

# TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

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Luke 6:12-16

"Choosing the Twelve"

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TRANSCRIPT

So, I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to Luke chapter 6, Luke chapter 6, and today we're looking at verses 12 through 16. The title of this is "Choosing the Twelve." And beginning in verse 12, this is the reading of God's word.

"It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot; Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor." There's so much packed into this passage. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, how grateful we are that You have chosen to work through fallible instruments such as we are here. And that's what You did two thousand years ago when You handpicked these men to be Your messengers, to be Your tools, Your instruments; and how mightily You worked through them. Even as we look at this today, give us a sense of encouragement and hope that You would work through us, fallible as we are, weak as we are, that we might be a lighthouse in this generation, that we might be used to spread and to propagate the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, Father, this is our

prayer. Bless now this time we spend in Your word, in Jesus' name. Amen.  
[End]

In these verses that I've just read, we read about Jesus choosing His twelve disciples. And this is really an extraordinary moment in redemptive history because Jesus is now taking this strategic and significant step in preparing for the continuation of His ministry after His ascension back to heaven. It will be into the hands of these men that He will commit His ministry.

Never has so much been entrusted to so few. Into their hands will be committed the spread of the gospel to Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the world. Into their hands will be committed the planting of churches and the appointment of elders. Into their hands will be committed the defense of the faith that will come under assault in the first century. And into their hands will be committed the writing of much of the New Testament. Never has so much been committed to so few.

Now, we need to set the scene for this moment. Sometimes as we go through a book, we can lose a sense of, "Where are we?" And just to remind you, the public ministry of Jesus was three years, slightly more than three years. And we are in Year Number Two. We are in the middle of Year Number Two.

Year Number One, Jesus lived in relative obscurity, mostly out of the public eye. And Year One was His baptism, His temptation in the wilderness, His encounter with individuals like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. But in Year Two, Jesus comes out of obscurity and into the visibility of the public spotlight and He enters into His Galilean ministry, which was extraordinarily effective, and people responded to it. He preached to the masses. Large, thousands of people were drawn to hear His preaching in this the second year. But as His popularity escalates, so does the opposition as well as the scribes and the Pharisees will leave Jerusalem begin to dog His trail, and all of that will lead to the third and final year that will end up with Him upon a cross.

So we find ourselves at exactly the midpoint in the middle of the second year. The place is Galilee, the northern region of Israel. And the time now, in essence, is for Him to think about His succession plan. The cross will be a year-and-a-half away. And He knows what lies ahead, that He will lay down His life for ransom for many. He will be buried. He will be raised from the dead. He knows this. And He will ascend back to heaven.

But the work must continue. And so now is the time to begin to train twelve men to carry on the work that He will begin. They will learn from Jesus firsthand, as He will call them to Himself. They will learn how to live. They will learn how to love. They will learn how to pray. But more than that, in preparation for gospel ministry, they will learn from Jesus how to handle the Scripture, how to teach, how to preach.

What do you think Peter will do on the day of Pentecost? He hadn't been to seminary. He hasn't gone to Bible college. How did he learn how to take Joel chapter 2 and then go to Psalm 16 and then Psalm 132, come back to Psalm 16, then to go to Psalm 10? How did Peter know how to do that? He learned at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. He learned by observation. And he learned also by interaction with the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in a relatively short time, the ball will be put into their court, and they will have to carry on the ministry after Jesus' departure. So this is a seminal moment as Jesus now will draw them into Himself.

The first thing I want you to note is in verse 12, "the intercession." This scene begins with Jesus spending the night in prayer. So in verse 12, "It was at this time," we have to ask, "What time?" It was when the conflict with the Pharisees had escalated. And no doubt, there's a sobriety that comes with that, a realization that the heat is beginning to come. And so it, no doubt, forces Him, drives Him to give careful thought to what will it be like after He is crucified.

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain. He withdrew, stepped away from these heated confrontations that He's been having, to the mountain. We're not told what mountain. Whatever mountain it was, it became known as the mountain because that's where Jesus spent the night in prayer. And it was a passionate, fervent night in prayer.

This word for "prayer" is a compound word that means, really, to beseech. But there's a prefix in front of it that means face to face. Jesus drew so close to the Father in prayer that it was as though it was face to face with the Father in prayer. "And He spent the whole night in prayer to God." This underscores the importance of the decision that He's about to make. Jesus did not spend every night all night in prayer. He couldn't have survived in His humanity. But this is a very pivotal moment.

And for what does He pray? We're not told what He prayed for, but we can reasonably assume two things. He's praying for the Father's direction and who to choose to be His closest disciples. You need to understand there are hundreds, if not thousands of people who would be called disciples right now following the Lord Jesus Christ. He didn't choose twelve out of twelve, He chose twelve out of hundreds, if not thousands, who were gathered around Him.

And so within His dependence upon the Father in His humanity, he needs the Father's direction and guidance, the Spirit who has rested upon Him to help single out who are the twelve to be chosen. And then certainly, He was praying for the Father's blessing to attend their preparation for ministry and to attend the ministry that they will have in the future.

I think there's something very practical for us to learn here, that there will be times and seasons in your life when there is a decision that is so important to be made that you need to withdraw and give focused time to the Lord in prayer. It may be for some of you, "Should we have another child?" And you need to really pray what is God's will. And it's not going to be written in the sky, but God channels and works through our minds and through our hearts and the use of Scripture and careful thought, almost in a

mysterious way, to direct us into the will of God. It may be a career move. It may be a very significant purchase of a home. Who knows what it is? It may involve ministry and becoming involved in a ministry. But that is a time to stop and to pray, and not just to offer up some passing prayers, but to withdraw to a mountain and to seek the Lord.

That's what Jesus is doing here. If Jesus needed to do this, ten thousand times ten thousand times more do you and I need to seek the Lord in prayer. I wonder what there is in your life right now that you need to withdraw to a mountain and to pray.

Second, "the selection." In verse 13, "And when day came," - early sunrise the next morning - "He called His disciples to Him." There's no wasted time with Jesus. He spends the whole night in prayer. As soon as there's sunrise, He's at it, "and He called His disciples to Him." He summoned them.

The word "disciple" means a student, a learner. The call is for them to enter the classroom of His discipleship at a very high level. This is not the first time Jesus has called them to Himself, you need to understand this. They've already been called to salvation. That was back in John chapter 1, and it's also early in Matthew 9. He's already called them into a personal, saving relationship with Himself.

And there's been another call that has come after that. It was the call to leave their nets and to leave their tax booth and to come travel with Him and begin to become acclimated to what His ministry is all about. And so this is now the third time He has called them to Himself. And it is for a very significant training. We would say today, as if to go off to seminary and to be trained for a lifetime of ministry.

And so that is what is taking place here. He called His disciples. He called them to become learners, to become students. Everything begins with the mind. Then it goes to the heart. Then it activates the will. But everything

must pass through the mind. "And so He calls His disciples to Him" - to be with Him - "and chose twelve of them." The word "chose," *eklegō*, means to select out from among the many.

I've already told you there were vast numbers who were following the Lord Jesus Christ. In Galilee when He fed the 5,000 in reality, it was probably about 20,000, it was just 5,000 men - vast numbers. And He needs a handful of men. He needs some spiritual marines to send out to hit the beaches, "and so He chose twelve of them," twelve, perhaps, symbolic for the twelve tribes of Israel.

We need to understand these men did not sign up for this as volunteers. There was not a notice posted, "Help wanted." They were not responding to a need. They had no idea what the need was. They had no idea what the future held. They're just a part of the crowd coming along with Jesus and traveling with Him on a consistent basis. Many in the crowd would then go back to their homes and new crowds would come, but these here were continuing with Him, but they were chosen by Jesus. They did not choose Jesus, Jesus chose them.

In John 6:70, Jesus said, "Did I Myself not choose you?" to the twelve. The answer to that is, "You know how you got into this. I chose you. I initiated this. I pursued you." In John 15:16, it couldn't be any more clear: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." Literally translated out of the Greek, it reads, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." And in John 15:19, "I chose you out of the world. You have never gotten involved in this. if I had not chosen you."

The same is true for you. If you're a follower of Christ, you have been chosen. God drew a circle around your name and eternity passed and singled you out for Himself. And there is a sense of destiny about every one of your lives who have been chosen to be a follower of Christ. As long as you're on this earth, you can no longer do your own thing. You have been chosen for a purpose, for a reason, and that is to serve Him as long as you are here upon the earth.

You may be a businessman. That's your secondary vocation. Your primary calling is to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. You may be a housewife, a mother, a grandmother. That's glorious. "An excellent wife, who can find one? Her worth is far greater than precious stones. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and she does Him good and not evil all the days of her life." It's glorious, but that's her ministry, to serve the Lord.

And so Jesus chose twelve to be with Him, to sit at His feet, to learn the Bible, to learn ministry, to learn preaching and teaching, to learn leadership. And then He says at the end of verse 13, "who He also named as apostles." "And He named them as apostles" means that He has assigned them to be apostles. This is the first time in the New Testament the word "apostle" appears. It appears at the same place in Matthew as well. It's the first time in Luke.

What does the word "apostle" mean? It means one who is sent out on a mission. It means one who is sent out with a message. An apostle is a messenger. An apostle is an ambassador. An apostle is a representative spokesman on behalf of the one who sins.

So an ambassador is someone who represents the king in the foreign court of another. You got that? That's what an apostle is. He represents the King of kings and the Lord of lords in the foreign courts of this world and brings the message of Jesus Christ to this lost and dying world, and they are sent out, they are thrust out. And I need more time than what I have with you this morning to talk to you about what it is to be an apostle.

The last thing I did before I came to church today is I threw away about five pages of notes. But I'm going to just succinctly give you five points about an apostle. Number one, "The apostles formed the foundation of the church in the first century." And you only lay a foundation one time when you build a house. You don't lay a foundation every floor. There's only one foundation, and the whole edifice rests upon the foundation, and that was

the ministry of the apostles, and Jesus Christ was the chief cornerstone. And even today, we are resting upon this foundation that was laid by Christ through His apostles.

Second, "There are no apostles today." There are no apostles because no one today can meet the qualifications for an apostle. You can read about it in Acts chapter 1. You had to have accompanied Jesus from the time of His baptism to the time of His ascension and to be personally taught and trained by Jesus Christ Himself. No secondhand knowledge.

Second, you had to visibly see the resurrected Christ from the grave. No one can meet those qualifications today. And by the way, that is why Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus to meet these qualifications so that He personally saw the resurrected Christ. That's an experience that will never happen to you and it will never happen to me until we step into heaven. And Saul, who became Paul, was personally taught in the Arabian desert by Jesus Christ Himself to meet these qualifications. So, if you read about a church and their pastor is called Apostle Jack or something, and his co-pastor, his wife, Apostlette Jackette, just know either they have no clue as to what an apostle is or their wolves in sheep's clothing.

Third thing you need to know is that "an apostle received direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself, such that when they spoke, they spoke with the infallibility of Christ Himself." They were just middlemen. They received direct revelation, Ephesians 3:5. They received direct revelation by the Spirit, and they were led uniquely by the Spirit to write their portions of the New Testament with flawless inerrancy and infallibility.

Fourth, "Their apostleship was verified by performing miracles." No apostles today, no gifts of miracles today. Does God heal the sick today? Yes, through prayer, through doctors, through nurses, through medicine, through time, but not with anyone who can go lay hands on people and heal them because there are no apostles today.



And then, fifth, "What they said was what they wrote and what they spoke, and what they preached was the supreme authority of God Himself." So in this sense – and I want you to track with me here at this point – in this sense, every true New Testament church must be an apostolic church. In the truest sense, no church should ever be a congregation-led church. No church should ever be a deacon-led church. No church should ever be a pastor-led church. And in the truest sense, no church should be an elder-led church.

Every church should be led by the Apostles what they wrote in the New Testament, and it is the responsibility of the elders in our church to never color outside the lines, and to stand on the foundation that was laid 2,000 years ago. And the apostles, through their writings and what they taught, they continued to be the foundation of this church and every other church. And what the apostles conveyed was exactly what Jesus, who is the head of the church, gave to them.

So, no church can redefine church, how we're do church. No church can redefine worship and how we're going to do worship. No church can come up with their own method for how to carry out the ministry. That's not given to us, it was given to the apostles. And we are to take the biblical truths and principles that were laid down by the apostles that was given to them by Christ and we are to follow the apostolic teaching that Christ gave to them.

So, we're painted into a corner. We have guardrails on the side of the road. And for our elders, they have a stewardship entrusted to them to make certain that we always build upon the foundation of the apostles. So this is a very significant thing that Jesus now has appointed them to be apostles. And it will be in the Great Commission – Matthew 28, Luke 24, Acts 1, John 20:21, the Great Commission – that they will then be sent out in reality. But it is at this moment they are being singled out for this commission that will come after His resurrection.

So, this leads now to, third, "the compilation." In verses 14 through 16, we come to the actual names, twelve names of twelve disciples, twelve men. And as we look at this list, I don't need to reread the list again, but what strikes me is how unpretentious and ordinary these men are. There's not a religious leader here. There's no one who's gone through the rabbinical schools of training. There's no one here who is a scribe or a Pharisee. There's no one mentioned here who serves in the temple. There's no one mentioned here who's a leader in a synagogue.

These are just common men. None of them are really sophisticated, polished. They were rough around the edges. I mean, these were fishermen, red-necked, calloused hands, tax collector, hated, despised. They were impulsive. They were temperamental. They were easily offended. They were slow as a glacier to learn.

You and I would have never selected this group to start a world movement for planet domination with the gospel. This is how God has always chosen to work. He rarely goes to Cambridge and Oxford. To start the nation of Israel, to become the father of the nation Israel, God chooses and calls a pagan moon worshiper in Ur of Chaldees, Abram.

To lead the exodus, God chose a murderer who was on the backside of nowhere with no sheep of His own tending His father-in-law's sheep: Moses. To hide the two spies in Jericho, God chose a prostitute: Rahab. To kill the giant Goliath, God chose the runt of the litter, a little shepherd boy named David. All of that is what we see here in this list. It's a bunch of nobodies who have no real training.

In 1 Corinthians 1 :26, Paul says there were not many wise according to the flesh. There were a few wise. There might be an Oxford graduate or a Cambridge graduate, sure. I've got one of them here in the front of my Bible as I think about it, John Rogers, first Marian martyr. He's a graduate from Cambridge. Our Bible was translated by William Tyndale. He was an Oxford graduate.

Just not many mighty. Just not many wise according to the flesh. Not many noble. Not many blue bloods. Not many top drawer. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the things that are not and the things that are despised, God has chosen. Hey, we qualify. God's looking for someone just like you.

They were just raw material that He could shape and mold. They were available, right? They immediately left their nets. They immediately left their tax booth. I mean, they were available. It wasn't their ability, it was their availability. I mean, they were flexible. They weren't clinging to the old traditions of the rabbis and the Pharisees. There was nothing to erase on the blackboard. Jesus had a clean slate with these guys. They were teachable. They were slow to learn, but they were teachable. They had to get thumped on the forehead a few times. But they were always willing to learn.

They were dependable. They remained loyal to Jesus. You remember in John 6:66 it says the disciples would no longer follow Him, meaning those in the crowd that were just followers, but they weren't really truly committed to Christ, they went away. And Jesus said to them in John 67, He said to Peter, "Do you want to go away also?" The way He frames the question is almost to poke him in the chest, "Do you want to go away also?" And Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have words of eternal life. I mean, we've burned all of our bridges behind us. There's no place to go but forward with You."

And on top of that, they were hardworking. These were not prima-donnas. These were not peacocks. These were men. Let's just take the first four, these fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James, John. I know very little about fishing on the coast, but I've been in restaurants at 4:30 in the morning studying my Bible and place is already packed with fishermen. I mean, they're burning no daylight. They're up early, out on the water.

That's the kind of men Jesus had to work with. They're not just sitting around do-nothings. These are industrious, energetic, disciplined, dedicated kind of men. They're not clouds floating around. They're not waves of the sea tossed back and forth. These men have a determination about them.

And so, would you like to be used by God? Well, let me ask you: Are you available? Let's just start right there, because if you're available, He'll wear you out. Are you teachable? Do you come with all the answers? Or are you faithful? Are you teachable? Are you hardworking? I mean, that's the kind of raw material that God delights to use.

I remember when I was wrestling with God's call on my life to go into the ministry and to preach, and I'm working at a bank, and I'm just like the rope in a tug-of-war, I'm being pulled in both directions, and what am I to do? And I remember this verse, Isaiah 66:2, it just came crashing in on my heart. I knew I wanted to serve God in this unique way, but would He want me? And could He use me? And God said, "To this one I will look: to him who is humble and contrite in spirit, and who trembles at My word." The question is not, "Are you somebody?" The question is, "Are you willing to be nobody, to be humble and contrite in spirit and to tremble at His word?" Well, He chose these.

Now, fourth, I want you to see the divisions. In verses 14 through 16, there are three groups of four the way this is laid out. These are not arranged in a haphazard fashion. These are like the Ten Commandments, there is a consecutive sequence in order. These are like the Beatitudes. There's a purposeful arrangement of the Beatitudes – one leads to the next, leads to the next, leads to the next.

There are four lists in the New Testament of these men, and this is one of those four lists, and each of those four lists break out the same way. There are three groups of four men. So, there's Tier Number One, there's Tier Number Two, and there's Tier Number Three – T-I-E-R.

So, group Number One is the first four names that you see there in verse 14. It's always these four first. It's always Peter, Andrew, James, John. We know the most about these men. They had the closest proximity to Jesus.

You know, you can only have so many friends in life. And there's an inner circle, and then there's the next concentric circle, and you push the fence posts out, and then there's the next concentric circle. But you cannot have a hundred close friends. If you have a hundred close friends, you have no close friends, okay?

Well, Jesus had four that were tight around Him. And Peter is always number one on the list. He has the leadership ability. There were not twelve leaders among the twelve. There were not four leaders among the twelve. Every huddle has to have a quarterback, and every group has to have a point man, and Peter was that man. He's always listed first in Group Number One, and he's always listed first among the twelve, and that was the role that God gave him. It wasn't John who stood up on the Day of Pentecost and preached, it was Peter who stood up and preached.

And then the second group is the next four: Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas. They were a little further away in closeness and intimacy with Jesus. You remember John - I'm just thinking of this in John 13 - he was the one who laid his head on the bosom of Jesus. And he identified himself not by his name, John, but as the disciple whom Jesus loved. He had this intimate, personal, close, closest relationship.

But now Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, and Thomas, they're always listed in the second tier in all four of these lists. Sometimes the order is rearranged in the second group, but Philip is always first. And so Philip is like the leader of the second tier.

And then the third group, are the last four: James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot. We know virtually nothing about those first three except their names, and we're left to really have to dive deep in word studies to try to pull something out about those men. But James the son of Alphaeus is always listed first in this last grouping of the last four men, and Judas is always listed last. No surprise there for obvious reasons, and he's the furthest away from Jesus – so far away, he has no personal relationship with Jesus. And think about it, he heard all the sermons, he saw all the miracles, he attended all the meetings, he traveled all those roads. He was involved up to his nose, but he never had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He was so far away from Jesus, he is in hell this morning.

So, just a point of application. The same will be true in your life. There will be a few people, there will be a handful of people that you really ought to have a close relationship with. Could be a prayer partner, could be a work associate, could be a ministry partner, could be a family member, and that's healthy and that's good. And when we meet in a large meeting like this, we can't meet every need in your life, that's an unrealistic expectation. You need to have a little, small circle of fellow disciples that you can share a burden with, a prayer request, receive encouragement.

And then there would be another circle of people: "Yeah, I know them, I've eaten meals with them, I sing with them in the singing team," or whatever. So that's the way it should work in your life as it worked with the twelve disciples.

The last thing I want you to see is the identification. In the few minutes that we have left, I want us to look at this list one more time and I want to just walk through it very, very quickly. In the past, I've preached twelve sermons on the twelve disciples. I'm not going to do that to you, okay?

But it starts with Simon Peter, Group Number One. He was the leader, he just was. There were not twelve leaders. He was the leader among leaders. He had the dominant personality, the dominant convictions. He had the raw

material. He was a hardworking fisherman, he busted it. He was always out in front. He was always up front. He was outspoken. He was take charge. He was self-initiating. And he was martyred. And Jesus told him he would be martyred in John 21.

Then there's Andrew. Andrew, he's a humble servant. He played the hardest role: to learn how to be second fiddle. He was a fishing partner with Peter. In fact, he was the brother of Peter. In fact, he was the one who brought Peter to the Lord. And he was willing to take second place and to yield to his more outspoken brother and to support his brother. He's always behind the scenes, Andrew. You've got to have a left tackle if you're the quarterback.

And then there's James. James too was martyred, Acts chapter 12. He was called a son of thunder, and that wasn't a compliment. I mean, he was fiery. He was charged up. He was zealous. He was aggressive. He was uncompromising. He was a project man: "Get the job done." He was goal oriented. Got to have those men, or you'll just sit around talking about it. God so loved the world, He didn't send a committee. James was a make it happen guy.

And then John, well, he's the brother of James, and he too was called a son of thunder. I mean, he was like an electrical storm. I mean, he was the one who said, "Lord, bring fire down from heaven on these Samaritans and just burn them up to a crisp. They're in the way." He started out narrow-minded, intolerant, but it was birthed out of strong convictions, until God broke him, and he became very humble. He became known as the apostle of love. Can you believe that? You read 1 John, you understand why he's called the apostle of love. Well, he started out as a son of thunder.

So that's your starting lineup. That's your first tier right there. And there's an intentional sequence in order to this. When you make out a lineup for a baseball team, there's your first four in the batting order.

And then the second group starts with Philip - still in verse 14 - and he was a man of practical common sense. You've got to have men who just know what time it is. I mean, you've got to have men who know how to get things done, who are methodical, who are analytical.

And then Bartholomew, he's also called Nathaniel. He was more contemplative and meditative. His wheels were always turning, and he began with some sense of superiority. He's the one who said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" I don't want to use the word "prejudiced," but there is a certain elitism about that statement.

And then in verse 15, still in this Group Two, there's Matthew. He was the tax collector. He was the most hated man in town - no exaggeration. He was hired by the Roman Empire to bilk his fellow Jews for all the money he could extract from their pockets. And then he got saved and he became an evangelist. In fact, the first thing he did was immediately he invited everybody he knew to come over to his house, and he invited Jesus to come, and he told Jesus, "You tell them what you told me." He wanted to win as many people to Christ as he possibly could. And it's by no coincidence, he is the author of the first book in the New Testament, at least in the order of the books that we have in the canon of Scripture. When he left that tax booth, he burned his bridges behind him and he went full throttle for the Lord.

And then there's Thomas, to round out this second group. It's hard to really put a profile on Thomas, from pessimist who tended to think the worst could happen, who always needed to see proof. He was inquisitive, and he was used greatly.

And then there's Group Three. Starts with James the son of Alphaeus. And we know little about him. In [Mark 15:10](#), he's called James the Lesser. How would you like to be whatever the lesser? But it kind of pictures what a team player he was. And he's willing to be a utility man and play whatever role you need for me. You got to have people like that. Very ordinary. But



he's the point man for the last four names here. This is his division. This is his battalion.

And then there's Simon the Zealot. Wow, a zealot? That means you're a part of the underground resistance to try to overthrow the Roman Empire, okay? I mean, this is like the French Resistance in World War II trying to overthrow the Nazis. I mean, he is a fireball. He is a patriot. He is a nationalist. He is fiery - I've already said that. And here's what's interesting about how Jesus put this team together is you take Matthew who worked for Rome, has the franchise, local franchise to build taxes, and then now you've got Simon the Zealot who hates Rome, and you put them on the same bus together. I mean, only Christ could be the common denominator to bring all these people together.

And then there's Judas the son of James. He actually had two names. Matthew called him Thaddeus, which simply means breast child, like a mother would breastfeed a child. So what that tells us is he's probably the youngest sibling, the youngest child. He was the one who was on mother's breast while everyone else had already been born and were older in the family, and so they just kept calling him by this nickname: Breastfed. That's Judas. I'm a truth teller, okay, I'm just telling you the truth. But Luke doesn't want to do that to him, and so he calls him Judas son of James. And he has to add "the son of James" so he doesn't become mixed up with that other Judas.

And then that leads us finally to Judas Iscariot. Of course, he's always last. The last will be last. And you know what? He was the most impressive member of this group. He had more going for him in worldly things than anyone else, so much so, they made him the treasurer: "You keep up with our money." They trusted him.

So, the obvious question is - I love that there's no Sunday school coming. Praise the Lord for no Sunday school, it means I can talk just a couple more minutes.

So, the obvious question is, "So why did Jesus choose Judas?" It's a good question, and there's a couple reasons. In John chapter 13, we see two of those reasons. In John 13:18, Jesus is in the upper room, and He said, "I do not speak of all of you." There was only twelve of them there. "I'm not saying this about all of you." He says, "I know the ones I have chosen."

Now, He's chosen all twelve for service, but the other eleven have been chosen not just for service, but, more instrumental, for salvation. They weren't all twelve chosen for salvation. Judas was a reprobate. Judas was passed over by the grace of God and left in his sin for his just punishment.

But in the middle of verse 18, why would God do that? Well, as I've told you before, here's the real question: "Why would He choose anyone for salvation?" I totally understand why He would leave someone in their sin. He should have left me in my sin. What's inexplicable is that God would choose any for salvation.

But in this case with Judas, Jesus gives us the answer to why: "But it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me.'" Jesus chose Judas to prove the authority of God's word, that it had been prophesied in the Old Testament. And that Judas was not chosen for salvation, was an authentication of the inerrancy and the infallibility of the divine word of the living God. That's Reason Number One.

And then the next verse gives Reason Number Two, is to prove the deity of God's Son. So, in verse 19, He says, "From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass." What is the it? Well, it's the betrayal by Judas of Jesus. "From now on I'm telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur," - and the "it" refers to Judas' betrayal - "you may believe that I am." New American Standard adds, "He." It's an italics, meaning it's not in the original text, "that you may believe that I am."

It's a divine name: "I am who I am. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world. I'm the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I am the way, the truth, and the life." "Judas' betrayal will prove that I am, that I am totally in charge. And I'm in charge of everyone's eternal destiny." Some will receive mercy, and others will receive wrath. But He does things all fairly and rightly.

But there's a third reason, and it is to be a warning to unconverted church members. Here is Judas in the inner circle. I've already told you, he heard it all, he saw it all, he felt it all, he experienced it all, and yet he hung himself and went to hell.

It is very possible you could be here today. You could hear this sermon. You could hear the singing. You could feel the love and the warmth of the fellowship. And when you die, you will go straight to hell because you never had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in your heart, and you were too stubborn to confess your sin, and you were too unwilling to believe in Jesus Christ and to give your life to Him, and that reason is you were too prideful. You were too enamored with yourself. And that is why Jesus said, "If anyone shall come after Me, he must deny himself and take up a cross and follow Me."

And so, this may describe you today. You could be just like Judas. And today could be God's wake-up call for your life before you die, because there's no repentance in the grave. If you need to believe today in Jesus Christ, you may never have a moment like this, an opportunity like this for the rest of your life. You do not know how long you will have to live. You do not know where you will ever be in a situation again where you will hear the truth.

So, crystal clear, do not be like Judas. Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, commit your life to Him. Take that decisive step of faith. Jesus Christ came into this world on a mission of salvation. He came to seek and to save that which is lost. He came to go to a cross and to be lifted up and to die upon a cross. All of human history is divided by that death upon a cross.

Everything before that is BC, before Christ; everything after that is after His death, after the Lord's death.

Right in the middle of all human history is the cross of Jesus Christ. He was lifted up to die. And God the Father took all of our sins and placed them upon Christ, and He suffered and He bled and He died. He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" But at three o'clock in the afternoon He said, "It is finished."

The salvation has been accomplished and is offered to you today as a free gift. You haven't had to suffer for it. You haven't had to pay for it. How hard must a heart be to walk away from Jesus Christ? How hardened must a heart be to not receive from the hand of Christ the offer of salvation that He extends to you that cost Him His very life? The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Do you want to know how you can know that you're one of His chosen ones? Believe upon Jesus Christ. That's the evidence. Just believe upon Jesus Christ, and you will know that you're one of the Lord's from all eternity past. May God give you grace to do that today.

[Prayer] Father, what a ragtag group of disciples that You led Jesus to call to Himself. There was nothing great about them, and yet You used them greatly. Lord, look into this room. Look into our hearts and souls. There's no cover up here. There's no pretension here. Anything great about us is simply Christ in us. We pray that You would use us in ways beyond which we can even comprehend at this moment to influence this city, this state, this nation, this world. It's all up to You. Use us for the honor and the glory of Your name. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.