a calling it is—to believe on Christ and to love one another as He loved us!
- Who can do it?
  - Well that leads us to the second thing to learn from the example of the calling of the twelve.

**Secondly, I want you to see that the Lord will supply you with all you need to do what He has called you to do.**

- He supplied His disciples in two ways.
  - First, in that He gave them sufficient training to fulfil their calling...
  - Second, in that He gave them sufficient grace to fulfil their calling.
    - Let us look at these two kinds of provision in more detail.

First, consider the training He provided for them...

Vocational training is the very practical form of His provision for them.

You can see how He gave them this training in stages...

- First, He had them brought up in Jewish homes where they were exposed to the word of God and the hope of the Messiah.
- Then, He sent John the Baptist to their region to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand and that the Messiah would soon appear.
- Soon after that, Jesus Himself came and began to instruct these men casually.
- Then He called them to live their present work and spend all their time sitting at His feet, learning from Him.



- Then, as we have seen in Matthew 10, He begins to send them on short term missions under His careful oversight...
- And all this to prepare them for the time when He will be taken from them and they will be sent out into the world with the gospel.

This kind of training was very practical.

They needed to learn doctrine, and so they spend much time both publicly and privately learning from Him as their teacher.

They also needed to learn how to conduct themselves in their ministry...

- What work they should concentrate on as well as how they should handle different situations that would arise.
- How should they deal with opposition or with people that wanted to follow for the wrong reasons?

TRANS> Jesus gave them this practical training to prepare them for their work.

The Lord provides training for you also in order that you might be equipped to serve our neighbour.

It starts when you are a child.

Even if you are from an unbelieving home, you learn various skills that will enable you to serve others in your vocation.

- Children, if you are lazy in your school work or in learning how to cook or chop wood—
  - You are not loving your neighbour because you are not preparing yourself to be useful to others in this world.

During this time, you should also be learning from the Scriptures...

- You should be learning how to get along with others, how to honour your parents...
- You young men should be very diligent to study God's word so that you will be equipped to lead you family in worship and to lead them to a sound church.
- You young women should be learning how to care for children and how to be keepers at home...
  - And you too should be learning how to study and apply God's word.

As you get older, the Lord continues to supply you with whatever training you need to prepare you for the future...

He does not overwhelm you all at once, but leads you from one phase to the next.

- If He had sent the disciples out on their own when He first called them to leave their vocations,
  - It would have been a disaster!

You err greatly if you think you can just move into marriage or parenting without the hard work of preparation and training!

- You need guidance from God's word.
  - You need to labour in the word and labour to put it into practice.
  - You need to learn skills and develop attitudes in keeping with God's truth.

He is very gentle with you, just as He was with his disciples.

- He leads you step by step, preparing you for what lies ahead.
- If you sincerely and diligently seek Him, He will provide you with what you need to serve Him tomorrow.

TRANS> But alas, much more than training is needed!

You also need grace to fulfil your calling—special grace!

The disciples could have had all the training in the world,

- but it would have been of no use without grace.

We are told in verse 1 that Jesus gave them power to cast out demons and to heal all kinds of sickness.

- And as I showed you last week, He also gifted them to speak His word infallibly.

Clearly, they never could have carried out their calling apart from His empowering grace...

- By His grace, He gave them the ability to do what He had trained them to do!
- They had been given things to do that were impossible for them to do,
  - but by His grace, they were enabled.

This grace is essential for you also if you are to fulfil your Christian calling!

It is just as impossible for you to be a faithful Christian husband, or wife or child or labourer as it was for them to cast out demons or heal the sick!

Jesus did not call them to do this without also giving them the ability to do these things...

- not just the training and the time of instruction to prepare them...
- but also the grace that was needed to carry out their task.

When Paul spoke of the ministry, even after he had been at it for a long time,

- or it would be more accurate to say, especially after he had been at it for a long time...
- He declared, “Who is sufficient for these things?”
- And then he answered:
  - 2 Cor 3:5-6: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant.
  - The more he was at it, the more he realised how much he needed God’s grace!

If you look at your Christian calling and you say,

- “No problem, I can handle it”
- Then you don’t understand your calling!
- I think of a certain young man I disciplined when he was in university who used to say that all the time:
  - “No problem, I can handle it.”
  - And today that man is shipwrecked.
    - He has been wrecked for over a decade now...
    - He has lost his family and his children.
    - He is cut off from God and His people.

Do you not feel overwhelmed when you look at some of the things that God has called you to do?

Parents, do you look at your calling to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and say,

- “How can I ever pull this off?”
- Look at how I lose my patience!
- Look at how negligent I have been!
- Look at how inconsistent I am!
- How can I ever do this?

- Well I will tell you how—
  - You must get on your knees and cry out to God to show you what you must do...
  - Then you must search the scriptures to learn God’s will for the training of your children...
  - Then you must get on your knees again and ask Him for the grace to help you do it.
  - Then you must seek to put it all into practice.

Children, do you find it difficult to live in your calling from God to honour your parents?

- Do you find yourself whining or grumbling when they ask you to do something?
  - Do you find yourself imitating their bad examples instead of their good examples?
  - Do you find yourself being lazy and undisciplined?
- He promises His grace to you also...
  - You need to get on your knees and plead with him to help you do his will as a child.
  - And He promises that He will help you if you will look to Him.

Now of course it is true that there are some things that are over your head...

You may go into rocket science and come to realise that you don’t have the brain for it...

- or you may go into brick laying and realise that you don’t have the back for it...
- When this becomes clear and you have done what you can,
  - it is time to move on to something else.

But there are many things about which you do not have an option!

- If you are a husband or a parent, you can’t lawfully back out of that!
- But you can count on God to give you the grace to do His will.

So now I want you to consider these disciples for your encouragement!

Did these guys have what it takes to be the witnesses for Jesus Christ for the whole church—in all ages to come?

- Do you see them, fumbling about and saying stupid things?

- Do you see them, contending with each other about who will be the greatest?
- Do you see them, so slow to understand what Jesus is telling them?
- Do you see them, still confused about the cross?
  - How could they possibly do what God has called them to do?

They could do it because Jesus Christ was supplying them with the grace and the instruction to do what He had called them to do...

He had them in training one step at a time...

And He was supplying them with His grace from day to day.

Christian, if He could supply these bumbling fishermen and this tax collector with what was needed to convey the gospel to the world...

- Do you not think He is able to provide you with the instruction and grace you need to fulfil your calling?
- Of course He is!
  - Do not despair. God will give you grace to fulfil your calling. Those who seek His grace diligently will find His grace.
  - Don't be hesitant to drop to your knees about what sort of husband or wife you are!
  - Don't be hesitant to do the same for what kind of elder you are—or what kind of carpenter!
    - Christ enables us to do our service for Him.
    - Paul says that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us to do the will of God!

TRANS> So you see how kind the Lord is to us!

- Not only does He graciously give us a clear call to His service,
- But He also provides us the training and the grace we need to carry out that calling!
- And now lastly, I want to look at how He calls us without respect of persons.

**Thirdly, learn from the calling of His disciples that He calls all sorts of persons into His service.**

- Twelve men are listed here that were called to be Jesus' disciples—
  - And what diversity there is among them!
  - You need not despair that you are not the right sort of person for Him to use.
    - He uses all sorts of persons in His kingdom.

But first I want to give a word of caution because this principle is so often abused.

Our society confuses deviance with diversity—and so do many in the church!

Deviance is rebellious diversity—it is diversity that goes against God... and I am not talking about that!

- Women in ministry is not diversity but deviance.
- Homosexuality is not diversity in marriage, it is deviance from the calling of marriage.
- Often such things are done in the name of diversity, but God will judge these as deviance.

Then there are the more subtle deviations...

- A church that refuses to discipline sinful members is not merely diverse from the church that does, it is deviating from God's calling.
- A parent who refuses to discipline his child is not simply diverse, he is deviant.
- A husband who decides to stay at home instead of providing for his family is not just diverse, he is deviant.
- I have know a man who refused to train up his children in the name of individualism... He didn't want to be like the other men in the church.
  - But training up your children is not an option!
- Even as we consider legitimate personality differences, understand that these differences often have sins that are peculiar to them...
  - For example, a very compassionate person is often tempted to complain.
    - The compassion is good, but the complaining is sinful!
  - A very determined person is often careless about the needs of others and can be impatient...
    - The discipline and determination is good, but the impatience is still sinful—it's not just a personality trait!
  - A very friendly sort of person can fall into the temptation to compromise.
    - Warmth and friendliness toward others is good, but compromise is sinful—it is not just a personality trait.

So in talking about diversity, please understand that I am not talking about deviance.

- Judas is an obvious case in point...

- He was one of the twelve and God certainly used him in his plan...
  - but it was not because Judas was faithful to his calling....
  - He was diverse for sure, but his diversity was deviance!
    - He was diverse in the wrong kind of way...
    - It would have been better for him if he had not been born!

TRANS> With this precaution in mind, let us now look at some the differences God uses in His kingdom—legitimate diversity.

First, look at how uses persons from all sorts of backgrounds.

It is remarkable to think that a former tax collector was a disciple!

- And, on the opposite extreme, Simon the Canaanite or zealot (mentioned in verse 4).
  - The term Canaanite here was the Aramaic name for the party of the zealots which is the Greek term that Luke uses in his gospel.

Matthew and Simon were total opposites in their backgrounds!

The zealots were a party that had risen up in rebellion against the Roman rule and adamantly refused to pay taxes to Rome.

- They considered it their duty to make sure that nobody broke God's law with impunity!
  - They carried out the punishment with their own hands, just the way Phinehas did when he killed the adulterers in the very act and stayed the plague.
  - This Simon was a former zealot, but now he was a disciple of Jesus.

Matthew, on the other hand, far from refusing to pay taxes had been a tax collector representing Rome and making sure his fellow Hebrews paid their taxes!

- These men would have been mortal enemies before they became Christ's disciples!
- Yet, by the grace of God, you see them both serving the Lord in the close knit party of Jesus' disciples!

Do not think you are excluded because of your background!

He is in the business of transforming lives!

- Do not think you can't be a good mother because your mother was a drunkard or a prostitute—or even if you yourself were!

- God delights in pouring out His grace upon you and snatching you out of ruin to serve Him!
- It doesn't matter if you were a member of the Ku Klux Klan or if you were a frontline promoter of abortion...
  - God's grace washes away all your sin and brings you into His service—not as a second rate Christian, but even as a devoted disciple.
  - Paul considered himself as a former murderer of Christians to be one who showed that God could save anybody!

TRANS> The Lord uses persons from all sorts of different backgrounds.

- Rejoice, whatever you were, for He has called you to Himself now!

Next, see that He uses a great variety of personalities.

- The calling of the disciples shows that God uses persons of diverse personalities.

Consider the great difference between Peter the optimist, and Thomas the pessimist.

Peter is always ready to lunge forward with very little thought...

- At one time being the first to say that Christ is the Son of the living God,
- and the next moment forbidding Him to go to the cross!

And then there is Thomas...

- Hesitant to go to Bethany to minister to Lazarus because he is very aware (and rightly so) of the rising opposition against Christ...
- Perhaps you remember his comment to the other disciples once he saw that Jesus was determined to go:
  - John 11:16: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

How useful both sorts of men are in God's service, as long as they don't give in to their respective weaknesses...

- If you are a Thomas, you have the ability to foresee potential problems that may arise and to prepare for them—
  - though you must guard against reluctance to move on for the Lord.
- And if you are a Peter, you have the ability to fearlessly forge ahead into new territory for the Lord and to encourage others also—
  - but you must guard against presumption and rushing ahead without adequate preparation—falling asleep during prayer meeting!
- In these two men you see that Jesus is not looking only for optimists,



- nor is he looking exclusively for pessimists...
- He called both to be His disciples because it is His will to shape them both for use in His kingdom.

Consider also the difference between Peter the doer and John the thinker.

Read the gospel of John and you see how reflective John was about all the works of Jesus.

- He wants to tell us the deeper meaning of every miracle and explain what it reveals about Christ!
- Read the gospel of Mark (written under Peter's influence) and you see a focus on the pictorial details of what Jesus did—
  - Peter wants to show us how Jesus served.
- One focus is not better than another, but both are useful for completing the portrait of our Saviour.
- Peter did not cease to be doer and John a thinker,
  - but they were neither one stuck in what they were...
    - It is evident from John's writing that he is not the least bit interested in thinking that does not lead to action...
      - In 1 John 3:16-18, he says:
        - <sup>16</sup> By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.
        - You see that John's thinking led him to act...
    - On the other hand, Peter's acting led him to reflection upon Christ and what He had done:
      - In 1 Peter 3:17-18, he says:
        - <sup>17</sup> For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> ¶ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,
        - He is not interested in action unless it is action that leads us to meditate on Christ!

Men, you do not need to suppose that you must be known more for action or more for contemplation to lead your home or to lead in the church.

- One man will be known more for stirring his household up for deeds of service to others...
  - If it is service that leads them to worship Christ, then it is an excellent thing.
- Another will be know more for stirring them up to consider the glory of Christ and meditate on His grace...
  - If it is a worship that leads them to serve others, then it is an excellent thing.
  - God is pleased to use both kinds of men in His service...
    - Let not one despise the other.

And finally, see that He uses persons of differing capacity and ability.

God does not call us all to the same level of service, nor does He give us all the same ability in our callings.

Even among the twelve disciples, there are several who are rather obscure.

- Simon the Zealot, whom I mentioned earlier, is a prime example...
  - I have told you about all we know of him already...
  - We have no books by him, no writing about him in history books, and no references to him in the scripture outside of the lists of disciples.
- Not much more is known about Lebbaeus Thaddeus, except that he is also called Judas or Jude and may be the author of the epistle that bears his name.
- So also, very little is known about James the son of Alphaeus except that He was also called James the Less to distinguish him from the more prominent James.

Though little is known about some of these disciples...

- Yet, Jesus clearly called them to serve Him and we have no reason to think they did not do so faithfully...
  - Prominence and faithfulness are not always the same.

In the ministry, God uses men who are raised up to great prominence—as Peter or Martin Luther...

- But He also uses men who are little known beyond a local pastorate.
- The question is not how prominent, but how faithful their ministry is.
- If you think about it,

- There always a need for more labourers who are not prominent than for labourers who are.

The same is true for you in your calling...

- Some are called to subordinate roles, others are called to leading roles.
  - A godly coal miner who does his work faithfully for the Lord is far better in God's kingdom than a Prime Minister who is forever compromising his faith.
- The Bible teaches that many who are first will be last and many who are last will be first.
  - On the day of judgement, there may be many surprises!
    - It may be that one like Simon the Zealot, about whom we know little more than his name...
      - will receive the greatest reward among the twelve.
    - Do not think the work you do for God is unimportant because it is small or unrecognised!
      - Do not despair if your gifts and influence are small.
      - Of all the gifts that were put into the treasury, Jesus declared that the widow's mite was the greatest of them all...
        - This unnamed widow never knew that Jesus thought that while she lived in this world—and how surprised she would have been to think so!
        - But what glory such persons will bring to our Lord on the day when all the secrets are revealed in glory!
        - Jesus assures you that even a cup of cold water given in His name will not lose its reward.

So let us learn what we can from the calling of the twelve!

- Learn how Christ's calling is clear and plain...
- Learn how He gives you all you need to fulfil your calling...
- And learn that He uses all sorts of persons to do His work.

Be encouraged that He is the Lord and that He is the One who puts you into service.

- It is required of you that you be faithful to His calling, whatever that calling is.
- He will give you the grace to do it if you will look to Him.