

## Mark

### “A few good men”

#### 3:13-19

- I. **Introduction**
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#### I. **Introduction**

When examining the text it is important not only to give your attention to what the text says but the broader context as to why the Holy Spirit desired to place the narrative in the location it is found in our Bibles. The answer to that question will go a long way in determining what the Holy Spirit wanted to convey to the original reader. A case in point is before us in verse 13-19. The question that needs to be answered is: *Why is the choosing of the 12 disciples placed next to how Jesus “withdrew” from the popularity of the multitudes?* There are many who would read these as unrelated incidents, recorded without any fore thought. But Mark full of the Holy Spirit wants his readers to answer that question. These seemingly unrelated stories have been deliberately placed next to each other to show an association more than a chronological sequence. I’m convinced that they are connected to convey something that was critical both to the unveiling of Jesus as well and our spiritual development. Jesus withdrew from successful testimonies of pretentious crowds as well as truthful titles from demonic liars. And instead the facts are He wanted ordinary men who by their words and works would demonstrate what will happen to a common person who spends time with Him.

## II. Vs. 13-15 Professional verses Relational

Vs. 13 In the New Testament you will find three other lists of the names of the 12 Matthew, Luke and the book of Acts. Luke tells us that Jesus gave the group the name of apostles. The difference between a disciple and an apostle is:

- A **disciple** is a person who learns by doing, today we might use the word *apprentice*.
- An **apostle** is a person who is sent out on official service with a commission, and today we might use the word *ambassador*.

It is very significant that Christianity began with a group. The parasitical approach was *similarity* and *separation*. Jesus' methodology was the exact opposite, *diversity* and *inclusion*. Nothing better demonstrates this than the extremes of the men Jesus called: A revolutionary anti Roman zealot and a pro Roman tax collector both of which are part of the 12 man team. With this extreme diversity all 12 did possess **two common traits**:

1. They all had an **unbreakable attraction to Jesus**, they wanted to make Him their master!
2. They all had **the courage to visibly align themselves with Him!** No band of men ever risked more than these 12 with their allegiance to a radical peasant Galilean who was crashing headlong into religious leader and being labeled as a rule breaking sinner.

**These 12 had faults but one of them wasn't a lack of love for their Master.** They loved Jesus and weren't afraid to tell the world that they did. Before giving us the cast of characters in verses 16-19 Mark gives us, **three traits Jesus looked for in those He personally called to service!**

1. Vs. 13 **PERSONAL ENCOUNTER: People who wanted to be with Him for the right reasons:** Jesus **didn't want** a "sales force" or "advocates" who had received benefits! What He desired was men who from personal experience had chosen to be with Him. They weren't trained to talk about Him instead they were tell of their encounter that was not temporary and superficial but everlasting. *There is too*

much of Christianity today in my humble opinion that has been scrubbed and sanitized from the raw truthful testimonies of transformed lives. Oh, it is polished and pointed but sounds like an infomercial that gets the stains out without harming the fabric. The outcome of this “*new sales force*” are converts who become “*members*” of a church that caters to their every whim and demand. Yes, we now have “*professional spokesmen*” but it has been at the price of “*unlearned fishermen*” that **“HAD BEEN WITH JESUS”**. And I am reminded that it was those unlearned fisherman that were chosen to change the world!

2. Vs. 14 **PRACTICAL EVANGELISM**: The selection was not based upon giftedness nor education. From beginning to end we have proof that Jesus deliberately chose to build His church with inferior material. That was by design to prove that it is only through and by Jesus that this organism we know as the Church has the power, position and the ability to perform what He has called us too. **Their appointment had a threefold task:**

a. **That they might be WITH Him.** The highest priority was not in making a “*professional*” team but rather a “*relational*” team. This appointment was of men who more than anything else just wanted to be with and near Jesus. The “*job interview*” (*there wasn’t one*) did **not** include a resume’, past job experience, training or education. None of these mattered to the Master, what mattered was would they unequivocally without any direction or promises obey the simplest of tasks, which by His own words was to be with Him. Why is this question never asked? It seems to me that far too often the church ends up with people who either want a position or a career path but not Jesus!

b. **That He would send them out:** Secondly the team needed to have settled who the Master was and who it wasn’t. The sending out was not based upon a catalog of desirable locations or situations in which a person could naturally choose what was the most appealing and beneficial to their life. The applicant must adapt the attitude that Peter would manifest when asked by Jesus to exercise a direction which Peter had far more experience outwardly than did Jesus, commercial fishing. When Peter heard Jesus’ orders to “*cast the net upon the other side*” Peter in his professional understanding explained that they had been out fishing all night but “*never the less at Your word*” he would cast the net as

directed. There will be many a time when our “*all night fishing*” has not yielded the results that we thought we would have achieved for our effort, but our obedience is not leveled upon outcome but because our Master told us too!

c. **To preach:** Their primary task is to be **His proclaimers!** *They weren't called to be His entertainers!* **It was very simple task:** *Speak what you have learned from Him.* It didn't require any talent or education, why even unlearned fishermen could be considered accomplished. There is a progressive order to this appointment that if not followed as laid out will cause a mess. People can have natural skills in communication, be comfortable in front of others. But if that person eyes the calling to preach and is allowed to do so without noting the above two items the results will be an egotistical entertainer who is far more interested in being worshiped than having the Person they are to proclaim worshipped.

3. Vs. 15 **POWER-FILLED EXPERIENCE:** The final trait Jesus looked for were men who understood that *they were only receivers or stewards of His blessing and power in order that they would be distributors of them.* He gave them power, it was not their own and it was not to be used for their benefit or promotion. They were given something to say and something to do, then were sent out for that purpose with power to accomplish it. *There ought to be an authenticity that manifests its self when a person who has been with Jesus is where they are supposed to be, doing what they are called to do.* They were His ambassadors to make public proclamation with such authority as to make what they said obeyed and given delegated power that people were healed and demons fled.

### III. Vs. 16-19 He chose who?

Vs. 16-19 Matthew records that prior to this calling of the 12 Jesus was up all night in prayer over who He would select. While some believe that this time in prayer was spent receiving direction and confirmation from the Father on who He would choose, men who would be most impactful and influential upon the world. I could also make the case looking at the cast of characters chosen that perhaps the prayer was to be kept from

selecting those that seemed most outwardly a perfect fit. There are two surprises in Jesus selection mentioned in these verses: **How many** He selected and **who He selected**.

- a. **How many**: When we factor in the extremely large numbers of people, the political, religious and economic situation that made up this time, 12 men seems like extreme under staffing. Why 12? Yes it's a biblical number but I doubt seriously that Jesus selected 12 because He thought "*Gee, that's a biblical number!*" No, Jesus selected 12 because that was about the max that He could pour Himself into and have quality time with each. Jesus' method in the number of men He called indicates His confidence in the task at reaching the world. **Jesus and any single one of them fully and wholly consecrated to Him was more than enough to change the world, 12 was over kill!!!!** Jesus didn't launch this enterprise during our era which suggests to me that He didn't need our technological advancements to reach the world. Don't get me wrong I'm not saying that He hasn't used mass media technology, radio T.V., C.D's etc. What I am saying is that those technological advancements are not essential nor indispensable as far as Jesus is concerned. **What is essential and indispensable is Jesus in the life of those He calls.**
- b. **Who He selected**: The first three mentioned Simon (Peter), James and John are all given special names as He "*surnamed*" them, giving them nicknames. This special designation indicates an inner circle of responsibility. They are the ones we see going on special details, called upon to accompany Jesus at specific opportunities as well as the ones Jesus tended to spend the more of His time with. It appears that they were designated the leaders of the 12. **In both Jesus selection of the 12 and the three within the 12 we see a consistent methodology by Jesus of investing in a select few to reach the many!** Looking at Jesus' nicknames of these three in the placement of them over the 12 seems to indicate Jesus' assessment of what this group needed most: "**A rock and two loud voices**"! Personally having pastored for nearly 30 years I think a rock and two loud voices comes in pretty handy when dealing with sheep!
  1. **Peter**: Here is a choice of a man that Jesus knew would deny that he ever knew Him. The acknowledged leader was a person who went from shifting sand to the Rock, which describes what he became after the Holy Spirit took control of him.
  2. **James**: The surnaming of both James and his brother John in Syrian is "Sons of thunder" but in Hebrew is "Sons of tumult". The name was laid upon these two for their "tumultuous zeal" which characterized both of them. Here is a choice of two brothers who has such tempers that they wanted to blow away or burn up people who didn't comply. James would leave his mark not by being a loud voice but by being the first to lay down his life.
  3. **John**: Who would remain until the end and was noted more for his actions of prayer and love than a loud voice.
  4. **Andrew**: His name comes from a Greek origin and was used to describe a person who was "manly". He was the first to enquire of the Lord.
  5. **Phillip**: Is another Greek name that means found of horses and in ancient Greek was used of a person who was a chariot driver. Elsewhere we are told he was the first that Jesus called.

6. **Bartholomew:** Also known as Nathanael in who we are told had no guile.
7. **Matthew:** Is a name that means a “gift of God” he is the one know as Levi in chapter 2 verse 13 the tax collector slash gospel writer. I know this is bad to say but who wants an IRS agent on staff?
8. **Thomas:** His name means “twin” and we know him as the magnificent sceptic. Again a questionable choice as this fellow will deny you’re alive unlike Peter who denied he knew you.
9. **James the son of Alphaeus:** Also known as James the less, he may be the brother of Matthew as both are said to be the son of Alphaeus.
10. **Thaddaeus:** He is the other Judas mentioned in John 14:22 and Martin Luther called the “good Judas”. Him we shall hear speak in the upper room.
11. **Simon the Cananite:** More properly the “Canaanaean” which is used to differentiate him from Peter by geographical location. Elsewhere he is called “Simon the Zealot”. Here was a choice of a man that had a complete make over from a revolutionary to a missionary, from a terrorist to tender hearted.
12. **Judas Iscariot:** His name is placed at the end of the list. Iscariot means “the man from Kerioth” which is a name of a town given in Joshua chapter 15 verse 25 as one of the last of the cities of Judah along the coast near Edom. What a tragic figure Judas is as here we note that he was given authority to cast out demons but in the end will be the one that satan will enter.