

His Master Plan: 12 Ordinary Men

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[0:00] the Gospel of Luke chapter 6. We follow Jesus who has begun His ministry back in Luke chapter 4, proclaiming what His mission was.

His mission comes from Isaiah, which is to set captives free and to proclaim their freedom.

Now we come as He gathers disciples to chapter 6 where from all of His many disciples, He chooses 12 men who ultimately, surprisingly, will change the world.

In the middle of Acts, they will turn the world upside down. 12 ordinary, quite unremarkable men.

So, we want to read the text and pray and then jump into it, dig into it, whatever you want to call it. If you're able, please stand as I read from Luke chapter 6, beginning at verse 12.

[1:18] Verse 12. And in these days, He went out to the mountain to pray. And all night, He continued in prayer to God.

And when day came, He called His disciples and chose from them 12, whom He named apostles. Simon, whom He named Peter, and Andrew, his brother, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James, the son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, and Judas, the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

So, it reads, let us pray. Father, guide us this day. Teach us, open our hearts to grasp this very simple, yet life-changing, church-changing, world-changing truth.

Help us not only see what Jesus did, but see what He's still doing today. This we ask in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[2:54] Amen. So, 12. He chose 12.

Why 12? Why not 10? Why not 20? Why not 50, and get it done faster? Is there a significance about 12?

Well, there were 12 patriarchs, which became 12 tribes. And now there's 12 apostles. Is God changing things?

Is He replacing 12 for 12? Are we done with the 12 tribes, and now it's the 12 apostles? Well, not quite.

Matthew 19, Jesus told the disciples that they would sit on 12 thrones. Sit on 12. They would sit on 12 thrones. That makes more sense. And judge 12 tribes of Israel.

[4:00] So the 12 tribes are not gone. He's not replacing the 12 tribes with 12 apostles. He is building a new foundation. In fact, in the book of Revelation, remember when John describes the vision of the new Jerusalem, there are 12 foundation stones that have the names of the 12 apostles.

And there are 12 gates to the city which have the names of the 12 patriarchs. So they're still part. They're not replaced. They're still there. But God is doing something new.

Remember, He talked about new wine, new clothes. New wine requires new containers. You don't mix the two.

They're not necessarily replaced, but they're different. And I think they're a fulfillment. I think what you have in the 12 tribes are a shadow. Certainly God's plan that He carried out, which was limited to physical fulfillment.

God is pointing to a greater, greater fulfillment that is not just one nation, but nation after nation after nation after nation of people who will be His people.

[5:18] So here's God's plan that changed the world. There's no doubt about it. The shocking thing is who He chose. Why choose nobodies?

Unknowns, uneducated, untrained. This is what they were called in Acts 4 by the religious leaders. These are clearly untrained, uneducated men.

Yet they had recognized that they had been with Jesus, so something stood out about them. Why choose that? Why not choose educated people?

Why not choose? Wouldn't He be farther ahead? And most believe that 11 of the 12 were from Galilee.

Judas Iscariot, if Iscariot means, is referring to a southern town where he's from, and not referring to Iscariot meaning the dagger.

[6 : 26] Don't know. At least 11 were from Galilee, which means they had a little Gentile in them. They were not quite the people of the South that fasted regularly, that kept the rules.

Why these guys? And so it begs the question today, is God still using the uneducated, the untrained, the ordinary, the unspectacular, the unremarkable kind of people?

The answer is yes. That's His preference. That's what He prefers to do. So, you know, a lot of people think, well, I don't know, how could Jesus use me?

I'm not trained. Haven't been to seminary. Don't bother. Been there. Been there. Seriously. Not that there's not value there. I waste a lot of money, though.

Can we be trained in, don't you need to be trained and skilled? Well, look at Peter. Look at Andrew. Look at these guys. We don't even know who they are.

[7 : 45] Who's Bartholomew? Right? Right? And yet, 10 of these 12 would end up martyred in another country for preaching.

The only two not martyred are John, who was exiled in his old age to Patmos, and of course, Judas, who killed himself.

So, fascinating. So, Luke 6, we get the master plan. I'm calling this His Master Plan. His Master Plan is staked in 12 ordinary men.

This plan is driven by His mission. His mission is clear. Everything He does is driven by His mission. We talked about that a few weeks ago. His plan.

So, His mission is to proclaim liberty to the captives, to set them free, not necessarily just from physical things, but from sin, right, for an eternal purpose.

[9 : 01] And then, that's His mission, but what's His methodology? How's He going to do it? How's He going to do it? So, that's what we're going to look at today. Luke shows us His process. We have seen His process as calling the many, but choosing the few.

So, early on in Luke 4 and 5, we saw Jesus calls men to follow Him. He begins to gather disciples. Right? Disciple is a learner.

It's just someone who comes along and is learning. He's a student. He's learning from Jesus. And that's where all of us begin. And then, as Jesus preaches, He's also healing because He's compassionate for people in need.

And so, He heals. And that attracts great crowds. And so, out of the great crowds become many, many disciples. In fact, at the beginning of chapter 5, we saw before He called Peter, right, in the whole fishing incident, right, we saw that there was a great multitude that came not just for healing, but to hear Him teach.

Because His teaching was with authority and power that no one had experienced before. No one taught like Jesus. And so, people gathered to hear this remarkable teaching.

[10 : 21] So, He had many, many disciples, much more than simply 12. So, He talks about large crowds, but He also talks about many disciples. So, here we come in verse 13, transition, excuse me, in Jesus' ministry, ministry, where from the many disciples that He has, He chooses out 12.

He selects 12 of the many to be His appointed apostles. And most believe, as we look at the timeline and compare all four Gospels together, that Jesus' ministry was three and a half to four years long, and it was about the second year that He chose, in His second year that He chose 12. So, He'd been teaching and gathering for over a year. So, these men, these 12 would spend at least two and a half years with Him before He sends them out.

So, not a quick seminary course. This was intensive. So, we also learned from Mark 3, a parallel text to Luke 6, that when Jesus called and named the 12 apostles, He appointed them.

And when He did that, He had two objectives, Mark tells us. One, He called them, or appointed them, one, to be with Him, to spend time with Him, to watch Him, to learn from Him, to observe Him.

[12 : 06] Right? Just to be with Him. And then secondly, ultimately, that He would send them out to preach, that He would then reproduce Himself through them. See?

So, here we come in Luke 6, where Jesus reveals His plan, or Mark records His strategy, His plan, His mission, and then His method.

His method was men. men. His method was men. He would choose 12 men, a few men. Why did Jesus choose 12 ordinary, uneducated, unspectacular, unremarkable men to ultimately save the world?

Why is this the strategy? It's nothing like we do today. We don't do this.

Well, we, meaning the church at large. We think you've got to have big programs. We think you've got to have big events. We think you've got to draw big crowds. And then out of those crowds, you ask them at the end of an inspiring message to raise their hand if they want to follow Jesus.

[13:21] And then they make a quote-unquote a decision. And instead of becoming a disciple, they become a decision maker whose life is questionable whether they follow Christ because I was one of those.

I made that decision as those of you who have been here a while know, I've told the story. I've made that literally hundreds of times. Didn't work.

It did show God was convicting me. It did show God was working. But it's a terrible method. terrible because it's disillusioning to the one who makes that decision and then it doesn't work.

It makes you not trust that preacher because he said your life will be changed and it's not. Even such reputable preachers like Billy Graham who told me that. And it did not change. He literally said if you cross this line and come down to the baseball field and cross that line.

I did it. Yes, Billy, my pastor, but this is Billy. It's going to work. I'm not against Billy. Billy's a good man. Just used a horrible method. Because that's what the modern church does.

[14:34] We don't believe in discipleship. We don't believe in this slow, tedious, unflashy, without big numbers kind of methodology.

But that's what Jesus did. You say, oh, Jesus gathered crowds, not by the end of his ministry. After John chapter 6, he just had a few.

And by Acts chapter 1, how many did he have? 120. Okay? 120, they said. So those were the 11. And a lot of women, a lot of other people, but just 120. That's it. among 2 million that year at Pentecost.

But he saved 3,000 that day. 3,000 out of 2 million. What kind of impact is that? Significant, no doubt. All right, I'm going off notes.

[15:40] I need to get back on notes. So why does he choose these 12 ordinary, uneducated men to save the world? The reason is that was his strategy. His strategy is revealed in verses 12 and 13.

Verse 12, he goes up and prays all night long. Why? Because it was a very significant decision that he's going to make and then go forward with. This is a huge transition part of his ministry.

This is a big bridge. So one part of his strategy, pray. Seek the Father. That's huge.

Because what kind of strategy and methodology do we have if we don't go to him first? We don't make plans first and then ask God to bless them. We don't create a vision statement and say, oh God, bless that.

No, we go to God first. Let him set the strategy and the tone. And then secondly, so what's his strategy? Secondly, his strategy is to choose 12 ordinary men. So that's it today.

[16:37] That's our message. So let me flesh it out a little bit. For strategy one, I don't think he ever thought of it as a strategy to pray, it was more his focus.

It was more like the way he breathed. It was like his lifeblood. This was to speak to the Father. He persistently seeks the Father's direction and strength.

Jesus resolutely seeks the Father's desire and enablement. and it wasn't something that he just did from time to time.

It was persistent. It was his lifeblood. So I want you to observe, first of all, his practice in verse 12. In these days, he went out to the mountain to pray.

He went out to a mountain. Is that significant? Well, kind of Old Testament vision there. And then somebody else goes up on a mountain and comes back down and changes everything, isn't he?

[17:39] Is that what Jesus, the second Moses, where he goes up on the mountain and meets with God? Moses took a lot longer for him. It took 40 days and 40 nights for Moses. Jesus got him one night. Maybe there's some significance to that.

He went up on the mountain. He withdraws to pray. Jesus did this over and over again. Our first instance of seeing Jesus when he was grown was in Luke chapter 3 where he comes to John the

Baptist to be baptized by him.

And it describes, Luke describes that while he was being baptized, he was praying. He was praying in that experience. Then we're told in Luke chapter 5 verse 16 that though the crowds would pursue him, he would withdraw from the crowds on a regular basis.

to pray. He would go to a desolate place. He would go to a lonely place. He would go to a private place where he could just be with his father. That's what he would do.

Here we have chapter 6 verse 12. He goes up on a mountain, prays all night long. You go over to Luke, I'll give you the instances in Luke, Luke 9 18. It happened that as he was praying alone, his disciples come to him.

[19 : 00] Later in Luke chapter 9 verse 28, he went up on a mountain to pray again. Up on a mountain to pray again. Luke chapter 11 verse 1, Jesus was praying in a certain place and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray.

They're kind of getting it, you know? It's like this guy focuses on prayer all the time. He's always praying. Always feel like I'm interrupting him while he's praying. It was his persistent, not duty, but dependence, resolute persistence to seek his father's face.

And then we see at the end of his ministry in Luke 22, he comes to Gethsemane and you know that story, right? He brings three other disciples along with him to pray with him, but even though he brings those inner three, he separates himself from them and is praying, right?

He prays, he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed, and he prayed saying, Father, if you're willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him, and he began praying in agony. He prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground, is how earnestly he prayed.

[20 : 46] So observe his practice. This is what he did. Luke records several incidences, not every one of them, but often when something followed that instance.

In Matthew 6, and we're going to see later in Luke 6, he's going to teach us how to pray, but Matthew records the greater content of Jesus' teaching.

He taught us how to pray, and he said, when you pray, go into your inner room and be with your father in secret and pray to your father in secret and he will reward you. Pray in secret, pray in secret, pray alone, get to a desolate place, get alone, close the door.

And then he said, keep your prayers simple. Don't make many words, don't think that God's going to hear you because you use all those nice articulated words. Keep it simple. He prays all night long, but it was still simple.

It's probably the same stuff over and over. I don't know. I don't know. Maybe he's debating with the father about Judas, really? Judas? And then he gave the pattern for prayer, a specific pattern.

[21 : 57] He said, when you pray, pray in this way. And then he gives them the six requests of our daily prayer, right? Cause your name to be set apart, cause your kingdom to come, cause your will to be done.

Give us this day our daily bread, forgive us our debts as we forgive her, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Those six areas that cover, if you study that, it covers everything you'd ever pray about.

It's a pattern, not just repeating those words, cause he'd already said, don't keep it simple, don't be repeating words. It was a pattern, not a prayer.

Prayer pattern. Anyway, he taught them how to pray. So we also see his passion in verse 12, that he went up on the mountain, okay, he went up on the mountain to pray, but then we're told he spent all night.

All night he continued to pray to God. His passion on the mountain. What drives him to do that? All night. What took so long?

[23 : 00] Was he waiting for answers? We're not told, we're just told he spent all night, and then he chose the 12. What's on his mind? Well, obviously, as we see, it's a strategic time, because now Jesus makes a change.

Now he's going to select out 12. Now he's going to focus on 12. He's still going to teach the multitudes. He's still going to send out 72 of his disciples later, but the 12 are the mission.

They're the method. They're the ones he's going to depend on. They're the ones that are going to change the world. Well, 12 minus one, and then add one in later, and then add another one in later. He's praying for direction, clearly, because then he makes this decision. He's praying for wisdom. He's praying how to proceed, and who to choose. You wonder, you know, as he thinks about these 12, is he thinking about other ones? He's talking about, what about, you know, Father, what about, you know?

[24 : 04] So clearly, his choice is driven by what the Father tells him. Remember, Jesus is not omniscient in his physical flesh, right? He has emptied himself of all of his deity.

He is still the Son of God, but he has given up that knowledge, right? He's dependent. He tells his disciples, everything I say to you is not my initiative.

It's from the Father. Father. So everything is from the Father. So that's why he's passionately pursuing the Father all night long.

And so this is a huge strategic time. So then let's look at this word prayer. What is prayer?

It says that he prays to God. God. It's prayer to God. He's not just talking to himself. It's not talking out loud to yourself, not thinking out loud.

[25 : 08] It's praying to God. It's directed to God. Prayer is described in all kinds of ways in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms and the prophets, described as seeking his presence.

You know, seek God while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. So it's seeking him, calling upon him, asking for strength. Psalm 50 says, call upon the Lord in the day of trouble and he will deliver you.

Psalm 105 talks about seeking his strength and seeking his presence continually. Jeremiah 29 talks about pray, come and pray and I will hear when you seek me with all your heart.

Psalm 63 says, earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you. So what is prayer?

All these different words. It's asking, it's seeking, it's calling upon him. It's thirsting for him. It's fainting for him. It's not just saying words. It's, it's, it's, it's this heart passion for him.

[26 : 20] When you seek me, when you seek me with all your hearts, they're saying words. God wants our heart. So all night still, I can't get over that all night.

I mean, why does it take Jesus all night to know who to, who to choose? Didn't he already know? Hasn't he ever been, hasn't he already been praying about this? No doubt. He's already been praying about this. This is not new.

Why all night? I don't know how to answer that. Except that when Jesus taught about prayer, when Jesus taught about prayer, he, he regularly used parables that emphasized that prayer was about persistence.

It was about coming over and over and over and over again. It was about persistence. And so let me just borrow one of those we'll see later in Luke chapter 18.

It says this. He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. Okay. So that's the purpose of this parable.

[27 : 37] This parable, this picture is to teach us how we ought always to pray and not lose heart. Interesting that those are contrary, right? To always pray and not lose heart.

I either lose heart or I always pray. Interesting. Are you losing heart? Pray. Are you praying? Probably not losing heart.

Interesting how he puts those together. I'm sensitive to that. So here's the parable. He said in a certain city, there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected men.

Oh, top guy, right? That's the one I want. And there was a widow in that city who, what, kept coming to him and saying, give me justice against my adversary.

Adversary. And for a while he refused. But afterward he said to himself, though I fear God, I neither fear God nor respect men.

[28 : 41] Yet, because this widow keeps bothering me. I will give her justice so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

What a winning guy. Okay, I give up. She's beating him down.

She's bothering him. She keeps coming and pestering and hounding him. Get rid of this woman.

Okay, I'll give her justice. Obviously he knew she needed justice.

He agreed that she deserved justice. He didn't care. So, this is the lesson on prayer. God is apparently this judge and we are apparently these widows.

Huh? So, Jesus says, how does he apply this? And the Lord said, hear what the unrighteous judge says.

[29 : 49] He's unrighteous, but the father's not unrighteous. Okay, here's the connection. Yeah, really, really bad guy and really persistent widow.

She gets what she wants. Parallel. God who's not unjust. And then we who seek him. Okay. Contrast.

Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect? Who? What? Who cry to him day and night.

Cry to him day and night. Isn't that what Jesus did? He cried to him day and night. Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily.

Now, speedily is according to God's timing, not ours, but especially our modern age. Speedily doesn't mean, you know, this minute, name it and claim it. It means relatively quickly.

[30 : 50] But still, they cry day and night. So it's not that quick, right? They're crying day and night. But it will get answered is what he's saying.

And when we look back on it later, so it'll be speedily. When we're in it, it's not very fast. It's not microwave cooking. Nevertheless, Jesus ends this way.

Interesting. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? What? What's faith got to do with it? Faith has everything to do with it. Faith is persistent prayer.

The essence of prayer is continually seeking the Lord, dependence and persistence. It's our breath. Is it our breath? Is it the way we breathe out to God?

We breathe in his word. We breathe out our prayer. Is it your breath? And it's only our breath if we persist because of faith.

[31 : 54] So Jesus says, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? He's suggesting that it's going to be rare. It's going to be the few who are like this, who will pray like this.

And there's not praying like this because it's a duty. They're praying like this because they really believe. They really trust God. They believe that he answers. They will keep coming because they trust him.

They will keep bothering him because they know he will answer the door. Another parable.

Remember the guy knocking at the door? Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme.

Gimme, gimme, gimme, gimme. You know, annoying, annoying, annoying. Because this man bothers me. Is God bothered by our prayers? Is it? What do you think?

Does God bother? Do we bother God? If I keep coming, do we think it bothers him? No? He's like, come on. A little bit more? Well, he's asking us to do it.

[33 : 01] It's the way he answers it. So, his first strategy, his first, how is he going to accomplish his mission? First and foremost, his focus is prayer.

His focus, not just prayer, but persistently seeking the Father for his desire and enablement. So after praying all night long, Jesus comes down from the mountain.

Verse 13, when it was day, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve whom he named apostles. Okay, very simple statement. But this is his master plan.

Jesus chose ordinary men. Okay, but I need to add to that statement. He chose ordinary men.

Yeah, they're ordinary, but they're also teachable and committed. They're ordinary, they're unremarkable, but they're teachable.

[34 : 04] And they're all in. They're all in. So, what's his method?

His method is men. It's not a program. It's not the, when I went to seminary, and why do I bad mouth seminary? Not all seminaries are bad. I just had a really bad experience.

I went to a seminary to learn the languages and to learn how to preach and how to teach the Word of God. I did learn the languages and fell in love with that.

But my last year in seminary, my seminary split. I was naive and unaware that this was happening, but there was a philosophy difference at my seminary and a majority of the teaching staff scholars at the seminary left my seminary and went with John MacArthur at his new seminary.

Why? Because what was John doing? Well, if you've heard John, you know what he's doing. He's going to teach the Word. My seminary was interested in church growth.

[35 : 28] It was interested in numbers. It was interested in pragmatism. I remember paying, I don't know how much I paid per unit for this 900 level discipleship course.

I thought, we're going to dig into the Gospels. This is going to be great. It was church growth principles. Excuse me.

This is me in the class. Excuse me. Why aren't we in the Bible? Why aren't we looking at how Jesus did discipleship? Oh, we're looking at the big discipleship. You know, big discipleship. Excuse me. That's not how Jesus did it. Excuse me. That's how we're teaching it. And I realized my seminary had given up and had succumbed to this trend in America to do what's big and do what's fast and do what looks good on the surface.

This became something that spread across denominations. The denomination I was in in my first eight years in pastoring was this battle.

[36 : 46] You need to put more people in your pews. You need to get more numbers. I refused to record numbers of decisions because I didn't do that. I recorded baptism because I think those were more legitimate.

Anyway, if you're not aware of it, the church growth movement and the pragmatic methodology has spread through churches rapidly and especially big denominations.

It's just about how it looks. It's not about what's real. And that's why when God sent COVID, yeah, God sent COVID, he's starting to purge and purify his church.

Who's real? Who's real? Who will keep coming? I mean, granted, this is a snow day.

And granted, there are some that can't come. I get it. I'm not talking about that. Where are the disciples? Why is it so few?

[37 : 57] It's God's method overall, isn't it? It's not about the big numbers now, it's about what they will multiply later in ways that aren't so flashy.

See, his method, see, it's not trying to achieve everything all in mass like the modern movement.

The modern movement is to do these big events and to get these numbers and, you know.

His method was not a program, it was not this mass thing or a pragmatic movement. His method was men. That method means it was slow.

It was slow. It was not flashy. It didn't look all that great. I mean, look at these guys. After two and a half years, they're still gone.

I still got questions. Geez, I don't get it. Right? I mean, you're kind of going, and this is who he's turning it over to? Okay. His mission is to set captives free.

[39 : 07] How is he going to do that? Well, he's certainly going to preach, and he's been preaching, and he's going to pray, and now at this point, we find that what he's going to do, how he's going to fulfill his mission, is by investing in a few men, and to train them, to spend his life with them, to pour out himself.

Now, way back in 1963, this book was written. It's called The Master Plan of Evangelism. Anyone here who's heard it? Just a few. So, this I got in 1978.

My copy is 1978, so it's a new one. By then, it had already been reproduced and reprinted 23 times. I believe there's still copies around, but it's no longer that popular.

But it is a study done by Robert Coleman, who just looked at the Gospels and just tried to follow what was Jesus' method? What did he do?

How did he selected these men? What was his process? So he talks about there were basically, he outlined seven or eight principles or steps, whatever you want to call them.

[40 : 24] First, he selected them. Men were his method. Then he spent time with them. He's building a relationship with them. They're traveling with him. They're sleeping and eating.

They're asking questions. They're going through dialogues. After he teaches, then he spends time with his twelve and they ask, what did you mean? I didn't get it. Because they're teachable.

Then he consecrates them, which means he required obedience, didn't he? If you're going to follow me, what? Lay down your life, right?

Deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. So he required, he said, if you're going to follow me, it's not about easy. It's not about a couple of classes. It's deny yourself, take up your cross, follow me.

This is going to cost something. Impartation, he gave himself away to them. Demonstration, he showed them how to do it. Delegation, he assigned them work.

[41 : 25] Supervision, he oversaw what they did. He sends out the 72, he sends out the 12, two by two, and then they come back and they report and they talk about it. He's training them. He shows them how, then he gives it to them and they do it and then they talk about it and they learn about

that so they can do it better the next time or they can get kind of, now I got questions because, now what about when they say this, you know, so then they can teach because you're always more teachable after you've been in the situation, right, and then you know, oh, wait a minute, what about that?

I never thought of that, what about that? That's what seminary doesn't give you. Reproduction, here's the ultimate goal.

He expected reproduction. That was his aim. He does all this with these men, he spends all this time with these men training and pouring his life into them, building relationships and teaching them and asking them questions, do you know what I'm saying?

Oh, yeah, well, no, actually, no, I don't get it. You know, have you put it together? He keeps asking them, man, we saw it in the gospel of Mark, have you put it together yet? Have you connected the dots? No, don't get it.

All right, we'll go over it again. This is his master plan. His strategy for his mission is 12 men.

[42 : 56] He stakes the whole mission on what he calls, what he names them as apostles. He chose from them 12 whom he named apostle. Apostles who he would then train and send out to preach.

In fact, he would commission them. Apostle means sent one, right? One sent. So, in a general sense, our missionaries are apostles. They're sent ones.

I would say, not capital A, but small a. Anyone sent. We're all apostles in that sense because Christ has sent every one of us out. Right? In a general sense, we fish.

fish. We're not capital A apostle that has the power to cast out and to heal and do all these things that these apostles could do for a while because read the whole book.

Beginning of Acts, they're doing it all the time. Even their shadows are doing it. And later at the end of Acts and then in the letters to Timothy, drink a little wine.

[44 : 01] can't heal that person. They had this power initially to confirm them. That was not a permanent thing.

So they're sent ones. They represent Christ with his authority. They go with his authority and power. And the Great Commission, what's the Great Commission? Matthew 28. All authority has been given to me.

Heaven and on earth, I got it all. And now you, go and make disciples. Go. You make disciples by going, which means you go preach the gospel.

By baptizing, what's baptizing? Well, you're baptizing those who believe the gospel. And then what do you do? Make disciples, go and make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

And then what? Teaching what? Yeah? Teaching, yes, teaching. In other words, discipling, training. So you preach, you baptize, and then what?

[45 : 06] Then the big job. Teaching them to obey everything I commanded you. The whole book. Teach them to, which includes what?

The last command. Go baptize. Teach. In other words, reproduce. Reproduce. That's not a class. Well, excuse me, it involves classes.

We take Bible study. That's part of it. We take Bible, we're learning. That's part of the process, yes. But it's not just a class you check off and say, okay, now I'm trained. By the way, there's churches where you can go through four classes and you're good.

You go through one class, you get saved, you become a member, you go to, seriously. Wow, I didn't know you could organize it that way. It's pretty cool.

You can check all those boxes. And it's a huge church in California. Huger, I think, than Joel's. Hugerist. I don't know.

[46 : 12] I don't care. Yeah, the pastor wrote a book that became the most popular book in Christianity for quite a while. Then it became a 30-day thing.

Something about the purpose-driven life, something like that. That one. Oh, you read that one? It's okay. But it's a check-the-box guy.

He doesn't say heresy. He's just got it a little too figured out. And I think he's had other problems. I don't know.

It doesn't matter. So reproduce. So remember what Jesus said in the upper room, John 15, 16, he said to them in the middle of this upper room, right?

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you. Why? That you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain. You didn't choose me, I chose you.

[47 : 11] Why did I choose you? I chose you and appointed you. Why? So that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain. I chose you so that you would reproduce.

You're my fruit, now you go produce more fruit. Go and bear fruit. And remember it's bearing not produce fruit. How do we make fruit?

Right? To the vine, right? Okay. So that whatever you have asked the Father in my name he may give to you.

So most translations leave out the past tense of that. It's not so that whatever you ask in my name I may give to you. It's that you go bear fruit, that your fruit shall remain, so that whatever you have been asking me in the name of my Father he may give to you.

In other words, what you've been asking for is fruit. That's not a name it and claim it verse. That's a verse that says you're praying for fruit and that's what you're going to get.

[48 : 18] not a new car or something. Not that God's against cars. All right, his men. All right, here's the who did he choose?

His men, they're ordinary, unremarkable, they're uneducated, all that. Who are they? Well, in this group of 12 men there are fishermen, there's a tax collector, there's a zealot.

You know what a zealot is? It's probably a technical term for the group of people in the first century who were happy to assassinate Roman officials, who were happy to take out their machaira and do what they need to do.

These were serious Jewish men who wanted to take back the kingdom. Okay, and Jesus chose one of them to be his disciples. I wonder if he was part of that discussion that all night, right, about really, you want, Father, you really want, you know, he could be a problem.

What if he, yeah. Remember when Jesus says, what, said something about, Lord, we have two swords, you know, and Jesus said, that's enough, and Jesus said, you know, you need to have a sword but not be over, done, had two swords.

[49 : 46] So who had the swords? Who are the two disciples that have the swords? Well, we know Peter had one, right, and probably this other Simon the zealot also had a machira.

Remember I showed you what a machira looks like? That's not a knife. And that's the short one, that's 18 inches long, that's what he had.

Anyway, one of those guys? And then you got Judas, he picks a traitor. Did he know? Yeah. John tells us, the gospel of John tells us he knew from the beginning.

Who would believe and who would betray him? He knew. And maybe that's part of what took all night long. Really, Lord? Really, Father? Really, that guy? Yeah, pick Judas because he's going to betray you.

Wow. That's going to take some praying on. I got to live with this guy. And he better teach him.

[50 : 44] And he's got to teach him. And he's going to let him hold the money. And even though he knows he's stealing, he doesn't confront him. Isn't that interesting?

And isn't it interesting that none of the other 11 knew Judas would be the betrayer, but Jesus did. He never gave it away.

And I imagine that took some of the hours of the night to pray through, to do that. Good for me.

So what does he see in these guys? I mean, they're ordinary people like us. You know, they're just regular folk. What does he see in them?

Well, I think that he saw two things. One, they're teachable. They were hungry to learn. Now, don't confuse teachable with quick to get it.

[51 : 52] They were slow to understand. Right? They were slow. I mean, they're still not getting it at the end, but they were hungry to learn. They were teachable. They were asking the questions.

And then secondly, they were committed. They were all in. They had faith that was weak. Jesus would continually say, where's your faith? And, oh, you of little faith, you of short faith.

But they had faith. And they had, I believe, they had one conviction. Remember at the end of John chapter 6, when all these other disciples left, the majority of his disciples left, and he's left with these few.

And he asked Peter, I said, are you going to leave too? What's Peter say? Where are we going to go?

You're it. You got the words. I don't get them. But I know you got the words. You're it.

[52 : 56] I'm all in. Do or die. Thomas would be one later who said, let's go die with him. This is going nowhere, but let's go die. I'm all in. I don't get it.

The whole resurrection thing, unless I see his body. You know, which didn't mean he was always a skeptic. It just meant that that was hard. Talking about something impossible.

Raising from the dead. So they were the, that's what he saw. He saw men who were teachable, and committed. How committed were they? What kind of men were they?

I can't go through all 12, but Fox's Book of Martyrs talks about the stories of these men that date all the way back that had been handed down.

There's James, the brother of John who was beheaded. Acts 12 tells us about that. Apparently one of the sons of thunder didn't make it very far in Acts.

[53 : 53] Didn't he make it halfway through Acts? Poor guy. Kind of a John the Baptist probably kind of guy. Just, you know, got to say, all right. We have Thomas. Thomas preached to the Parthians, to Parthians, to Medes, to Persians, to Carthamianians, a bunch of other people, and he was killed in India.

Simon, the brother of Jude, and James the younger, who were all sons of Mary, Cleopas, and Alphaeus, was bishop of Jerusalem after James, the brother of Jesus. He was crucified in Egypt. Simon, the apostle, who's called the zealot, preached in Africa and Britain. Well, it wasn't Britain that we know now, but early Britain. And he also was crucified.

Mark was the first bishop of Alexandria, preached the gospel in Egypt. He was burned. Mark, the writer of the gospel of Mark, disciple of Peter.

Bartholomew, also known as Nathaniel, is said to have preached in India and translated the gospel of Matthew into the Indian tongue. He was beaten, crucified, and beheaded. Good night.

[55 : 07] Beaten, crucified, and beheaded in Armenia. Andrew, Peter's brother, preached to the Scythians, the Sogdians, and some other things I can't pronounce. He preached in Ethiopia in the year A.D.

A.D. He was crucified there. Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews in the Hebrew tongue, and after he converted Ethiopia and Egypt, okay, this is the lowly tax gatherer, Peter.

The king of Egypt sent someone to kill him with a spear. Philip was stoned and crucified. James, oh, that's James' brother, our lord.

Well, that's a good story, too, but we're just looking at the apostles here. And then during Nero's persecution from 64 on, Peter died, of course.

Peter, at his own request, was crucified upside down, did not feel he was worthy to be crucified like his lord. Paul also was killed by Nero.

[56 : 17] And then later, after Nero, under the persecution of Domitian, Domitian exiled John the apostle to Patmos, right?

And we know some of that story from the book of Revelation. All these nobodies changed the world. Would that be how you did it? Would that be how we do it? We believe that just pouring ourselves for a few years or more into a few people will make a big difference.

Yeah. So, why would Jesus entrust everything to a few nobodies? Why pick these ordinary unremarkable people who just were unknown?

Why? Because it's God's way. Here's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1. He says, Where's the one who's wise? Speaking about his own folks.

[57 : 38] Where's the wise man? Where's the scribe? Where's the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom.

It pleased God through the folly, the foolishness of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks, the rest of the world, seeks wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than men. They love that statement. The foolishness of God is wiser than men. The weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your calling, brothers, not many of you, not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

[58 : 50] But God chose, here's the, you want to be inspired, you want to be uplifted, you want to think better about yourself. God chose the foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what

is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, even nobodies, to bring to nothing things that are.

Why? So that no human being might boast in the presence of God. It's because of Him that you're in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Why? So that as it is written, let the one who boasts in the Lord. Why does God choose nobodies? Why does He choose people like us? Why does He choose people that compared to the world appear weak and lowly and despised? Because it's not about us.

[60 : 00] As we say at the beginning of every service, it's all about Him. Because it's about Him. It's about making Him look good, not us. It's about God doing something amazing in a setting that seems no, nobody's can't accomplish anything.

Nobody's can't do anything. Nobody's can't do no thing. How do you say that? That's His way. God's way is not our ways.

His wisdom is foolishness to us. God intentionally uses foolish methods. I wish my seminary would understand this.

God intentionally uses foolish methods, not the things that make sense to men. God uses preaching which is outdated and out mode and you got to do something else.

You need to do film clips now. You need to use movie clips. You need to use drama. Not against drama, but that doesn't replace preaching. Why does God use preaching?

[61 : 10] Because it's foolish. foolish. And when it works, it's obvious that it's God. Not the method.

Because the methods, come on folks. We have even seminaries that have given up on that. Silly. God uses foolish methods. God rests on the Holy Spirit, not on techniques. God wants to use the unremarkable, not the wise, not the powerful, not the noble.

He wants to use the unremarkable. Why? So that they can't take any credit. God prefers the weak, the lowly, the despised, the nobodies, because it shows His power in our weakness.

So the question today is has He called you? Has He called you first and foremost to first follow Him, to learn from Him, to watch Him, to study Him.

[62 : 20] And then He tells us, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. I will make you a fisher of men. And you'll all do it different.

Is He making you a fisher of men? Are you aware of the process of how He's doing that? Have you been following long enough that now He's starting to open up opportunities for you to pour your life? Not have an event where you tell them the gospel and ask them to make a decision. It's not about that. Not blast them. You can't give them the gospel until they know that you care about them. You pour your life into them. You build a relationship with them. You build trust with them. You answer hard questions with them before you probably ever get to talking about the gospel. Because they don't trust you until they know that you care about them.

That's the day we're living in. Because probably the people you're fishing for are people that have had heartbreaks with churches and religious people. And you've got to get through those barriers before they can hear the gospel.

[63 : 33] They have to know you care about their broken heart. Their disappointments. The way they see the church and Christianity.

charity. So if you merely just kind of give them a spiel, they may lump you in with what they've wrongly lump you in with something they can't hear.

See what Jesus did took time. Took time. time. And that's when he himself is spending daily time with each of those men.

As well as a number of women and others. Why do we think we could do it quicker?

Just trying to challenge us. Find people, maybe just one, maybe two that you can pour your life into.

[64 : 50] If you're a parent, it could be your children, of course. But others, maybe it's a co-worker, maybe it's a neighbor, maybe it's, I don't know. I mean, spend a night in prayer to find out who maybe.

Huh? It's not, okay, who can I add? Yeah, it's that before the face of the father. Do that. But you're part of this mission. You're part of this mission and think about how you're part of this mission. How does God have you fit? And it doesn't, it's not going to look like somebody else. It's going to be, God's going to make it so different for you, so unique to you, in some ways.

And it might surprise you who it is. You might get a zealot. You might get a tax collector. And if you've been a tax collector, you'll be like, okay, I'm comfortable with that. Anyway, his method today is to make disciples. Go, baptize those who believe and teach them all that Jesus has taught.

[65 : 58] Let's pray. Father, we ask you to take what has been delivered today and give each of us something to chew on, something to absorb, something to take before you.

It's not about all the information, it's about your passion. And so, what am I telling you? You know how to do this.

We just ask you to apply it to our hearts in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.