

# *Jesus' Workers*

Matthew 10:1-4

David Jeremiah told the following incident. A pastor was teaching a class of Sunday School children, and he asked them, "Who broke down the wall of Jericho?"

A boy answered, "I didn't do it!"

The pastor turned to the Sunday School teacher and asked, "Is this typical?"

She replied, "Pastor this boy is an honest child – I really don't think he did it."

Such a response really upset the pastor and he went straight to the Sunday School superintendent and told him what happened. The superintendent said "Well now, I've known the boy and his teacher for a number of years and just can't picture either one of them doing such a terrible thing."

In total disbelief, the pastor called an emergency deacon meeting and reported the entire story. After a moment of awkward silence, the chairman spoke up and said, "Listen, Pastor, just find out how much it cost and we'll pay the damages."

Perhaps, Jesus felt this way at this point in His ministry in Matthew 10.

Jesus ministered alone for awhile in His public ministry, especially after John the Baptist was imprisoned.

But now Jesus started training others not only to help Him but to replace Him. He chose 12 men who would be the first leaders of the early church. Eventually Jesus' replacements died. But thankfully they trained replacements as well.

What Jesus did the early church practiced. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul passed this practiced on to his replacement, Timothy.

This ministry is just as necessary today. Are we training our replacements? To whom are we passing the baton? Who will be the next generation of leaders? Who will replace our current Sunday school teachers? Or Deacons? Or AWANA workers? OR choir members?

How did Jesus train His replacements?

## **1. He Called Them (Matthew 10:1)**

1) Matthew 10:1 begins with "and." The calling of the 12 replacements follows Jesus command to His disciples to pray for more workers. But His call also follows His praying all night (Luke 6:12).

2) The early church followed this example in Acts 13. Before they sent out the first full-time missionaries they prayed and fasted.

- A. Jesus first calls us to salvation (2 Thess 2:14 “He called you by our gospel”)
- B. Then, He calls us to service (Acts 13:2; 16:10).
- C. Finally, He calls us to training. Jesus calls us to training or to be disciples or learners.

In order to make disciples as Jesus commanded in the Great Commission we win people to Christ, baptize them and “teach them to observe all things.”

- 1. Leaders are readers. Readers of God’s Word (2 Timothy 2:15) and other books (2 Timothy 4:13)
- 2. Before these disciples could be apostles or sent ones they had to be trained. For 3 ½ years Jesus trained these future leaders.
- 3. This is true of all believers (Matthew 11:29)

## **2. He Trains Ordinary People (Matthew 10:2)**

- A. Peter, James and John were fishermen. Matthew was a tax collector. One was former Politian or political activist.
- B. We don’t the occupations of the nine. But there no Ph.Ds, CEOs or Generals.
- C. Jesus doesn’t choose us for what we are now but for who we can become.

Jesus saw great potential in these men who would have been the leaders of His day.

Stephen Davey shared a fictitious memo from “The Jordan Management Consultants”. This story that gives the response of a imagined consulting firm if Jesus had sent the resumes of the 12 apostles who were applying for management positions in Jesus’ corporation today.

The imagined consulting firm is named Jordan Management Consultant Firm.

Thank you for submitting the resumés of the twelve men you have selected for Management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests and the results have been run through our computer. It is our staff’s opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education, and vocational aptitude for the type of work you are now undertaking. They do not demonstrate a team concept. We would recommend that you search for persons of experience, managerial ability, and proven capability. Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to an offensive temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership and he will remain anonymous. Brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Frankly, they are mama’s boys. Thomas demonstrates a questioning, doubting attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by our greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus have definite leanings toward the radical scale. One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, has a keen business mind, is good with finances, and is highly motivated and ambitious. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and

right hand man.

D. That should give all of us hope as Paul reminded the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 1:26.

### **3. Jesus Molds Disciples Into A Powerful Group (Matthew 10:2-4)**

One preacher called this group “A Ragtag Band of Misfits” that Jesus molded into a very successful ministry team.

The list of the apostles is found 4 times (Mt 10; Mk 3; Luke 6; Acts 1)

Matthew is unique in that he puts the 6 in pairs.

A. Peter is always first in all four lists.

- 1) He was first among his equals because
- 2) Jesus was the leader. But Peter is the leader under Jesus.
  - a. Peter is paired with his brother Andrew who brought him to Jesus. These two brothers were very different and yet God used both of them.
  - b. James is paired with his brother John. Both sons of Zebedee. At one point they were sons of thunder. James became the church’s first martyr. John lived a long life and later wrote 5 NT books.
  - c. Philip and Bartholomew or Nathanael. Philip introduced Nathanael to the Lord.
  - d. Thomas and Matthew. Only Matthew reminds us that he was a dishonorable supporter of the Roman government at the expense of his own people. The Jews considered Jewish tax collectors traitors.
  - e. James son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus. About these two we know nothing.
  - f. Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.
    1. The Zealots were a radical party who hated Rome. The Zealots carried on guerrilla warfare from a retreat called Masada. When Rome discovered Masada, they attacked and ended the Zealots.
    2. Judas Iscariot is always listed last and as the one who betrayed Jesus.

B. The 12 are always divided into three smaller groups.

- 1) Peter is always the first, Philip is always 5<sup>th</sup> and James is always 9<sup>th</sup>.
- 2) Jesus was able to spend more time with the first group. The first group wrote the most Scripture.

C. The 12 had very different personalities and temperament

- 1) Peter was impulsive sometimes even rebuking Jesus. John was the opposite. He was contemplative leaning on Jesus heart.
- 2) Nathanael was believing and Thomas was skeptical.
- 3) Matthew was a tax collector for the Roman government. Simon the Zealot was a radical revolutionary for overthrowing the Roman gov.
- 4) Peter is always first and Judas is always last.
  - a. Peter was the closest to Jesus.
  - b. Judas was unconverted and the farthest away.

5) How did Jesus unite such a diverse and strong willed group?

- a. Jesus called these men to “Follow Me and I will make you to become fishers of men.” The disciples’ focus was not on each other, but on Christ.
- b. Perhaps Matthew gives us another clue. Matthew humbly admitted what he was before Jesus saved him and transformed him into this new person. Instead of focusing on the weaknesses in others he focused on his own weaknesses and sins that God had saved from.