



The unfolding of your words gives light.

To Seek and to Save

An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

¹²It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray^a, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God^b. ¹³And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles^c: ¹⁴Simon, whom He also named Peter^d, and Andrew his brother^e; and James^f and John^a; and Philip^b and Bartholomew^c; ¹⁵and Matthew^d and Thomas^e;

^a 6:12 **He went off to the mountain to pray.** This is a good pattern for prayer because the Lord made prayer a priority. It is not showing us that we need to actually take a trip in order to pray. You do not have to be away from home to pray any more than you need to be on a mountain.

^b 6:12 **He spent the whole night in prayer to God.** The odd literal translation of this reads: “in the prayer of God.” This kind of praying is likely more than Jesus talking and the Father listening. Silence in the presence of God is not any less praying than rambling through a list a requests.

We miss something when we think the greatest command of God is to pray more. Loving God and others makes you pray more. In other words you can pray a lot as a habit without really loving God and others, but you cannot really love God and others without praying a lot.

^c 6:13 **when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles.** Notice that the twelve were chosen from those who were already disciples. Levi, Peter and the others were already part of the same group. The office of apostle carried a responsibility that was greater than that of the rest of Jesus’ disciples.

This where Jesus is making a clear break with national Israel. The apostles hold an eternal place in the kingdom of God, just as John’s vision of New Jerusalem shows (Revelation 21:10-14). The city not only has twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, it also has twelve foundations bearing the names of the twelve apostles (including the replacement for Judas).

The idea that a rabbi would call and teach disciples would have been an uncontroversial act. But to create a group of authoritative leaders called apostles was a bold move which set those men up as rivals of the Jerusalem elders. Note that this immediately follows a very public rejection by the existing Jerusalem elite.

All night prayer prepared Jesus for His hands-on role with the Twelve. He took seriously His task of equipping the Twelve.

^d 6:14 **Simon, whom He also named Peter.** Simon, or Shimon, means “he has heard.” Notice that Peter, “Little Rock,” was a name bestowed by Jesus. Jesus normally called him Peter (Matthew 16), but after Peter’s denials He called him by his given name.

^e 6:14 **and Andrew his brother.** Andrew appears to be a Greek name meaning “man” or “manly.” He can be described as “approachable,” based on a few statements about him in the gospels. He is the one who found the little boy with the loaves and fish (John 6:8-9). He is the one approached by Philip when some Greeks wanted to see Jesus (John 12:20-22). Andrew was the younger brother and fishing partner of Peter who was, as legend has it, eventually crucified on an X-shaped cross.

There is a textual difference between the basis for our NASB and that of the King James Version. The KJV leaves out several “ands,” apparently organizing the Twelve in groups of two, starting with Peter and his brother Andrew. Even if you accept the reading of the NASB, the pairing is also shown in Matthew 10. You can see that the first two pairs of apostles are brothers.

^f 6:14 **and James.** James was the son of the Mary who had a house in Jerusalem where the early church met for prayer. He was possibly a fiery preacher, having received the nickname along with his brother John, “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). One of the “inner three” along with Peter and John, he was considered the leader of the Jerusalem church and suffered martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa I.

The Gospel of Luke
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James *the son* of Alphaeus^f, and Simon who was called the Zealot^g; ¹⁶ Judas *the son* of James^h, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitorⁱ.

¹⁷ Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and *there was* a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon^j, ¹⁸ who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases^k; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. ¹⁹ And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing *them all*.^l

^a 6:14 **and John.** John, the human author of the gospel that bears his name was the brother of James and one of the “inner three” apostles privileged to see things the others did not. He also wrote three inspired epistles and the book of Revelation. He keeps his gospel account anonymous, referring to himself only as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). He is quite possibly the only apostle who died of natural causes.

^b 6:14 **and Philip.** Philip is known as a “bean counter” because of his statement before the feeding of the 5000 that two hundred denarii would not be enough to buy food for the crowd (John 6:7). But he is also the man who went and found his friend Nathanael to tell him about Jesus (John 1:45).

^c 6:14 **and Bartholomew.** This is the fellow referred to buy John as Nathanael. He was skeptical about Philip’s invitation to see Jesus because Jesus was from Nazareth. He was evidently a man of the Scriptures and had some biases that could only be corrected by meeting Jesus. Jesus removed his doubts (John 1:45-51).

^d 6:15 **and Matthew.** We already met Matthew the tax collector when Jesus called him to follow. Now he has been privileged to be part of the foundation of the church.

^e 6:15 **and Thomas.** Thomas tended to focus on the negative, assuming at one point that he and the other apostles would be going to their death in Judea (John 11:16). This was the doubter, but Jesus removed his doubts (John 20:28)

^f 6:15 **James *the son* of Alphaeus.** We really know nothing of the man from Scripture other than his name, but he is called James “the less” at one point, possibly a reference to his stature (Mark 15:40).

^g 6:15 **and Simon who was called the Zealot.** We do not know for sure if Simon had a career among the Hebrew loyalists who assassinated Romans or if “Zealot” was another nickname given because of his fiery personality.

^h 6:16 **Judas *the son* of James.** This Judas is also known as Simon. Here, then, is the third fellow with the name Simon. They could be called “Peter, Thaddeus and Judas,” but then you needed to distinguish which Judas. John 14:22 has “Judas (not Iscariot)” asking Jesus a question about the coming work of the Holy Spirit.

ⁱ 6:16 **and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.** “Iscariot” probably means that Judas was actually part of the “dagger men.” The zealots were assassins trained in stealthily killing prominent Romans from behind with daggers. As part of the *sicarii*, Judas may have had political reasons for following Jesus that were dashed when Jesus began talking about the cross.

^j 6:17 **a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon.** People came from quite a distance. Notice that the throng included people from both Jewish and Gentile territory.

^k 6:18 **had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases.** The people were not just coming for selfish reasons. They wanted to hear what Jesus had to say. But you would have done the same thing if you had been afflicted like these people. Jesus is the refuge for those who sting from the effects of living in a fallen world.

^l 6:19 **all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing *them all*.** This happened on more than one occasion. It does not mean that there was some sort of supernatural energy drain. Remember that this is the man who made the universe in six days. It does mean that He was the source of healing for those who touched Him.

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^a 6:12-19 It is worth noting the times God's servants "came down from the mountain" to be met with the day-to-day heartaches of a sinful world.

- Moses came down from Sinai to find Israel in an idolatrous frenzy (Exodus 32).
- Elijah came down from a victory on Mt. Carmel to face a death threat from Jezebel (1 Kings 19:2).
- The Lord came down from a mountain to find panicked disciples in a boat in a storm.
- Peter and James and John came down from the mount of transfiguration to be confronted by a demon-possessed child (Mark 9:14-18).

We have here a glimpse into eternity past because we are seeing the playing out of the divine decree. Here is what you learn about the character of our Lord:

1. God is not detached. There is consultation within the Godhead. This shows not only the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit but also their interdependence. This comforts us because it shows us there is a plan. Everything happens right on time.
2. God brings Himself glory by turning the ordinary into the glorious. The choices made by God were unconditional. None of us would have thought to organize a mission with fishermen, a couple of assassins and a tax collector. God changes His people. This is encouraging because we know He does His work patiently.
3. The divine decree ended up showing mercy to people. We sinners naturally do not want to surrender control. We think a God who is sovereign will not be fair. We like talk of free will and we like human success stories. God hates them because they rob Him of glory. God's successes are the ones that leave no doubt as to the source of the blessing.

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