

CHAPTER 5

The Disciples of Christ

(The Choosing of the Twelve)

Note: For a much more detailed study of the twelve disciples, see our set of 13 Sunday School Lessons entitled, **The Twelve Disciples**

The Preparation

"He went out into a mountain to pray" (Luke 6:12).

An important decision must be made. From a multitude of followers, a small group of twelve men must be chosen. God's will must be ascertained. Which twelve should be selected? The right men **must** be chosen. **God's choice** must be determined!

Why was this decision so important? Christ would devote most of His time and attention to these men. These men alone would belong to a select group known as "**the twelve**" (Mark 6:7; 10:32). These men were those whom Christ would name "**Apostles**" (Luke 6:13; Matthew 10:1-2). These men would be sent on an important mission to the nation Israel (Matthew 10:1-15). These men who would be the first to observe the Lord's Table (Matthew 26:26-30). These men (with the exception of Judas) were among the first to see the resurrected Saviour (John 20:19-29; 1 Corinthians 15:7). These men would receive important commandments from the risen Lord (Acts 1:2 and compare Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-48). These men would provide the foundation for Christ's marvelous building, the Church (Ephesians 2:20). These men would be used of God to indoctrinate the early Christians (Acts 2:42--"the doctrine or teaching of the Apostles") and to give to the Church certain of the New Testament Books. [Do you know which of the disciples were used by God to write New Testament Books?] These men will someday judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). Finally, these men will be forever memorialized on the twelve foundations for the wall of the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:14).

The right choice needed to be made. God's wisdom was needed. God's will had to be determined. The Son of man went out into a mountain. Why did He go there (Luke 6:12)? _____ He was alone with God. He **communed** (had intimate communication) with the Father. He wanted nothing but the Father's will. The Bible says, "[He] continued _____ in _____ to _____" (Luke 6:12). He spent the whole night praying (**asking, seeking, knocking**--see Matthew 7:7) and when the day came, God's will was clear. The Lord called His many disciples unto Himself, and out of this group "He chose _____" (Luke 6:13). God, in answer to prayer, gave Him twelve men. Compare John 17:6--"I have manifested thy name unto the men which Thou _____ [to] me out of the world: thine they were, and Thou _____ them [to] me." The right choice was made. God makes no mistakes!

You and I must make important decisions. **Every day** choices must be made. Do we desire to ascertain God's will? Do we get alone to commune and communicate with God? Do we bathe our decisions in prayer? Before we make our choice, do we look for God's choice?

Below you will find a list of some of life's important decisions. How important are each of these decisions to you?

1. **MOST IMPORTANT**
2. **VERY IMPORTANT**
3. **IMPORTANT**
4. **LESS IMPORTANT**

(In class you may want to discuss why some of these decisions are more important than others.)

_____	What courses should I take in school?
_____	Who should my friends be?
_____	What kind of activities should I do with my friends?
_____	How should I spend my money?
_____	How should I spend my leisure time?
_____	Where shall I spend eternity?
_____	How should I spend my summer vacation?
_____	What kinds of food should I eat?
_____	What kinds of music should I listen to?
_____	What kinds of books should I read?
_____	How much television should I watch?
_____	How much time should I spend at the computer?
_____	Should I drink or smoke or take drugs?
_____	How important should the Bible be to me?
_____	Should I receive Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord?
_____	How should I take care of my body?
_____	When should I date?
_____	Whom should I date?

_____	What should I do after graduation?
_____	What kind of car should I buy?
_____	Should I go to college?
_____	What college should I go to?
_____	Whom should I marry?
_____	What should my life's work be?
_____	Where should I live?
_____	Should I buy a home or rent a home?
_____	What job should I get?
_____	What church should I attend?
_____	How often should I attend church each week?

As you make these and other decisions, will you allow the God who makes no mistakes to choose for you? He wants **nothing less than the best** for you and for your life. Will you carefully and prayerfully turn to Him in every decision, whether big or small?

The Choice

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16).

The Lord Jesus Christ, in prayerful dependence on the Father, chose twelve men (see Luke 6:13; John 6:70; 15:16; Acts 1:2). The names of these twelve men are listed in four places in the New Testament:

Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:14-16	Acts 1:13
1) Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
2) Andrew	James	Andrew	John
3) James	John	James	James
4) John	Andrew	John	Andrew
5) Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
6) Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
7) Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
8) Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
9) James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus	James of Alphaeus
10) Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
11) Simon the Cananean	Simon the Cananean	Judas of James	Judas of James
12) Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	-----

You will notice that all four lists have three groups of four each, with the same names in each group. The same name heads each group, but there is variation within each group. Judas of James was also named Thaddaeus, and this is the disciple who is named in John 14:22. In New Testament times it was very common for a person to have two names.

Who were these men, these chosen ones? Were they men of great fame? Were they men of great power and position? Were they the brilliant intellectual giants of their day? Were they among the wise and the powerful and the rich? Who were they?

According to Matthew 4:18-22, Peter, Andrew, James and John were common, ordinary _____ (see verse 18). Matthew was a hated and despised _____ (Matthew 10:3). In Acts 4:13 Peter and John, like the other disciples, were described as "_____ and _____ men" (which means they had never received any formal education). In the world's eyes they were nobodies! They were just a group of ordinary, uneducated, unknown Galileans (most of the disciples were from Galilee; compare Luke 22:59 and Acts 2:7)! Why did Christ choose such unlikely, unimpressive, unrenowned, undeserving men?

What do 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 and James 2:5 teach us about the kind of people that God has chosen for Himself? (Matthew certainly would have said "Amen!" to 1 Corinthians 1:28 because very few people were as despised as the publicans [tax collectors] were.) If God had chosen only the rich and the wise and the powerful, where would that leave most of us? If God had chosen only the greatest and most powerful nation, where would that leave the nation Israel (see Deuteronomy 7:6-8)? God can take common, ordinary people, and make them great and godly men and women. This gives **us** great hope and encouragement!

God chose a teenage slave boy, and made him ruler over all of Egypt! (Who was he? _____) God chose a little shepherd boy, and made him Israel's greatest and godliest king! (Who was he? _____) God chose a young Jewish captive, and made him the chief advisor and administrator in the kingdoms of Babylon and Persia! (Who was he? _____) It doesn't matter who or what we are, it's **God** that makes the difference! What can God do **in you** and **through you** and **for you**?

**I'm just a NOBODY
Telling EVERYBODY
About SOMEBODY
Who can save ANYBODY!**

The Training

The twelve men chosen by the Lord were called by two different names. In Matthew 10:1 they are called the "twelve _____"; in Matthew 10:2 they are called "the twelve _____" (compare Luke 6:13).

The word "**disciple**" means "one who learns, a pupil, a student, a learner, someone who is taught by a teacher." It's true that the disciples were "unlearned and ignorant men" (they were without any formal schooling), but it's also true that they were the best educated men in the world because "they had been _____" (Acts 4:13) and there is no better Teacher than He!

The word "**apostle**" means "one who is sent, someone who is sent forth or sent away on a special mission." In Matthew chapter 10 the twelve Apostles (verse 2) were **sent forth** on a special mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (verses 5-6).

In Mark 3:14 we discover **why** the Lord appointed and chose His twelve men:

1) To Be His Disciples

"That they should be _____" (Mark 3:14)

The very first thing that the Lord wanted from these men was their constant **companionship**! He wanted them to be with Him, to enjoy His presence, to sit at His feet and learn, to fellowship with Him all the day long and to accompany Him wherever He might go. He wanted them to spend time with Him, to associate with Him, to eat with Him and to travel with Him. What do

you think is the very first thing the Lord wants **from you** (compare 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 John 1:3; Matthew 11:28-30)?

2) To Be His Apostles

"That He might _____ them _____ to preach" (Mark 3:14)

Before the twelve could be "**Apostles**" they first had to be "**disciples**." Being with the Teacher must precede going forth to teach others. Martha wanted to **serve** (Luke 10:40); Mary wanted to **sit** (Luke 10:39). Which one was a true disciple (Luke 10:42)? _____ When the Apostles finally went forth to preach, their message came forth in power because everyone knew (even their enemies) that they had been **with their Teacher** (ACTS 4:13).

Do you spend time with the Lord? Do you enjoy His fellowship? Do you spend time with the Lord in prayer? Do you sit at the feet of the Teacher and let the Bible speak to your heart? If you really spend time with Him, then when you are **sent forth** to your family and to your friends and to your classmates, they will see a difference, and they will know that you have been with Jesus!

The Lord is very concerned about the **training** of His servants. Consider these examples (Please MATCH):

1) _____	He was trained by the Egyptians until he was 40 years old (Acts 7:22-23) and then he was trained by God for another 40 years as he kept his father-in-law's flock (Acts 7:30). Finally when he was 80 years old, he was sent forth to deliver the children of Israel (Acts 7:34).	(A) THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF
2) _____	He received training with a lion and a bear before facing a human beast (1 Samuel 17). He learned to shepherd the sheep so that later he could shepherd and rule the people of Israel.	(B) JOSEPH
3) _____	He sat under the famous teacher Gamaliel and received the best rabbinical training of his day (Acts 22:3). After he was saved he needed to be with the Lord and spend time with His Teacher and Lord (Galatians 1:11-17).	(C) MOSES
4) _____	He received 13 years of intensive training as a slave and a prisoner. He did not begin to govern Egypt until he was 30 years old (Genesis 41:46; compare 37:2).	(D) DAVID
5) _____	He did not begin His public ministry until He was about 30 years old (Luke 3:23).	(E) PAUL

The Traitor

"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70)

The Lord Jesus once spoke to His twelve disciples and told them that they were clean but not all of them were clean (see John 13:10-11). In this select group of twelve, there was one man who was **unclean** (he was unregenerate, unsaved; his sins had never been washed away). There was one man who had never been washed (see 1 Cor. 6:11). There was one man who was a child of the devil (compare John 6:70).

Why was Judas Iscariot chosen to be one of the twelve? Did the Lord make a mistake? Did He choose the wrong man? No, even when the choice was first made, the Lord knew all about Judas (see John 6:64). You see, God had an important purpose for choosing Judas. The Lord wants to teach us at least three important lessons from this traitor's tragic life:

1. It is Possible to Go Through All the Outward Motions, and Yet Not be Saved.

To the other disciples, Judas seemed no different than they. No doubt he prayed with the others and entered into their discussions and read the Scriptures. At times he probably asked the Lord questions. There were times when Judas went forth to preach God's message to others (Matthew 10:4-7; Mark 3:14). In fact, the Scripture indicates that Judas was even given power to cast out demons and heal the sick (Matthew 10:1,14,8; Mark 3:14-15). Indeed, there may have been some people who lived in Palestine in the first century who were healed by Judas! Yet, in spite of all this, Judas was doomed to a Christless eternity (compare **Matthew 7:21-23**).

2. It is Possible to Fool Everyone but God.

Judas failed to get his heart right with God but he succeeded in fooling the other disciples. There is no hint in the gospel records that the other eleven disciples ever suspected Judas. In fact, they seemed to trust him to the end, because on the night Jesus was betrayed, Judas still held the money bag (John 13:29).

When Jesus made the announcement, "One of you shall betray Me!" the disciples said, "Lord, _____?" (Matthew 26:21-22). They did **not** say, "Lord, **it must be Judas!** We always knew there was something suspicious about him!" Judas fooled **almost** everyone (see Matthew 26:25; John 6:64; 6:70; 13:11)!

3. It is Possible to be Very Close to the Lord, Yet End Up Forever Lost.

Very few people have ever been as close to the Lord (while He was on earth) as Judas was. Very few people have been so privileged as he. Judas was given maximum light as far as the things of God are concerned. He was face to face with the Lord. He sat under the best Teacher the world has ever known and he heard the best Preacher! He heard the message of salvation from the lips of the Saviour Himself, and he heard this message again and again. He personally witnessed many of the miracles of Christ which clearly proved that Jesus was everything He claimed to be. He had every possible advantage and benefit which came from being in the very presence of the Son of God. What more could a man ask for? What more could a man be given? And yet, listen to what Jesus said about this man: " _____ unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if _____ " (Matthew 26:24; see verse 25).

How does Luke 12:48 apply to Judas?

Are you like Judas? Are you genuine or fake? Do you go through the outward motions (going to church, praying, talking about the Bible, etc.) without your heart being moved within? Are you fooling others who may think you are really saved? Are you fooling the Lord? What privileges has God given to you? What light has God given to you? What are you doing with it? Have you heard the way of salvation again and again? Has God given you a Bible? A good church? Christian parents? A godly Pastor? Dedicated teachers? **What are you doing with these things?** It would have been better for Judas if he had never been born! Read God's warning to **you** in 2 Peter 2:20-22! Read God's only solution in Psalm 95:7-8 and Hebrews 3:15! The life of Judas is a warning to every one of us.

[For a more detailed study on Judas, see the set of notes entitled, *THE TWELVE DISCIPLES*, Chapter 9. See also the set of notes entitled, *THIRTEEN BIBLE CHARACTERS*, Chapter 12.]

“And He (Jesus) saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”
(Matthew 4:19)