

# THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

“Be With Me”  
Mark 3:13-19  
August 19, 2018

**Summary:** Jesus appointed twelve disciples that that might *be with him*. This is a virtual definition of discipleship, being with a rabbi in such a way that you’re always observing his life, receiving his guidance, and processing his understanding of God and his word. The goal of being with the rabbi is to be like the rabbi. In Luke 6:40 Jesus said that a disciple, when he is fully trained, will be like his master. And in today’s passage, Mark indicates the same: Jesus intends to send out the twelve to preach and have authority over demons; in other words, to share the words and works of the kingdom, just as Jesus is doing.

The fact that Jesus chose the Twelve is significant. The Old Testament people of God were twelve tribes headed by twelve patriarchs. But that covenant had been broken; the people were scattered and ten tribes were lost completely. However, Jesus is rebooting the kingdom. He is renewing the covenant, reforming the “nation,” and re-calling people to God. The new kingdom will be headed by these twelve patriarchs.

And what a crew! No one would have suspected that these twelve would be the first recruits into the king’s cabinet. They look more like the first recruits into a reform school. But it seems that Jesus calls these twelve at least in part to express the wide open invitation that perpetually exists in God’s kingdom, as well as to demonstrate the power of Jesus’ gospel to change anyone’s life.

**Simon Peter, Rocky,** not the type of person one would say is qualified to be a spiritual leader, yet he is always listed first. He is first in faith, but so often first in failure—walking on water and sinking; professing Christ but opposing the cross; pledging loyalty but denying the Lord.

**Jame and John, The Sons of Thunder,** men with anger and aggression issues, so often demonstrating a spirit of rivalry. They want to call down fire from heaven on unwelcoming Samaritans; they want to shut down other people doing good works in Jesus’ name; they want thrones in the kingdom flanking Jesus.

**Andrew, Simon Peter’s Brother,** the “nickname” almost no one wants. He is one of the four original fishermen disciples; in fact, in John’s gospel he seems to be the first. But soon he is overshadowed not only by Peter but by the other three. Did Andrew struggle with resentments because of that?

**Philip,** from Bethsaida, the same town as the fishermen (Bethsaida means “Fish Town”) but clearly not one of them. If Andrew sometimes felt like the odd man out, Philip probably did more.

**Bartholomew, Thaddaeus, and James son of Alphaeus:** We know almost nothing about these men. There is one line in the New Testament between them. They are extras in the cast; the end of the bench.

**Matthew the Tax Collector and Simon the Zealot:** Men from opposite ends of the political spectrum, one in league with Rome, the other dedicated to its violent overthrow. Jesus transforms both into agents of his kingdom. Did they go out two-by-two as partners? We wouldn’t be surprised. That’s the power of being with Jesus.

## Discussion Guide:

1. Read Mark 3:13-19 from a standard translation like the NIV or ESV and also from *The Message*.
2. Which of the Twelve do you relate to the most? Why?
3. What does Jesus' selection of these first twelve disciples teach you about his vision and values for discipleship?
4. The sermon touched on ways in which **being with** Jesus transformed the disciples. (For example Peter and John healed a crippled man in Acts 4 and then defended the faith when the authorities called them to account. Their words astonished the officials, who noted that they were "unschooled, ordinary men who had **been with** Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Likewise, if Andrew's original "claim to fame" was that he brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus—well, he went with that, and brought others to Jesus too.) What is one way in which the Lord has taken your personality—a trait, characteristic, or maybe even a flaw—and "discipled" it into something useful for him?
5. What is one discipleship (or transformation) process that you're in the midst of currently? What is one way in which being with Jesus is shaping you?
6. Discuss the two quotes cited near the end of the sermon, which speak about the challenges of living in community with other disciples:

**"Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives."**

*Parker Palmer*

**"Those who love their dream of a Christian community better than the Christian community itself become the destroyers of that Christian community."**

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

What do these quotes teach you? How do they challenge your thinking?

7. What is one application that you take away from the sermon?