**Twelve – Wk 1- Twelve Ordinary Men**

**I have wanted to do a series on the Twelve Disciples for several years.**

**I am excited to walk in the steps of ordinary people who were invited and called by Jesus to do extraordinary things.**

**We are going to examine standout moments in their life with Jesus and what we can learn about being a disciple, drawing primarily from scripture and church history.**

**When you think of the 12, what comes to mind? Can you name them? Most people can quote song lyrics, favorite celebs or athletes, and historical figures – but few know the names of the men who, in obedience, changed the world. Who are they?**

**Mark 3:13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach 15 and have authority to cast out demons.**

**16 He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Jesus knew from the beginning who Judas was and what he would do – in prayer he picked him)**

**What is amazing about them is that they were not the most gifted or qualified by earthly standards; they were very… average. A motley group of regular, unimpressive dudes.**

**We don’t know much about their families – we know some of them were married (Matt 8:14, 1 Cor 9:5). Some were family. (Chosen is fiction)**

**THE TWELVE: All four gospels and Acts list the twelve.**

**The lists are slightly varied as nicknames and surnames were used. Jesus often gave them some of the nicknames.**

**Each Bible list breaks them into three groups. Peter is always first, and Judas (the traitor) is always last.**

**Group 1**

1. **Simon (Peter) - Son of Jonah**
2. **Andrew (Simon's brother) - Son of Jonah**
3. **James - Son of Zebedee (First Apostle to die – Acts 12:2) - Jesus’ Cousin**
4. **John (James’s brother) Son of Zebedee (Last to die) - Jesus’ Cousin**

**We know the most about this group (closest to Jesus)**

**Group 2**

1. **Philip**
2. **Bartholomew (Nathanael)**
3. **Matthew (Levi)**
4. **Thomas (Didymus = the twin)**

**Group 3**

1. **James - son of Alphaeus/Clopas (James the younger) - Cousin/brother**
2. **Jude (brother) of James (Judas/Joses/Thaddeus) – Cousin/brother**
3. **Simon (the Zealot/Zelotes) Brother of James & Jude - Cousin/brother**
4. **Judas Iscariot (the traitor)**

**They had no idea what was in store for them, what they would see and experience, or what they would do through Jesus.**

**They are called disciples and Apostles. What’s the difference?**

**Mark 3:14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles)**

**\*\* Disciple = Mathētēs means learner or student – to follow a teacher.**

**From that group – he selected who would then be Apostles.**

**\*\* Apostle = Apostellō means sent ones, official messengers.**

**Jesus is the supreme Apostle – as one sent by the Father.**

**He then has his Apostles – and sent them into the world.**

**They came and followed Jesus, drawn by the Father (John 6:44)**

**They left it all and followed - they were disciples, learners, students.**

**Mark 1:17 And Jesus said to them, (Call) “Follow me, (learn) and I will make you (transformed, and trained) become fishers of men. (Sent)**

**Notice: Called - follow / learner (disciples) - changed – sent out**

**They started out as learners; they ended up as messengers.**

**The Twelve Basics:**

1. **They remind us that God can change and use anybody!**

**We will find they were not perfect! But they grew to be world changers!**

**It is often said that people don’t change. True & false, the only way someone can truly be new and change is through Jesus. Think of someone you think will never change… even you!! Then Jesus…**

1. **They were hand-picked by Jesus**

**More than 12 Disciples followed Jesus - Jesus had hundreds of disciples who followed him, both men and women (Luke 8:1-3)**

**\*\* Thousands followed him (Luke 6:17)**

**\*\* 120 mentioned in Acts 2 / \*\* 500 mentioned in 1 Cor 15**

**\*\* 70/72 handpicked to prepare for his arrival in towns (Lu 10:1-12).**

**We don’t know the names of the 70 - but the 12 were part of them. for sure, and others, such as the Acts 1 Apostle replacement, Matthias, and candidate Joseph, called Barsabbas (aka Justus). It is believed that Barnabas and John Mark were part of the 70 and many of the 120 in Acts 2.**

**Church tradition names them, but the list is uncertain.**

**\*\* Out of them, Jesus chose 12 men to be his closest ministry team.**

**\*\* From them, he chose 3 to spend extensive discipleship time with.**

**They did not all have the same intimacy with Jesus.**

**We will focus on these men 12 men and the 11 who became Apostles.**

**\*Speaking of the twelve: Fictional letter written to Jesus from the Jordan Ministry Management Consultants. (see last page)**

**Mark 3:13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles)…**

**Luke 6:12 One of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples (from the many) to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles…**

**After spending a night in prayer on a mountainside – he came back and, “called to him those whom he desired”**

**These twelve ordinary men, while walking with Jesus, were prone to arguments, mistakes, and misunderstandings. Blockheads w/attitude.**

* **They were from differing political backgrounds. From political Zealot/radicals (violently opposed to Rome), who always carried a weapon to take out soldiers - to a Roman employee tax collector.**
* **They were from different educational backgrounds – some only spoke the local language and limited ability to read and write, while others spoke several languages and wrote fluently.**
* **They were from different economic statuses – from blue-collar manual labor fishermen to wealthy white color pencil pushers.**

**All Galilean: at least four were fishermen, while others were farmers and craftsmen with varied careers and skills.**

**John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.**

**What was the qualifier? They humbly followed when called.**

**Why twelve – why not 13 or 20? Twelve is always essential to Israel.**

**12 judges / 12 minor prophets / Jacob/Israel - 12 sons / Moses - 12 tribes / David - 12 territories / 12 cakes, plates, bowls in the Tabernacle / 12 spies in Numbers / Nebuchadnezzar – 12 month dream / Rev - tree of life bears 12 fruits / Jesus was 12 yrs old when peaking in the temple / 12 baskets left over after 5000 deeding – the list goes on in the Bible.**

**In the world God created - … 12 lunar cycles in a year / 12-hour cycle biological rhythm / carbon atoms have a base-12 pattern / 12 notes in chromatic scale – the list goes on in math and science.**

**The 12 apostles parallel the 12 tribes of Israel and signal a new Israel. They were to be the new Israel leadership task force. Their future in heaven was to be to judge Israel. (Matt 19:28, Lu 22:29-30, Acts 1, Rev 21:12)**

**Ordinary men, no resume to boast of – handpicked/chosen by Jesus. A sovereign work of God’s grace, much like salvation. Even Judas was chosen for his role to betray (as we will see).**

1. **They had unique access to Jesus that others did not**

**Mark 3:14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him…**

**They had daily contact with God in the flesh. Behind-the-curtain access with inside teaching, training, and miracles.**

**They faithfully walked with him for three years (Lu 3:23, Jo 2:13, 6:4, 11:55)**

**Graduates of JC University - They saw miracles, signs, and wonders; heard a tremendous amount of his life-changing teaching; were there for his death (though they fled), were first-hand eyewitnesses to the resurrection, touched his risen body, were there on inauguration day of the Holy Spirit, and were sent out unto the world in power – seeing salvations and persecution that followed.**

1. **They laid the pavement for the gospel to grow in the earth!**

**Mark 3:14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach (new covenant preachers)**

**They were given special apostolic authority to preach and relay the Gospel of Jesus as special messengers of God. (John 13-17). They were commissioned to give the Word of God.**

**Acts 2:42 And they (the church) devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching (doctrine) and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.**

**The foundation of the kingdom on earth described - 1 Cor 3:10–11. The Apostles built the foundation with the chief cornerstone.**

**Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone… / 3:4 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.**

**The new Jerusalem foundation is described:**

**Revelation 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

**Some who say, “Well, I accept the teachings of Jesus, but the disciples were just people – they are not God’s word.”**

**Luke 10:16 “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”**

**When people reject the Apostles teaching – they reject Jesus.**

**Irenaeus - 1st cen. early church Father wrote *Against the Heretics* of his day, that you can’t receive Christ and reject His Apostles because they carried the authority of the One who commissioned them.**

**By God’s power, these average men led a global revolution of faith in Jesus that turned the world upside down. Upon death, were seated in heavenly authority around the throne of Jesus (Matt 19:28, Lu 22:30).**

1. **They were empowered uniquely by the Holy Spirit**

**Mark 3:14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles)… 15 (to) have authority to cast out demons.**

**Jesus gave miraculous authority that was unique to them.**

**Mark 6:7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits. / 12 They went out and preached that people should repent. 13 They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.**

**Luke 9:1 And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.**

**BTW, only Jesus has the authority to give this. They were given special apostolic authority and supernatural power.**

**Matthew 10:1 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. / 7 As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. (we will unpack this chapter the last week)**

**Acts 5:12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico.**

**Though God still does miraculous things today – the Apostles were given these special gifts to lay the foundation of the church. Their power is not our power.**

1. **Jesus is still calling disciples to come and follow him**

**Luke 6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, (Maybe there is a big decision you need to make – spend the night praying on it. Make a decision in the morning.) whom he also designated apostles: 14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (Then Luke adds this story…)**

**17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there (a reference to the hundreds of disciples that followed him) and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, 18 who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. (the crowd that came for the teaching and a touch from God) Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, 19 and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.**

**Notice you have the 12 / the many disciples / and the crowd that came for the “freebies” and “feelies.”**

**Interestingly, God, by his mercy and kindness, still worked in the lives of the lost. Healing them and helping them.**

**\*\* But having an experience with Jesus does not make you a disciple or a Christian. Like many in churches today…**

**After Jesus picked the Twelve – he was still calling disciples to follow.**

**Luke 9:23 And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?**

**26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.**

**The calling to be a disciple – is for both men and women.**

**To be a disciple is to have faith in Jesus, die to self, and grow.**

**To forsake the world for the kingdom of God.**

**How did this ordinary and odd group of people change the world? They followed Jesus without abandon. Will you?**

**Further study:**

**John MacArthur, Twelve Ordinary Men**

**The Twelve Disciples, Rose Publishing**

**The Twelve Disciples, Douglas Connelly**

**Fictional letter written to Jesus from the Jordan Management Consultants.**

**Dear Sir:**

**Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for managerial positions in your new organization. It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking.**

**Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale.**

**We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew had been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.**

**One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind, and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious, and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man.**

**Sincerely, Jordan Management Consultants**

**Simon (Peter) - Son of Jonah**

**Andrew (Simon's brother) - Son of Jonah**

**James - Son of Zebedee (First Apostle to die – Acts 12:2)**

**John (James’s brother) - Son of Zebedee (Last to die)**

**Salome = wife of Zebedee - Mother Mary’s sister, Zebedee was Jesus' uncle (Mk 4:21-22, 15:40, Mt 27:56, 20:0-21, Mark 16:1-8, John 19:25).**

**They would have been first cousins of Jesus. Jesus brought them into his inner circle of three. (Mark 3:17 – “sons of thunder”)**

**Philip**

**Bartholomew (Nathanael) - John 1:45, 46, 47, 48, 49; 21:2**

**Matthew (Levi) – Son of Alphaeus??**

**Thomas (Didymus = twin)**

**James son of Alphaeus/Clophas (James the younger/less)**

**Judas (brother or son) of James (Judah/Jude/Joses/Thaddeus) Jude 1:1**

**Alphaeus/Clophas – historically known as the brother of Joseph, was married to Mary, sister-in-law, to Mother Mary. Making them Jesus' second cousin. (Matt 10:3, 13:55, ; Mark 3:18, 6:3; Luke 6:15, 1 Cor 9:5)**

**Some suggest that Mary and her sister Mary are the same person. She married Jospeh’s brother (Clopas), making them the half-brothers of Jesus are also his cousins. As these are the same names given for Jesus brothers (James, Joses (Joseph), Jude, Simon).**

**Simon (the Zealot/Zelotes) \*\* possibly his wedding in Cana (tradition)**

**Judas Iscariot (the traitor)**

**Many had wives and families (1 Cor 9:5)**

**Jesus possible family**

**It is historically accepted that Jesus' brothers (particularly James and Jude) later become apostles.**

**Question: Upon what foundation is your faith in Jesus Christ based?**

**Miracles, teachings, his resurrection… it is based upon the testimony of the Apostles and those who knew them. (John 17:20) Jesus is the chief cornerstone (Eph 2:20, 1 Peter 2:4, 6,7) The Apostles are the foundation. (Eph 2:20)**

**Matthew 10 as the final sermon**