

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

February 27, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

The Calling of the Twelve

Topics – Luke 6; The Twelve Apostles; Prayer

Text – Luke 6:12 - 19

Introduction

I Praying in the Night (v. 12)

This is the fourth mention of Jesus praying in Luke's gospel. He prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21) He departed into a solitary place and prayed in Luke 4:42. He also prayed in the wilderness after healing the leper in Luke 5:16. Here, He is praying all night before selecting the twelve Apostles.

Let's make a quick survey of Jesus' prayer life.

A The Place of His Prayers

Jesus did not confine His prayers to any particular, geographic location. He prayed all of the time, and in a variety of places. He often prayed privately, but He also prayed publicly.

1 Where He Prayed

- a. Solitary, desert places (Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42)
- b. The wilderness (Luke 5:16)
- c. A mountain (Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 9:28)
- d. In the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39 – 44; Mark 14:34 – 36; Luke 23:46)
- e. On the cross (Luke 23:34; 46; Matthew 27:46 – 47; Mark 15:34 – 36)

2 When He Prayed

- a. Early in the morning (Mark 1:35)
- b. All night (Luke 6:12)
- c. Before eating (John 6:11)
- d. In the early evening (Matthew 14:23)

B The Purpose of His Prayers

1. He prayed to in order to talk to His Father.
2. He prayed in order to give thanks.
3. He prayed before an important task.
4. He prayed when He was troubled.
5. He prayed in order to travail on behalf of His disciples.

Here in Luke 6:12, Jesus spends all night in prayer before selecting his twelve apostles. It was a big time of decisions, and Jesus spent the night before praying.

Why don't we spend some more time in prayer before we make our big decisions.

II Picking in the Day (vs. 13 – 16)

There is a difference between a disciple and an apostle. A disciple (μαθητής – *mathētēs*) is a disciplined one; a pupil; a student. An apostle (ἀπόστολος – *Apostolos*) was a delegate, a messenger, or an ambassador. Wiersbe calls them “chosen messenger[s] sent with a special commission.”¹ The term typically refers to these twelve who were chosen by the Lord during His earthly ministry. However, the term is also used to refer to other men in the New Testament who achieved this special designation among the brethren.

"Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out," (Acts 14:14)

"But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." (Galatians 1:19)

There is also the dispute as to who took Judas' place as one of the twelve.

Turn to Acts 1:1 – 26 – The apostles were told to wait at Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came, but they decide on their own to find a replacement for Judas. The question is: did God want them to do this?

The qualifications for apostleship were that:

1. They had to have seen the Lord and been a witness to His resurrection:

"Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." (Acts 1:22)

"Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 9:1-2)

2. They were given sign gifts that proved their apostleship.

"Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one." (Acts 5:15-16)

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Hebrews 2:3-4)

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Corinthians 12:11-12)

3. They had to be called by the Lord.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," (Romans 1:1)

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)" (Galatians 1:1)

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;" (1 Timothy 1:1)

So was Matthias the one chosen by the Lord, or was Paul? Was Paul one of the twelve, or was he just another apostle?

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 191). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

It matters because in the New Jerusalem, the walls of the city will be named after the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

*"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."
(Revelation 21:14)*

There are four lists of Apostles given in the New Testament. (see also Matthew 10:1 – 4; Mark 3:6 – 9; Acts 1:13) Peter's name is always listed first, and Judas' name is always listed last, with the exception of Acts 1:13 where Judas is not listed at all.

Sometimes, there appears to be discrepancies in the lists, but this is due to a man having more than one name. For example the "Judas" in Acts 1:13 is the brother of James and could be the Thaddeus mentioned in Mark 3:18. Bartholomew is likely the Nathaniel of John 1:45.

III Preaching in the Plain (vs. 17 – 19)

Jesus comes down from the mount with his disciples and his newly selected Apostles, and there were many people gathered together there to be healed of Him. The people came from all over Judaea, as well as from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. People came because they wanted to be healed, and they received the help that they desired from the Lord, but Jesus also gave them many wonderful principles in His "Sermon on the Plain."

This message contains much of the same information as His more famous, "Sermon on the Mount." Likely, he repeated this same info to many different groups of people. It is ok to preach the same truth more than once. However, there are also parts of this message that are different from the other.

Notice in v. 19, the word, "virtue." (δύναμις – *dynamis*) This is the same word translated "power" in many places in the New Testament, including Acts 1:8:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Conclusion

Before Jesus preached, before He manifested His power, and before He picked His Apostles, He prayed.

"I feel it is far better to begin with God, to see His face first, to get my soul near Him before it is near another. In general it is best to have at least one hour alone with God before engaging in anything else." E. M. Bounds

If you and I want wisdom for picking the right people, we need to pray.

If we want God's power for ministry, we need to pray.

And we need to pray long and hard.

"To say prayers in a decent, delicate way is not heavy work. But to pray really, to pray till hell feels the ponderous stroke, to pray till the iron gates of difficulty are opened, till the mountains of obstacles are removed, till the mists are exhaled and the clouds are lifted, and the sunshine of a cloudless day brightens-this is hard work, but it is God's work, and man's best labor." E. M. Bounds

"The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." Samuel Chadwick

Did you pray today? Will you pray tomorrow?