



# REFLECTIONS

March 22, 2020

**When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles**

Luke 6:13

## Journey to the Cross—Preparing the Leaders

Following a night in prayer, Jesus called his disciples to him to choose twelve of them for preparation as leaders. In his prayers, he surely pondered which of them he should choose. Much as Moses had done on the advice of his father-in-law, Jesus needed to select capable men to teach the principles of the law and to show them ways to live them out.

Likely he considered each follower before him one by one. His early thoughts may have fallen on Andrew. Jesus would remember after his own baptism that Andrew was one of the two disciples who spent the day with him. And notably, Andrew had then been quick to share his experience that day with his brother, Peter. Jesus wanted people excited to witness like that. Jesus may have also remembered asking Andrew and Peter to leave their fishing boat to follow him and then extending a similar invitation to two other fishermen, James and John. All four of them followed without hesitation—another quality Jesus required.

Gazing into the crowd Jesus may have also recalled his time with Philip and Nathanael, with Matthew the tax collector, and others like Thomas, James the Less, Jude, Simon the Zealot, and to Judas Iscariot. Whatever the prompting, Jesus chose these men and called them apostles.

*Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His [apostles] came to him, and he began to teach them.* (Matthew 5:1-2) “Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, hungry, merciful, pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted.” He declared, “You are the light of the world like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.” He also explained how the law addresses actions but also emotional thoughts; and what it means to love your enemies, how to pray, and where your treasure is. He told them parables to illustrate his points. Later, to reveal his deity, they saw miracles happen before their very eyes.

He turned water into wine, calmed a storm, made a crippled man walk, and gave sight to a blind man. He fed 5,000 men with five loaves and two fish; he walked on water. He raised Lazarus from the dead. Then to give them a taste of the life he is grooming them to live, Jesus divided them into pairs and sent them to put all they had learned into practice. He exposed the apostles to these things and more in preparation for the day he would look at them and say:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20) They did.

Today, we are beneficiaries of their work. It's now our turn to prepare leaders. But fear not. Jesus words are still true, *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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