

Mark 3:13-15 The Choosing of the Twelve Apostles

Today we are going to take Mark chapter 3 verses 13 through 19, the Choosing of the twelve Apostles.

We have seen so far in the first six verses of this chapter the curing of the withered hand. A man had a withered hand. Jesus purposely healed him on the Sabbath day in the synagogue for all to see. The people, as we will see in a moment, the people of the street were rejoicing over the healings and ministry of Jesus. But the religious leaders were plotting how they might kill Him because He broke their rules about the Sabbath day. Jesus already told them at the end of Mark chapter 2 that the Sabbath day was made for man. It is a gift. Man was not made for the Sabbath, to keep it legalistically. So it is a time of refreshment, a time of ministry. It is a time of rest on the Sabbath day.

But many multitudes came in when they went down to the sea in Mark chapter 3 verses 7 through 12 and the crowds were even falling on Jesus trying to touch Him, trying to receive a healing, and a deliverance from unclean or demonic spirits. We know in verse 11 that the demons were saying, "You Yourself are the Son of God." We studied five things about demons last week:

- 1) They can confess the truth about Jesus.
- 2) They can believe the truth about Jesus and be trembling over that truth according to James chapter 2 verse 19.
- 3) Thirdly, they can witness the truth about Jesus. We saw in Acts chapter 16 verses 16 through 18 the slave girl that was telling fortunes and how the demonic spirit in her was advertising Paul and the others as men from God who have shown us the way of salvation. And Paul cast the demon out. Even though she was telling the truth, it was the wrong spirit. Demons can witness. Demons can testify to the truth.
- 4) Then we saw that Satan himself can perform signs and wonders. We saw in II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 9 that when the antichrist arrives on the scene he will be empowered by Satan to do signs and wonders and mighty works. So there are many being taken away by signs and wonders in our day.
- 5) And then fifthly, we saw the demons create doctrines, Christian doctrines. We know that Paul said in I Timothy chapter 4 verse 1 that the Spirit expressly says, **In the latter days some shall depart from the faith paying attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.** The experience comes first before the doctrine of demons. The experience, the emotional stimulation under the guise of it being the empowerment and power of the Holy Spirit. You can feel emotional stimulation and be deceived as to what the source is.

I have made the statement before - but not too many times in public - but I will make the statement today. You cannot feel the Spirit. You cannot feel the Spirit. That is flesh. That is emotion. You can have emotion. You can have an emotional reaction. You can feel emotional about things, but you cannot feel the Spirit. That is why people when say, "Oh, could you not just feel the Spirit?" No, I felt the stimulation that is under the guise and deception presentation of being the Spirit of God.

So in our text in Mark chapter 3 verse 11, whenever the unclean spirits were observing Him, *they* were falling down before Him, and were crying out, saying, "You Yourself are the Son of God!" And often He was rebuking them, in order that they might not make Him known. He would not receive testimony from demons. Not even if it was the truth. He will not receive testimony from demons.

For today we are going to focus on three verses, Mark chapter 3 verses 13, 14 and 15. Beginning at verse 13, **And He goes up into the mountain, and He calls to Himself who He Himself was desiring: and they came to Him.** (verse 14) **And He appointed twelve** - some manuscripts add a Greek phrase here saying, *whom He named apostles.* **And He appointed twelve, in order that they might be with Him, and in order that He might send them to preach,** (verse 15) **and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out the demons.** So the choosing of the twelve apostles. The word *apostle* means *to send*, somebody who is sent out with a commission. Apostle: someone who is sent out with a commission. And this is Him choosing the twelve.

There are some very important technical points in studying about Jesus choosing the twelve apostles; or the twelve to be apostles. We will learn it is from out of God's people the Lord calls who He wills to serve Him in whatever capacity He has for them.

Notice what it says in verse 13. **He goes up into the mountain, and He calls to Himself whom He Himself was desiring.** That is the literal translation. He calls people to Himself. It is a calling.

We know from Luke's account of this scene in Luke chapter 6 that He called not just the apostles, but He called all the disciples to Him. So that the disciples who were there were all called by Jesus for them to come to Himself. But He Himself did the calling, not people, but He himself did the calling.

But secondly, notice what it says, **whom He Himself was desiring.** The word *desire* is the Greek word for *will*. These are disciples whom the Lord willed to come to Him. So not everybody was selected out or called to come to Him. But these were called to come because of His will.

Now we also find this true with spiritual gifts as the Bible calls them. In I Corinthians chapter 12 Paul deals with this very subject about spiritual gifts. The first fact is that there is one Spirit of God working in various ways in various functions that God has. It is one expression of God broken up into different parts expressed through the various parts and members of the body of Christ, to make the one message and the one expression. But he says in I Corinthians chapter

12 verse 11, **But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually according as He wills.** People do not pick or choose or even ask for a spiritual gift as it is presented. There are other explanations about spiritual gifts that I will not get into. I will just make reference to them as spiritual gifts that are all produced by and worked by the Holy Spirit. But he says in I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 11 that the Lord distributes to everyone according as He wills.

This is a different word for *will* than in our text in Mark. In I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 11 it is the word *counsel* or *decision*. It is according to His intention, His counsel, His decision as to how people who are saved are going to function within the body of Christ. He says in verse 18 of I Corinthians chapter 12, **But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He willed.** Here is our word for *will*. It is as He wills He places functions in the body of Christ. Everything is done under the sovereignty of God and under the power and direction of God according to His will. It is not man's will. There is nowhere in the Bible where it tells a believer in Jesus Christ to seek a particular ministry or to seek a particular gift for himself or herself. It is the Lord's calling and His will that decides the placement and function of every believer.

But in I Corinthians chapter 12 in two places it says that the Spirit of God distributes to each one individually as He counsels. And that God chooses the body members and their functions within the body of Christ according to His will. It is not the will of man. It is not the choice of people. It is the Lord according to His will and according to His counsel.

Then we have verses 14 and 15. **And He appointed twelve, in order that they might be with Him, and in order that He might send them to preach, and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out the demons.** The word *appointed* in our text in verse 14 is the word for *to make* or *to create*. The Lord created, He made the twelve. It was His idea. It was His will. It was His function to bring about His will in forming the twelve.

But we are going to go off on an excursion here, off on a tangent in order to talk about a doctrine in another place in the Gospels. That is in Luke's account of this very scene right here where the Lord appointed, created, or made the twelve. In Luke chapter 6 verse 13 with the same incident Luke says, **And when it was day, He called the disciples to Himself** - you see, it is all the disciples to Himself - **and from them He chose twelve.** Not *He made* but Luke uses the word **ἐκλέγομαι** (*eklegomai*), which means *to choose*. He chose the twelve from out of the disciples, **whom He also named apostles.** That is what Luke chapter 6 verse 13 tells us. So it was not just He gathered around Him all the disciples. He called 12 from out of the disciples, which is interesting.

Luke chapter 6 verse 13 says He chose from out of all the disciples that were there the twelve and Jesus named them apostles. They did not name themselves. They did not take on the category themselves. They did not volunteer. I think that is interesting. What we have today is we have such a lack of function within the body of Christ today that volunteers are needed to fill certain positions. It is not a volunteer thing. There were no votes. They were not voted in. And that Jesus chose them from out of the disciples themselves.

Now the reason why I am emphasizing this is because it is important that what Luke said back in chapter 6 verse 13 that Jesus chose from out of the disciples. And here is where we are getting far out into the bush country.

In John chapter 15 verse 16 we have where Jesus said - and people usually quote this to prove God chooses people for salvation. But we are going to take it and see what it says. The words of Jesus in John chapter 15 verse 16, **You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, and that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.** So He is telling the apostles, **You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should bring forth fruit.** People use that verse to say, "See God chooses every one of His people to be saved." It is the same word **ἐκλέγομαι** (eklegomai) that is back in Luke chapter 6 verse 13. He chose them, but He chose them to be apostles from out of the disciples. He did not choose them to be saved. He is telling the apostles, "I chose you to bear fruit." But He is not talking about salvation. He is talking about choosing them for their function and for their part in the body of Christ.

So people apply John chapter 15 verse 16 to every single disciple or believer. Jesus was talking specifically to the apostles that He had chosen them. That is only applicable to the apostles whom Jesus chose out of the multitude. And the reason that is important is because some people apply the choosing of Jesus to all disciples. Jesus does not choose people to be disciples. He chooses people according to His will from out of the disciples for people to have functions within the body of Christ.

Ephesians chapter 1 gives us a summary statement of how God's people are those who have heard the word, and who believe, and who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. They are people who respond according to the Lord. That is how we get saved. We respond to Christ, His calling. And He calls us, and we come, and we receive Christ. So it is important to see that the Lord's choosing was not choosing them to be saved, but choosing from out of the disciples who made a response to Him. **From out of them He chose whom He desired to be apostles.** That is very important. Jesus chose the twelve.

So we know in Mark chapter 3 verse 14 He appointed, He made the twelve. In Luke chapter 6 verse 13, He chose the twelve. So we know what choosing and making and creating applies to. Not to interfering with someone's response to Christ - to receive Christ or reject Christ.

So the only reason that people come together is because of the Holy Spirit. They have nothing in the flesh or in the human to come together for. That is what we are going to see in our study of the apostles next week, as we study each of the characters and personalities of the apostles, which should be an encouragement to us. They are people who the Lord chose, they themselves would not have chosen the other people that were in the group. Their personalities differed, their attitudes differed, even their beliefs differed. But the Spirit has chosen them and God's Spirit has drawn them. And believe me, the twelve apostles they were no different than you or I except God chose them to function as apostles, and He put His Spirit in them to be

apostles, and that is the only thing that made them apostles. It was not their choice. They did not earn it.

Look at the reason why and the emphasis. The Lord himself desired it. His will was to make them twelve, and to make those specific people twelve apostles. The Lord himself made them. The Lord did it because that was His will and it has nothing to do with man, man's choice.

But look in verse 14 as the purpose, the purpose for the Lord calling and choosing. Look at the first purpose. When Jesus called someone He called them to come after Him, to follow Him. Not to join a church group, not to join a movement, certainly to be a part of the body of Christ, but individually to follow Jesus Christ. Not just believe the truth about Him but to literally follow Him on a daily basis. Why did Jesus call out the apostles? So that they would be with Him, spend time with Him.

Notice in verse 14, **In order that they might be with Him.** That is very important. Something we overlook today is to be with Jesus; not just church, not just Bible study, not just prayer, but to be with Jesus. And so God's Spirit in them ministered the things that they had learned during those three years with Christ and worked out in them. So all three years that they were with Him they experienced and came to know the truth about Jesus Christ. And that is what they shared in their ministry when the Holy Spirit came starting in Acts chapter 2. So what is the purpose for Jesus calling and choosing out and choosing those to be His? It is to be with Him. To spend time with Him.

It is interesting in the book of Acts, the disciples were standing before the religious counsel because the religious counsel said, "You cannot preach anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. You cannot preach Him anymore." And the disciples explained to them the gospel, the gospel message about Jesus Christ coming and dying on the cross, dying for the sins of the world. But it is interesting in Acts chapter 4 verse 13 it says, **Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.** That is what they realized. By considering them to be unlearned and ignorant men, those are technical terms for not going through the rabbinical schools. They were smart people, but they were not approved after having gone through the great theological systems of the Jews. So they took notice of them that these were not learned scholars, Jewish scholars, but rather they are this way because they had been with Jesus. That is what gives us the ministry and life of Christ is experiencing Him, being with Him.

They looked out, this council looked out at these fishermen, and they realized that they had not been to the theological schools, they had no training in scriptures, and from a religious standpoint they had been with Jesus, and that is what they noticed. They looked at them - the religious council looked at them and noticed that they were unlearned and ignorant men, but they took note of them that they had been with Jesus. They acted like they knew Him personally. They talked like Jesus was real. That is what they noticed. And very powerful. But that is what it means to walk with Christ. It means to walk with Him, to be with Him, to experience Him in a personal way.

Secondly, that **He might send them out to preach**. The term *send them out* is the verb form of the word *apostle* in verse 14. That is what apostle means. It means to send out with a commission. Jesus called them so that He might be with them and secondly, **He might send them out to preach**. And also according to verse 15 it says, **and to have authority to heal diseases, and to cast out the demons**.

We will finish with this, **to have authority to heal sicknesses, and to cast out the demons**, which of course was proof of ministry for the apostles. Several places in Scripture it talks about how signs and wonders were worked through the apostles.

Hebrews chapter 2 verses 3 and 4 says, **How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, and with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?** So that message that began and those that heard Him went out and preached to others what they heard. But signs and wonders and miracles accompanied them in order to give proof that what they were preaching was true. Just like Jesus performing signs and wonders and miracles to prove who He was. So they were accompanied by miracles to prove that their message was true.

So this text mentions that these signs and wonders were worked through the apostles that it might establish the word of God. What gave them the right to represent Jesus Christ? Jesus gave them his authority. He gave them His authority to preach and to cast out demons so they could not fail. Jesus gave them His authority.

So we have the calling of the apostles, which is interesting. Jesus chose them, they did not choose Him.

Secondly, that He chose them to be with Him and go out and share those things which they themselves had learned from being with Him. That they might go out with His authority to manifest through the power of God's Spirit that ministry which confirmed the message which they brought.

Next week we have an interesting study as we finish out these verses, verses 16 through 19, as we study about the apostles themselves. Who they were, what they were like, and what they were for, which is tremendously encouraging and comforting for us as we have our own personalities, we have our own attitudes. We have the people that we fellowship with - some we like, some we do not like, some we cannot stand to be around, others we can. Study how they handled it, what it was like. It is encouraging for us.

Let's close with prayer.