

Message #23

Luke 6:12-19

I think most people would agree that a great goal in life is to be like Jesus Christ. Certainly as a believer one key goal would be display a powerful life that reflects the glory of God and the grace of God. But in order for that to happen, there must be a power source and that power source is prayer. **To gain Christ-like power, we must have moments when we are alone with God in prayer.**

There are many things we may do as a believer and many things we should do. We should go to church regularly. We should worship. We should sing. We should give. We should listen to the Word of God carefully taught. We should try to serve where and when we can. All of these are important things, but if we want a truly powerful life, we must privately pray. If Jesus Christ demonstrated the necessity of private prayer in His life, we may be certain we need it in our life. Our power supply comes through prayer.

Dr. Luke was careful to bring this key point out about Jesus Christ. He carefully brought out that Christ was the God/man and he also carefully brought out that Jesus Christ was highly dedicated as the God/man to prayer.

He was praying at His baptism (3:21); He was praying prior to His temptation (4:1); He would often slip away from the crowds to pray (5:16). Now this is the God/man showing us the importance of prayer. What we see here is this:

JESUS CHRIST SAW THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER PRIOR TO HIM MAKING MAJOR DECISIONS AND PRIOR TO HIM HAVING AN IMPACTING PUBLIC MINISTRY.

This is a very significant point to see. If we need to make decisions and if we want to have an impacting life for the glory of God, there must be key moments of private prayer.

This is a fascinating and eye-opening text. What this passage shows us is that it is possible to accomplish some impressive things like the Pharisees did and Herod did. It is possible to build big, plush buildings and have a following of large numbers of people. It is possible to take in mega bucks and still not have a truly powerful life or ministry in the sight of God.

The type of ministry that enables one to cope with difficult pressures and make difficult decisions and enables one to have a truly eternal and impacting ministry is one that will only happen if there is prayer.

We have two banners that hang in this church which really do present a God-honoring philosophy. I did not say, "man-pleasing philosophy," but a "God-honoring philosophy." The banners say, "Preach the Word"; "Pray Without Ceasing." That philosophy comes directly from Jesus Christ. There are three Christological prayer realities Luke develops in this context:

PRAYER REALITY #1 – Christ’s ability to cope with negative pressures came through prayer.
6:12

There was tremendous negative hostility when it came to Jesus Christ. Both the seen (6:11) and the unseen world were against Him and out to stop Him and destroy Him. The pressures on Him were intense. In this one context there were at least four major pressures on Jesus Christ:

Pressure #1 - He faced opposition. **6:11** - religious leader raged and wanted to kill Him

Pressure #2 - He needed to make a major decision. **6:13** - He needed to choose His disciples

Pressure #3 - He was in constant public demand. **6:17** - People were coming in droves

Pressure #4 - He was responsible for teaching God’s Word. **6:20** - tremendous responsibility

It was in this context that Christ needed to get alone with God and pray. In **verse 12**, we learn two important features about the prayer life of Jesus Christ:

(Prayer Feature #1) - Christ’s place of prayer was private. **6:12b**

The text says He went off into the mountain to pray. He got alone with God. He got away from people, pressures, problems and publicity. He went to a private place where He could privately talk with God.

A critical key to His public power was His private prayer meetings. Truth is a powerful life of prayer is not based by how we pray publicly at church, but privately in closets.

(Prayer Feature #2) - Christ’s duration of prayer was lengthy. **6:12c**

Christ spent the entire night in prayer. This literally was an “all-night prayer vigil.” This teaches us two lessons:

Lesson #1 - His prayer was not ruled - This was quality time spent alone with God.

Lesson #2 - His prayer time was sacrificial - It cost Him a night’s sleep.

I have known of people who have been willing to drive all night to get to a car race, a ballgame, a vacation or a concert. But you won’t meet too many people who were willing to spend an entire night in prayer. Jesus did.

It is not uncommon for someone to get up in the wee hours of the morning to hunt, fish or go to some athletic event; but you won’t find too many who will get up in the wee hours of the morning to get on their knees and talk to God. Jesus did.

PRAYER REALITY #2 – Christ’s ability to choose Apostles came through prayer. **6:13-16**

In **verse 13**, we learn four things about these men Christ selected: 1) They were disciples; 2) They were chosen; 3) Their number is twelve; 4) They are the Apostles.

Now the word “disciple” is one that means learner or pupil. This is like a student. There were many who were classified as disciples. There were many who were following Christ, listening to Christ, learning from Christ.

Out of this group of disciples, Christ was going to narrow it down and before He did He prayed. He would choose twelve and name them Apostles. **The number “twelve” is specifically connected by Luke to the “twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30; Matt. 19:28).**

The noun “apostle” is a word that means these would be fully authorized by Him and specifically commissioned and sent by Him. **The major difference between a disciple and an Apostle was commissioned authority.**

Apostles were authorized to do things (such as Apostolic sign gifts), teach things, write things (such as Scripture), which average disciples were not authorized to do. These Apostles were crucial foundational agents in the building of the Church of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20). Even a man like Judas Iscariot was important because he would be the one who would betray Christ and turn Him in to be crucified, which becomes the whole basis for the Church. **Before Christ made this selection, He spent the night in prayer.** In **verses 14-16**, we are given information concerning His selection:

Apostle #1 - He chose Simon (also named Peter). **6:14a**

Simon was a fisherman. He was a rugged, emotional man, who at times got in trouble for things he did and said. Jesus gave him the name Peter, which means rock (Matt. 16:18; John 1:42). He ended up being rebuked by Jesus Christ and later was even rebuked by Paul (Gal. 2:11). But Peter became one of the giants of the faith. He became a rock, totally dedicated to Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Word of God.

Apostle #2 - He chose Andrew. **6:14b**

Andrew was Peter’s brother, who was also a fisherman from Bethsaida (John 1:44). He first got interested in Jesus Christ after hearing John, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, preach. In fact, it was Andrew who was responsible for getting Peter interested in Jesus Christ (John 1:40-42). Andrew showed some doubt about Christ’s ability to feed 5,000 people (John 6:8-9), but when the Church was about to begin he was a critical part of the work of God (Acts 1:13).

Apostle #3 - He chose James. **6:14c**

James was a fisherman and he was the first of the twelve Apostles to be martyred (Acts 12:2). James was the brother of John and he had a thunderous personality that was quick and ready to strike people dead if they did not respond to God (Luke 9:54-55). The fact that he was martyred demonstrates his great love for Jesus Christ.

Apostle #4 - He chose John. **6:14d**

John was a fisherman who mellowed in his later years of life. He, too, had a rough, harsh personality, but later became the one Apostle who really stressed Biblical love. When it came to certain matters, John was ferocious and even in his later years of life he told God's people to have nothing to do with those who reject truth about Jesus Christ (II John 10-11) and get certain people out of the church (III John 10). John was banished to Patmos where he wrote Revelation and he ended up living the longest of the Apostles, dying years later in Ephesus.

Apostle #5 - He chose Philip. **6:14e**

Little is known about Philip. He had a very practical business type of mind (John 6:7). He somewhat struggled in his faith and seemed to have some difficulty coming to terms with the truth about Jesus Christ and His connection to God the Father (John 14:7-12). It does appear that even though Philip had questions, he was very teachable.

Apostle #6 - He chose Bartholomew. **6:14f**

Bartholomew is sometimes called Nathanael. He was brought to Jesus Christ by Philip (John 1:45-51). He was somewhat of a prejudiced man who had many preconceived misconceptions about Jesus Christ and religion. This is the one Jesus said He had seen him do something under a fig tree. That truly was a turning point in his life.

Apostle #7 - He chose Matthew. **6:15a**

Matthew is sometimes referred to by the name Levi. He was a tax collector who was hated by Jewish religious leaders and chosen by Jesus Christ. He left a lucrative tax business to become part of this team.

Apostle #8 - He chose Thomas. **6:15b**

We do not know much about Thomas. He apparently had somewhat of a melancholy, shaky, doubting personality. He even doubted things after he had seen Christ do some amazing things. History says he ended up dying as a martyr, which indicates he did become stable in his faith.

Apostle #9 - He chose James, the son of Alphaeus. **6:15c**

We know nothing about this James other than he was handpicked by Jesus Christ to become part of the twelve.

Apostle #10 - He chose Simon the Zealot. **6:15d**

Little is known about him. He must have been some former political and radical fanatic. He had “nationalistic political leanings.” Zealots were known to have hostile opposition against the political power. In fact, Pharisees did not like the zealots because they blamed them for problems with Rome.

Apostle #11 - He chose Judas, the son of James. **6:16a**

Not much is known about this Judas. He is sometimes called Thaddaeus.

Apostle #12 - He chose Judas Iscariot. **6:16b**

This Judas was the group’s treasurer, embezzler (John 12:4-6) and traitor. Jesus Christ knew what he was when He chose him (John 6:70-71). He specifically selected him because He was fully aware that this one would betray Him, so He could die on the cross.

So after spending the night in prayer, these were the twelve He chose. Some applications:

- 1) All of those chosen were imperfect sinners even after they believed.
- 2) Many passages of Scripture teach us that Jesus Christ also chose us.
- 3) If God could use these twelve, He can use us.

PRAYER REALITY #3 – Christ’s ability to minister to people came through prayer. **6:17-19**

After the prayer meeting and after selecting His apostles, Jesus came down the mountain with His Apostles to some flat plateau area and He stood with His apostles and a huge crowd of people (**verse 17**). Many of these people were probably Gentiles who came from the coastal regions of Tyre and Sidon.

They came to Jesus Christ for three reasons:

- 1) To hear Him teach. **6:18a**
- 2) To be healed of diseases. **6:18b**
- 3) To be cured of demon possession. **6:18c**

It is very clear from **verse 18** that there is a clear distinction between physical sickness and demon possession.

According to **verse 19** “all the people” were trying to touch Him because miraculous power was emanating from Him. They knew they needed to reach out and touch Jesus Christ.

But here is the thing most people coming to Christ were not coming for the ultimate right reason. They were coming to be healed or have demon matters resolved. **What most were not doing was coming to Him to reach out for the forgiveness of sins (i.e. Luke 5:24).**

For the most part, Israel has missed this whole point and so has the rest of the world. Most people were more interested in having their immediate problems resolved than to have their sins forgiven forever.

Certainly in moments of crisis it is not wrong to reach out to Jesus Christ. But don't miss the main point; Jesus Christ came to save lost sinners. Believe on Him and you will be saved.