

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 10:2-4 | Twelve Ordinary Men
Sunday, October 8, 2023

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 10.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you. *Sermon Notes in Foyer*

REVIEW:

The last time we met, Gospel Writer—Matthew summarized Jesus’ ministry up to this point.

Matthew 9:35—Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.

As Jesus went around Galilee—over 200 towns in all—He saw the pain and the struggle of everyday life as he ministered to countless people.

Matthew 9:36— When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd.

God’s people were not cared for spiritually by the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Scribes and Pharisees were the pastors, priests, and ministers of Jesus’ day—and were not doing their job.

Matthew 9:37/38—The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. *3x = harvest*

We learned that the harvest is God’s judgment on sin.

There is a day of judgment for each one of us.

We will all have our day in court regarding how we lived our lives.

We didn't create ourselves and we are accountable to the One who did.

When we die, the Lord Jesus asks, "Why should I let you into Heaven?"—There are only two answers.

1. Because I'm a good person.
2. Because of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

The first answer sends that person into a very real place called hell for eternity.

The second answer opens the gates of Heaven to dwell with The Lord Jesus forever.

So even though the harvest is about judgment on our sin, we also learned that Jesus is commissioning the Twelve Disciples into the ministry.

Up until this point—eighteen months or so, Jesus was the one doing all the work.

The Disciples have been watching and learning from the Lord Jesus.

That's what a disciple does—he is a pupil and a student.

But, Jesus needs more help and says—*I need you guys to pray for workers.*

So can't you see the Disciples saying, *No sweat Lord, I'll pray for workers.*

Peter says, Amen. And it's like Jesus says, "Guess what boys?! God has answered your prayer!"

Andrews says, Wow, God answered our prayer that fast?

Jesus says, *Yes!*

John says, *Well, who are they—who are these workers?*

Jesus responds, *Look around, you're looking at them!*

God has always chosen ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

He took Abram, a pagan who worshipped the moon, and made him into Abraham—the father of the nation.

He took Moses, a man with a speech impediment and a terrible temper, and made him the first prophet and lawgiver.

He took ^{Hadassah} Esther, a poor Jewish peasant girl, and made her Queen of Persia—ultimately saving the nation of Israel from being slaughtered.

God works in mysterious ways—and believe it or not—he has chosen ordinary people like you and me to do His will.

INTRODUCTION:

A perfect God using imperfect people has always been God's way.

God has always used dysfunctional people as the means and mode to accomplish will.

Think about it—God has never had anything else to work with after the Fall in Genesis 3—but sinful people.

Soon after God delivered Noah and his family through the Flood, Noah got wasted!

Jacob, one of the forefathers of the faith, stole his brothers inheritance.

Aaron, the first high priest, built a golden calf for people to worship when Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God.

Joshua disobeyed the Lord by making a treaty with the Gibeonites instead of destroying them.

Gideon had no self-confidence and even less faith in God's plan and power.

Samson—talk about someone who needed the 12 Steps. This guy was co-dependent and addicted to sexual sin.

David committed adultery and murder and nearly failed as a father. Yet, he was the best King Israel ever had.

Elijah faces 850 false prophets, and calls down fire from Heaven— but cowered before one woman, Jezebel.

Ezekiel was brash and used his tongue like a machine gun.

Jonah defied God's call to preach to the Ninevites and was angry when his one-sentence sermon saved the city!

I could go on and on...God uses ordinary and dysfunctional people to usher in the Kingdom of God.

There is no plan B.

The twelve disciples who became apostles were no exception.

Today, we meet these men.

Today, Jesus turns disciples into apostles.

What's the difference?

And how do these men impact your life today. Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

+ **Matthew 10:2**—These are the names of the twelve apostles: First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

+ **Matthew 10:3**— Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

+ **Matthew 10:4**— Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

You are good, and you do what is good; teach me your statutes. (Psalm 119:68)

EXEGESIS:

+ **Matthew 10:1**—Summoning his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness.

+ **Matthew 10:2**—These are the names...

Before we get to the names, I want you to ^{see} how this list is divided into three subgroups of four people.

The first group includes Peter, Andrew, James, and John;

The second includes Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew;

And the third includes James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

You'll notice that the names may differ within the subgroups within the other Gospels, but they always include the same four names. ^{4 things: ①}

- ② The first name in each group is always the same—meaning that each subgroup has its own identity and leader.
- ③ You'll also notice that we know most about the first group, less about the second, and nearly nothing about the third.
- ④ Lastly, observe how these men are always in pairs with the subgroup.

There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian.

Matthew 10:2—*These are the names of the twelve apostles:*

As we learned in our last study, Jesus fires the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel did not Shepherd God's people—and God's patience ran out.

Did you know that God's patience runs out? It's not perpetual.

God essentially has to put the second-stringers—the B team.

And the B Team are the 12 apostles.

We have learned that Jesus has chosen and called these men. *for this purpose*
He has been with them for about 18 months and is now replicating Himself in them.

While a Disciple is a learner, pupil and student—an Apostle is much different.

+ An apostle is both a disciple AND a messenger—someone sent with the authority of the Sender.

The 12 Apostles are a group of handpicked leaders by Jesus Himself who preach *is heal* with God's authority.

Today we can't heal the blind or raise the dead—because we weren't commanded to do so—that power and authority was only given to the Apostles in the first century.

So let's meet these men.

+ **Matthew 10:2**—*These are the names of the twelve apostles: First, Simon, who is called Peter,*

Every family, group, organization, business, and church must have a leader.

It's evident that Peter was the prominent leader from the beginning.

He is always mentioned first in the lists of the apostles.

And because Pete is the Chief Apostle, Jesus spent more time with Peter than anyone else. *- Paul = chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15)*

Peter seemed to be attached to Jesus at the hip.

Pete was continually asking Jesus questions, giving advice, and even giving commands.

Apart from Jesus, no other name is mentioned more often in the New Testament—than Peter's.

Matthew 10:2— *First, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother:*

~~Andrew was Peter's brother.~~

Andrew's

His name means "manly."

Even before Andrew met Jesus, Andrew was a disciple.

Andrew and John were first disciples of John the Baptist.

Andrew is the one who introduced Peter to Jesus.

One thing about Andrew is that he's always bringing people to Jesus.

Andrew is the disciple who brought the little boy with the sack lunch to Jesus to feed the 5,000.

Who knows what was going through Andrew's mind at that moment.

Maybe Andrew watched Jesus turn water into wine, so maybe he thought Jesus could do the same with fish and chips.

Matthew 10:2— *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;*

The first group included two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John.

All of these men were fishermen, so they knew each other well.

James and his brother John were inseparable.

James is always mentioned first.

That may be because James is probably older and more outspoken than John.

James was so outspoken that King Herod singled him out for arrest and execution as the first apostolic martyr.

Matthew 10:2— *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother*;

John is one of the most prominent disciples in the New Testament.

He wrote the Gospel of John, the three epistles of John, and the book of Revelation.

Tradition tells us that John did not leave the city of Jerusalem until Jesus' mother, Mary, died.

Why? Because the Lord had entrusted her into his care at the crucifixion (John 19:26).

When you put James and John together, you get double trouble.

Jesus referred to James and John as ‘Sons of Thunder’” (Mark 3:17).

It's not a compliment!

Calling down fire from Heaven to destroy the entire population of a city reveals just a bit about their personality.

They were ambitious—to say the least.

They even got their mother in on their ambition.

She kneels at the feet of Jesus and asks for her sons to be number two and number three in the Kingdom of God.

That conversation didn't go over well with Jesus or the other disciples.

Yet, Regardless of their imperfections, God used them to ^{carry out} do his will.

The fishermen became fishers of men.

Matthew 10:3— Philip and ^{AKA} Nathanael / Bartholomew; ₍₂₎ ₍₁₎

Philip is the chief apostle of the second group.

In every listing of the twelve, Philip and ^{BART} ~~Nathanael~~ are always together, and were probably close friends before they met Jesus.

Philip was a student of God's Word.

We know this because Philip went to ~~Nathanael~~ (or Bartholomew) and said, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (1:45).

So Phil knows God's Word.

During the episode of the feeding of the five thousand, it was Philip whom Jesus asked, "Where will we buy bread so that these people can eat?" (John 6:5).

Philip took the question literally and started to do the math in his head.

Evidently, he was organized and full of common sense, but those things often hinder our walk with Jesus.

We see Phil's struggle at the Last Supper when he said to Jesus, "Lord, "show us the Father, and that's enough for us."" (John 14:8).

It must have grieved Jesus deeply to hear such a question.

We can sense the hurt as Jesus replies, “Have I been among you all this time, and you do not know me, Philip? (John 14:9).

After three years of following Jesus around, listening to him teach, hearing him preach, and watching Jesus perform countless miracles—Philip still doesn’t get it.

Yet the Lord used that man of limited vision and trust.

Philip was slow to understand and slow to trust—can you relate?

Matthew 10:3— *Bartholomew (aka) Nathanael;*

The synoptic gospels (the similar Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke) refer to him as Bartholomew, but John always as Nathanael.

Bartholomew was very different from Philip.

When his friend Philip told Bart that he had met the Messiah—Jesus from Nazareth—

Bartholomew seems to have a dry sense of humor because he responded—

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

Regardless, Bartholomew went with Philip to meet Jesus.

When Jesus saw Bartholomew for the first time, ***“Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”*** (John 1:47).

In other words, Bart was a Jew’s Jew.

He’s the real deal. Bart is a genuine person.

He’s not two-faced. He’s going to be honest with you.

He's not really a guy you want to show your newborn baby pictures to!

Regardless, Jesus gives Bart this amazing compliment.

How did he respond? "How do you know me?"

Jesus said—When you were under the fig tree, I saw you, (John 1:48-49)

In other words, Jesus said, *I was watching you as you studied The Word this morning under the fig tree.*

"Rabbi," Bart replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"

That's all we know about Bartholomew/AKA Nathanael.

The New Testament says nothing of his ministry or his death.

Tradition doesn't offer much, either.

+ **Matthew 10:3**— Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;

Thomas is famous for his doubt—"Doubting Thomas."

Thomas turned out to be the poster boy for skeptics of the Christian faith.

Tradition holds that Thomas preached as far as India.

The Mar Thoma Church, India, still bears his name today.

+ **Matthew 10:3**— Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;

Matthew is one of the best-known apostles because of his Gospel.

However, we don't know much else about him.

His claim to fame is that before Jesus called him, Matt was a trader to his own people through extortion.

Matthew 10:3— *James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;*

James is also known as James “the less” in Mark’s Gospel. (Mark 15:40)

That title is not flattering but probably means smaller or younger.

It’s possible that this James may have been Jesus’ first cousin.

Regardless, we don’t have a record of anything James said or did.

Matthew 10:3— *James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;*

John’s Gospel records only one verse by Thaddeus (aka) Judas.

Thaddaeus is the disciple who posed a question the night before Jesus’ arrest.

“Lord, how is it you’re going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” (John 14:21)

That's all we know about Thaddeus.

Matthew 10:4— *Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

Simon’s affiliation as a Zealot may point us to his prior membership in a radical organization known as the Zealots.

Before Jesus, Simon was a radical Jewish revolutionary.

In other words, Simon was involved in a group trying to overthrow the Roman government.

The Zealots were people who were determined to take Rome by force and blood.

The Zealots were one of four dominant religious parties in Judah.

We're all familiar with the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The other two were the Zealots and Essenes.

We don't hear much about the Essenes because they were like monks living in monasteries.

If you have heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Essenes are connected to them.

Simon the Zealot must have been some kind of character.

Before Jesus, Simon was motivated more by politics than religion.

He was similar to a guerrilla fighter.

Zealots snuck up on Roman soldiers— stabbed them—and then ran for the hills.

Josephus, a famous Jewish historian, called the Zealots "daggersmen" because of their assassinations.

Think about this— before Simon met Jesus, it's highly likely that he would have assassinated Matthew— because he was a trader and tax collector.

Notice here how Jesus didn't place Simon the Zealot and Matthew the tax collector in the same group!

But regardless, Jesus brings them together. Just like us!

this morning,

We have conservatives and some who are not so conservative.

We have Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.

We have people from various cultures and ethnicities.

And that's the way it should be—especially in the local church.

People who would usually not hang out together find commonality in Christ Jesus.

LASTLY,
 + **Matthew 10:4**— *Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

Everybody knows about Judas Iscariot.

Even the world knows that Judas betrayed Jesus for a little cash.

Judas is always named last in the lists of apostles, and, except for Acts 1:13, is always identified as the one who betrayed Jesus.

For the past 2,000 years, the name Judas Iscariot has been a synonym for treachery and disloyalty.

Do you know I've never baptized anyone named Judas?

Judas is never mentioned after Acts 1, when the apostles replace him.

TRIVIA—In the book *Inferno by Dante*, Judas and Satan share the lowest level of hell together.

About Judas
 Here's the thing—Jesus chose Judas intentionally and specifically,

+ **John 6:70**—Jesus replied to them, "Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil."

+ **John 6:71**—He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.

I find it fascinating that Judas was such a remarkable hypocrite that he was the group's treasurer.

Judas is the money guy!

Can you imagine that conversation?

Peter says, "Okay, we need somebody to handle the money. Who are we going to vote for?"

James and John both say,—not Matthew!

But they chose Judas!

Nowhere in Scripture do any of the disciples ever suspect Judas of being a traitor.

And yet Jesus gave Judas every opportunity not to fulfill that prophecy.

It's doubtful that Judas began by intending to betray Jesus.

But it's almost as if Judas was hoping that Jesus would announce His kingship to overthrow Rome after each miracle.

Since the Zealot was hoping for something - interesting that Jesus paired these two up.
~~But Jesus never did that, nor did he plan on doing that.~~

So, can't you just picture Judas, with his own agenda, slowly pulling away from the disciples day after day?

Judas was not on mission with Jesus. He also was ambitious.

Have you noticed that ambition is a dangerous quality for those in the church? We are not to be ambitious—we are called to be faithful and obedient. *TO*

Jesus who has given us His mission.

Regardless, one day, the opportunity came— Judas sold Jesus out for his own greed.

Scripture does talk about Judas being remorseful about his sin.

+ **KEYPOINT:**

Remorse is not repentance.

Feeling sad is not turning from your sin and turning to righteousness.

Just because you say, “I’m sorry” doesn’t mean you are.

+ **PREACH:**

These men had ordinary temperaments, ordinary strengths and weaknesses, and ordinary struggles—just like you and me!

Not only are they ordinary, but diverse, just like the church.

Nothing unites all of them together—nothing but Jesus.

Jesus is the one who transformed twelve ordinary men into men who turned the world upside down. (Acts 17.6)

There is only one person who unites today’s church—and that is the Lord Jesus Christ—who is the head of His church.

Jesus united the Twelve, and Jesus unites us.

Did the Twelve Apostles do everything perfectly? Nope.

Were they repentant? Were they teachable? Were they persistent? Yes.

Did they finish life well?

Do you ever think about that?—finishing life well?

What does that look like for you?

Here's how the Apostles finished life:

Tradition says that both Peter and his wife were crucified.

We know that Pete was married, but we don't know anything about his wife.

Yet, tradition says that before Peter was crucified, he was forced to watch the crucifixion of his wife.

Peter stood at the foot of his wife's cross, repeating to her, "Remember the Lord. Remember the Lord."

After she died, Peter begged to be crucified upside down because he was unworthy to die as his Lord had died.

Tradition says that Andrew led a governor's wife to Christ.

And when she refused to recant her faith, her husband had Andrew crucified on an X-shaped cross.

It is said that Andrew hung on the cross for two days, preaching the Gospel to those who passed by for as long as he could.

According to tradition, when James (John's brother) had been sentenced to death and about to be beheaded— *King Herod*

The Roman soldier who guarded him was so impressed with his courage that he knelt at James's feet and begged him for forgiveness and his part in the execution.

James is said to have lifted the man up, embraced and kissed him, and said, "Peace, my son. I forgive you."

After James' forgiveness, the soldier publicly confessed Christ and was beheaded alongside James himself.

Scripture reports that John (James's brother) was exiled to a small island called Patmos.

Tradition says that he was nearly boiled alive before he was banished to the island.

Tradition tells us that Phillip was stripped naked, hung upside down by his feet, and pierced with sharp stakes in his ankles and thighs, causing him to slowly bleed to death.

While dying, Philip asked not to be covered with a linen cloth ^{after death} because he felt unworthy to be buried like His Lord Jesus.

Thomas is said to have died from a spear being thrust through him while ministering in India.

The early church Fathers claimed that James, the son of Alphaeus, preached in Persia (~~modern~~ Iran) and was crucified as a martyr.

Tradition says that Thaddaeus had a powerful gift of healing.

Thaddaeus healed the king of Syria and led him to Christ.

^{healing?}
The conversion threw the nation into such turmoil that the king's nephew had Thaddaeus beaten to death with a club.

These men finished life well.

Apostles

Hebrews chapter 11 is known as the faith chapter—and lists people who lived by a Gospel centered faith.

+ **Hebrews 11:36**— Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds (chains) and imprisonment.

+ **Hebrews 11:37**— They were stoned,, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated.

+ **Hebrews 11:38**— The world was not worthy of them.

It costs nothing to *become* a disciple of Jesus—because he paid it all.

* Gospel *

But to *follow* Jesus faithfully—to finish life well—it will cost everything that we have in some way.

We may not die a martyr's death--but there are countless ways to serve Jesus by serving others.

For me to finish life well—it looks like this.

1. To love and provide for the Redhead.
2. "Preach the Gospel, die, and be forgotten." —Nikolaus Ludwig, count von Zinzendorf,

Our lives are not about us — they are about Jesus.

This week, I pray that you will consider what it looks like for you to finish life well.

It's a great question to ask the Lord.

Because it's probably not what you think!

↳ That's the fun part.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58)

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