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## JESUS CALLS THE TWELVE

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### Part 23 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 6:12-19 | April 11, 2010

Luke 6:12–16

*<sup>12</sup> In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: <sup>14</sup> Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup> and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, <sup>16</sup> and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

### FROM “COME AND SEE” TO “GO AND DIE”

Thus far in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus’ ministry has mainly been about come and see. Crowds have come to see him preach, teach, perform miracles, cast out demons, heal, and help those who are suffering and needy. And today in Luke 6:12–16, Jesus is going to call his twelve disciples to transition from “come and see” to “go and die.” And this is an incredibly important sermon. These men’s lives will change, and history will change with it.

And for those of you who have been at Mars Hill for a while, we praise God for the come-and-see opportunities. We like to give things away online. We like to invite people to church services. We like to invite people to community groups. We like to invite people to events, relationships, formal and informal ministry, and we’re all about come and see, come and check it out. Come and hear some Bible, meet some people, see some changed lives, get to know us, and what Jesus is doing. But at some point—and you need to know this, I’m not gonna be a false salesman—at some point, to be a Christian, you’ve gotta transition from “come and see” to “go and die” and that is, you just can’t watch other people walk with Jesus, you have to go walk with him. You can’t just allow other people to serve you, you need to serve as well. You can’t just allow other people to fund ministry, you need to give generously. At some point, the come-and-see season needs to end and the go-and-die season has to begin, and that’s exactly what we find at this strategic juncture of Luke’s Gospel.

### ELEVEN LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM TWELVE DISCIPLES

And so what we’re going to do is we’re gonna look at him calling the twelve to a go-and-die life, from a come-and-see experience to a go-and-die life. And so from this, we’re gonna pull out what I’ll call, “Eleven Leadership Lessons from Twelve Disciples.”

And the whole point is this: this sermon isn’t just about you, it’s about us. We want to have a church that follows the leadership example of Jesus. How did he pick his men? How did he lead his men? How did he train his men? How did he deploy his men? How did Jesus organize his ministry? Because we want to follow in Jesus’ example by Jesus’ empowerment through the Holy Spirit, and we want to have a church that is patterned after Jesus’ ministry. That’s what we’re all about. Yeah, we want to see people meet Jesus. We want to see the church grow. We want to start other campuses. We want to start other churches. We want to continue to mature and grow in every way, but most importantly, we want to do that in a way that honors Jesus, obeys Jesus, imitates Jesus. So we’ll pull eleven lessons from him selecting his twelve disciples.

#### 1. PRAY HUMBLY THEN PROCEED BOLDLY.

Number one: pray humbly then proceed boldly. Here’s what Jesus does, before choosing the twelve, what does he do? Luke 6 tells us, he spent a whole night in prayer. Silence and solitude, today this would be shut off the phone, shut down the computer, stop Twittering, Facebooking, blogging. Shut it all down. Don’t ask everybody, “What do you think I should do?” Don’t post it on your wall, “Everybody, give me your advice.” Just shut it all down, go get with God, silence and solitude. Bring a pen, paper, a Bible, get some time with God, and talk to him. “All right, Lord, I’ve got an important decision to make. I’m here humbly requesting you help me. Speak me to through Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, conscience. Help me know what to do.” This is exceedingly important, ‘cause we live in a world where hurry, worry, and busy dominate. No time for solitude, no time for silence. And so rather than going to God, we sometimes even go to technology to ask everybody else, “What should I do? Give me advice. Give me feedback.” And that’s not always evil or bad, but Jesus’ example is: start with prayer. Life, ministry, major decisions have to be bathed and birthed in prayer. That’s the way it works.

And it says previously in Luke that Jesus has done this before, so this is a fairly common occurrence for him. He’s gotta choose twelve apostles, that’s a big deal, so he’s gonna spend a whole night in prayer, looking across all those who are following him, and coming to hear him preach and teach. “Father, what about this one? What about that guy? What about this person? What about that one? Judas, you sure? We need to talk about that guy, not so sure I want him on the team.” So when you declare, “I’m gonna be a member of this church. I want to serve in this ministry, paid or unpaid. I want

to marry this person. I want go want to this college. I want to get this degree. I want to do this career. I want to live in this house. I want to take on this responsibility. We're gonna birth these children." Before you make those big decisions, "We're gonna deploy these leaders," pray, 'cause what happens is most people pray after they've made the decision. Like, "Oh no, Lord, help, fix it. Whoops." God is a gracious God, and he can and does often show up and help, but it's so much better to seek God before making the decision, and the resulting devastation.

And once you pray humbly, and you get time with God, okay, "God, this is who I am. This is what you want me to do. This is the decision I need to make," then you could proceed boldly. "No, this is what I need to do. The Bible says, I got time with the Lord, and then I double-checked with spiritual authority and godly people to make sure that I actually heard the Lord, not the voice in my head. And yeah, I have conviction here. I have a sense of calling, and I know what I'm supposed to do, so I'm gonna do it." Those who pray humbly can proceed boldly. Those who do not pray humbly have a hard time proceeding boldly. It gets hard. There's opposition, life, ministry gets difficult. And all of a sudden you're like, "Am I doing the right thing? Should I have even started this? Should I have volunteered for this ministry? Should I be pursuing this life course? I don't know, maybe I made a mistake." Crisis ensues.

Grace and I, before we launched Mars Hill, and before we even announced that we officially would, we felt called to it. God had called us both to it, but we took some time, a week in fasting and prayer just to double-check. "Okay Lord, double-checking, is this it? You want us to start Mars Hill or not? Yes, okay, cool. We're in this together, and we're gonna do it." And there's been some hard seasons, tough seasons, but we know, hey, this is what God asked us to do. Also, I prayed a lot before I married Grace, and God convicted me, revealed to me, "Yeah, marry that girl." Okay. Every marriage hits hard spots, every life hits hard spots, every career hits hard spots, every ministry, paid or unpaid, hits hard spots, and when you've prayed humbly, you can proceed boldly like, "I'm gonna hang in there, I'm gonna keep going 'cause I know this is what I'm supposed to do, and I trust God to get me through it."

## 2. GET THE MEN.

Number two: get the men. You're gonna see a lot of principles from Jesus' ministry that we incorporate at Mars Hill very gladly. This does not mean we don't get the women, but we want to emphasize getting the men. In Christianity today, 60 percent of those who attend church are women. Eleven to thirteen million more women in church than men. Say, "Praise God," the ladies love Jesus. Where are the men? What are they doing? Bad things, usually. And so what Jesus does, he goes after the men, he gets the men. He gets the men first. He looks across the hundreds, thousands who are following him in ministry, coming to hear him teach, part of the come-and-see ministry, and he chooses twelve, all men.

Senior leadership is reserved for men. Let me explain this, many of you will disagree with this. Read your Bible, read your Bible, read your Bible. 1 Timothy 2, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1; it's in *On Church Leadership*, it's in the book *Vintage Church*. I mean, I write this stuff down, trying to make it clear, but Jesus is consistent with the Old Testament, where the highest spiritual authority were the priests, they were male descendants of Aaron, that was a requirement. Jesus comes along, picks senior leaders, twelve apostles, twelve men. Some say, "Oh, well, Jesus really wanted women in leadership, and he had women in his ministry." He did have women in his ministry. He did have women who were friends of his. He did have women that he taught. He did have women that served alongside of him, but he didn't appoint any of them to apostle. If he wanted to revolutionize things, that's all he needed to do and he didn't, and he didn't make a mistake, 'cause he spent the whole night in prayer. He did exactly what the Father wanted him to do, and then that sets up the precedent for the New Testament church where the elders or pastors, those words are used synonymously in places like 1 Peter 5 and Acts 20, elders and pastors are men.

So Old Testament, New Testament, ministry of Jesus, beginning to end, senior leaders only, always men, authors of all books of the Bible, men. It doesn't mean that women aren't gifted in leadership, can't teach and use their gifts, they just cannot do so in that office. The office of deacon, however, is open for men and women. Back to the story, Jesus picks twelve men, twelve men. There are reasons that we have this position, and it's not because we like all the criticism and controversy. It's not like I woke up one day and I was like, "I would like to get whacked like a piñata. I know what will do it, male pastors, that will do it. That will ensure that I get criticized until I die. I'm gonna go with that 'cause it's a shortcut to getting beat like a piñata." I didn't pick that position. God wrote that position in the Bible, so we hold to that position, and it's a position that, quite frankly, is the position that Jesus operated by. He wasn't scared of anyone. He didn't mind breaking social taboos. He did increase great liberation for women, but he didn't appoint any of them as apostles.

My daughter recently asked me about this. She's in junior high, smart gal, real sharp, good student, good theologian, good writer. She's a great gal, love her, we're real close. She said, "Dad, I don't believe a woman should be a pastor, but some of the friends that I have in school do, and we were talking about that. And if you had to pick one section of the Bible to explain where it says that a woman can't be a pastor, where would you go?" Good question, we're sitting there I said, "Okay, grab your Bible, babe. Go to 1 Timothy 2. 'I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man.'" She says, "Well, that's pretty clear." "Yeah, I know. Keep reading, next chapter, 1 Timothy 3, what does it say?" "An elder must be above reproach, the husband of one wife." She said, "Well, that's crazy, that's obvious." To some, it is. She said, "Dad, then how could they get that to say something that it's not?" I said, "Honey, they're wrong." She said, "So the churches that have women pastors are wrong?" I said, "Yeah, they're wrong. They're Christians, and they can love Jesus, and we can be friends with them, and we can work with them for evangelism and good things, and we can try to be on good terms, and they're wrong. They would say there's things that we're wrong about, and maybe there are. We need to humbly listen to them, and go back to the Bible, and see if there's anything we need to clean up and work on and fix, 'cause nobody's perfect except for Jesus. Everybody's got something to learn."

So our position at Mars Hill is the Bible's clear on this. Old Testament, New Testament, ministry of Jesus, the appointing of the twelve, all qualified, competent, capable, courageous, Christ-like men. So get the men. We go after the men at Mars Hill, we just do. A little more than half of our attendance is men. The biggest group at Mars Hill is single men, the least likely people on earth to go to church.

### 3. PAST RESULTS OFTEN REVEAL FUTURE PERFORMANCE.

Number three: past results often reveal future performance. And here's the deal. Jesus looks out across his ministry, and he picks leaders who are already doing stuff. And if you've never done anything, yeah, something radical could change, but the odds are tomorrow, you're not gonna wake up and start doing a lot. If you're not faithful, you're probably not going to be faithful. I mean, there's something to be said for consistency, what Eugene Peterson calls, "long obedience in the same direction." Some people walk into Mars Hill and say, "Okay, I want to do this." "Okay, have you ever done anything?" "Nope." "Okay, then why in the world would we give you this great opportunity? Shouldn't you first do anything? Humbly serve, find something to do, show us that you can show up two weeks in a row, find your pants, you know, just knock a few things off your to-do list, and then we'll talk about making you a leader." 'Cause people walk, in they're like, "I want to be in charge of something." "All right, you can be in charge of you. We're gonna start there. We're gonna start there, and if you nail that, we'll move on, okay?"

But Jesus doesn't just pick people who have never done anything. Some of these guys have run businesses. They're all following him in ministry. They're serving informally. The ministry's grown, now it's time to officialize the leadership, and he picks those who have already performed, they've already done something. You need to know this at Mars Hill, the best way to rise up in leadership is to be getting things done. Become a member, join a community group, lead a community group, lead a worship team, lead a serving team. Move up through deaconship, move up through eldership. Whatever God has for you, you gotta start by doing something. You gotta start by doing something. There's a lot of people who walk in, and they're totally fired up for two weeks, and then it's over, you never see them again. Past performance indicates future performance. We want to see somebody who's been doing something before we unleash them to do something else.

### 4. TRAIN THE CALLED; DO NOT CALL THE TRAINED.

Number four: train the called; do not call the trained. It's interesting when Jesus went to call his leaders, and he did call them. He didn't get a committee. They didn't take a congregational vote. They didn't do nominations. Jesus called them. Jesus still calls people into ministry. We believe that. Acts 20 says that the Holy Spirit chooses the leaders in the church, he appoints the overseers. So God still picks leaders. Jesus still picks leaders through the indwelling, empowering, calling of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus trained the called. So, we don't make leaders, God does. We recognize them, and then train them. And for you, some of you will have a calling, and sometimes your calling will be like mine. Mine was obvious. God spoke to me, "Marry Grace, plant churches, train men, preach the Bible." Okay, that's what I'm doing. For some of you, you'll be reading the Bible, and you'll see something or somebody, and it's all of a sudden like that just leaps out at you, you're like, "That's it. That's what I want to do. That's what I want to give my life to." Or you meet somebody in the Bible, you're like, "I'm like them. I want to do what they're doing. That's what I need to do." That could be your calling. And sometimes it's trial and error, you're like, "I tried that, I'm no good at it. I tried that, I'm no good at it. I tried that. Hey, that actually works. I'm pretty good at that, and I like that. God seems to bless it when I serve in that area." Calling also can be just that deep-rooted sense of "have to" in your gut. It could be the Holy Spirit. So you say, "I have to help abuse victims. I have to help the poor. I have to help single moms. I have to help kids. I have to help men learn to be fathers." Right, there's something in your gut, and it's there from God. It's the beginning of a calling, and it starts with a real passion. Maybe there are certain things in life, you kind of ebb and flow, and the enthusiasm is hot and cold, but this is something that's consistent.

See, for me, I see it this way: how do you know you're called to something? Well, part of it is God gives you an innate desire. That's why it says in 1 Peter 5, "Don't lead because people made you lead, lead because you desire to, that you want to." That's why Paul says elsewhere, "If anyone desires the office of overseer, it's a noble thing they desire." It's a good thing to have a desire. So I was talking to a new Christian recently and they were unsure about God's calling on their life. "I don't know what God wants me to do. Got all these new decisions to make in life now that I'm a new Christian." And they were very kind of panicked about it, "What do I do?" I said, "Don't worry about God's calling, first worry about God. The Bible says, 'Delight yourself in the Lord, and he'll give you the desires of your heart.'" I said, "Are you enjoying the Lord?" They said, "Yeah, I'm reading my Bible. I'm praying. I'm in a community group and reading good books, and I'm repenting of sin, and I'm seeing the ways that I'm not like Jesus, and my life is changing and yeah, I feel like there's momentum, and I'm really excited about Jesus, and I'm growing." "Great." This person looked at me and said, "Well, what do I do?" I said, "Do whatever you want." They're like, "What? Do whatever I want?" "Yeah, 'cause if you delight yourself in the Lord, he'll give you the desires of your heart. He'll put desires on your heart, so that God's desires become your desires." Augustine said it this way, "Love God and do whatever you please." I said, "Well, what do you like?" They're like, "Well, I like serving people, and I'm pretty extroverted and, you know, I like welcoming people." "So you want to be a greeter?" "Yeah, I'd love to be a greeter. And I love hospitality and I love getting people together." "So someday you'd like to be a community group leader?" "That'd be great. I'm not ready yet, but maybe I could apprentice and get ready." "Yeah, that'd be a great idea. How does that sound?" "That sounds really fun. Should I do it?" "Do you want to?" "Yeah, well, how do I know if it's God will or my will?" "Well, if you're enjoying the Lord, his will becomes your will. He's glorified, you're satisfied, other people are helped. Everybody wins, that's ministry." It's more about our heart enjoying the Lord, and then we'll want to do what he wants us do.

You need to know this, I like my job. I love to preach and teach the Bible. There are, quite frankly, a lot of things that I get excited about, that I lose excitement for; studying the Bible, teaching the Bible, my whole life, ever since I got saved at age nineteen, pretty fired up about that. People ask me all the time, they're like, "How do you study that much?" I like it. It helps. Alright, unlike some jobs, which you're like, "I don't like it," that's hard, and maybe God's called you to a hard job, but when it comes to ministry, particularly for those of you who are volunteering, it's a great opportunity to say, "I want to do something that I like and I'm good at, and helps people and glorifies God, and I just get to pick something that fits." That's all.

Jesus trained the called. These twelve were already part of his ministry, they're already serving. They're already following him. They're already responding to him. They're already submitting to him, so he starts training them. "All right, we're gonna teach you guys, open your Bibles, we're gonna

have some discussion. We're gonna run some classes. You're gonna do some experiences. We're gonna let you go out and pray, cast out a few demons, help the sick. You kids are gonna get your feet wet now. It's gonna be busy time." He doesn't call the trained, and this is where ministry's gone wrong in the modern era. Jesus didn't go to where they trained the scribes, or up to the temple where they trained the priests. He didn't go to the equivalent of the Bible college or the seminary and say, "Alright, who's head of the class? Alright, who's Pharisee of the month? I want that kid, that's who I want." He didn't do that, because you can be trained but not called. You can go to school for something that God hasn't asked you to do, and you've got all the credentials, but you don't have any of the courage.

And I'm not against training. I've got a master's degree in theology, and I'm not against seminary or Bible college. We've got a school, Re:Train, we love to train people, but calling precedes training. Has God burdened you for something? Do you want to do it? Will you do it? Great, we'll help you do it. But see, people can help train, but only God can call. If God hasn't called you, we can't call you. Many of you need to be careful. You'll think, "I'm gonna go get a degree for ministry." Do ministry, volunteer, check it out. Let us then help train you, and find a slot to get you developed, but it may not be your thing. There was a controversial report some years ago that said that upwards of three-fourths of those who graduate from Bible college and seminary go into ministry and leave within the first five years, never to return. It means they spent years training for something that they're not going to do, why? Because there's a difference between calling the trained into ministry, and training the called for ministry. It starts with a calling.

## 5. WEIRD TEAMS ARE THE BEST TEAMS.

Number five: weird teams are the best. Weird teams are the best because number one, they're fun. And number two, they compliment one another. One of the great weaknesses in leadership development theory, and here's the truth, we like to read business books and leadership books, and I subscribe to the *Harvard Business Review* and *Wired* and *Fast Company*. I mean, I like it all, but the Bible and Jesus, that's where we really go to learn, and other things can help us learn about what others are thinking in leadership. But here's the big idea: if you have a weakness, should you work on it if you're a leader, and this could be in ministry or business, or do you find people who are strong where you're weak? Conventional prevailing wisdom has been, you gotta work on your weaknesses. Maybe a little bit, but you know what? Need to find somebody who's better at things than you. Get a weird team of people who are really different. If everybody looks the same, watches the same TV shows, listens to the same bands, wears the same clothes, uses the same colloquialisms, has the same everything, you're probably in a cult. I just hate to tell you that, and the problem with the cult is you never know till the last day, and so it's kind of a disappointment.

A weird team's the best team, right? So on Jesus' team, it's kind of a weird team. John's young, Peter and the other guys are older. John's apparently single. Some other guys are married and have kids. It's kind of a weird team. Eleven of them are country boys. One's from the city, Judas, didn't represent us real well. It's a weird team. It's a really kind of weird team. On this team is a guy named Simon the Zealot, we read in Luke 6. He hates the Roman government 'cause it's ruling over God's people, and he's kind of a punk rock anarchist kind of guy. Alright, he's a Fugazi fan. He's that guy. And so he just wants to overthrow the Roman government. He says, "I hate the government. Down with the government." He's that guy. He's got the anarchist patch on his sleeve. He's that guy. And then on the team as well is Matthew the tax collector, who works for the Roman government, ripping off God's people, and these two guys are on the same team. It's the antigovernment anarchist activist and the IRS auditor. Like seriously? The guy with the gun, and the guy who tucks his shirt in, they're on the same team? Yeah, that's a weird team. That's a very weird team.

Some of these guys are fisherman, one's a tax collector. At least four guys, we don't know what they did. Some are brothers, some aren't. It's a funky, little, weird team, but it works 'cause they're different, and they compliment one another's strengths and weaknesses. Some of these guys had business experience, some had political experience. Some had leadership experience. Some of them already had preexisting social networks and relationships. Just so you know this, the best teams are the weird teams. They're weird teams.

Like our eldership, every once in a while in an elder's meeting, Pastor Jamie, your lead pastor, he's the legal president at Mars Hill, he'll just kind of chuckle. And I've asked him before, "Dude, what's so funny?" He's like, "Look at this team, what a weird team." True, I look around like, this is a weird team. Forty-some pastors, nineteen more in training. Maybe we'll be at sixty by the end of the year, and it's like, nothing but Jesus could bring this team together. Some are jocks, some of these guys have action figures. I mean, those are two totally different teams. We have guys who tuck their shirt in, guys who don't tuck their shirt in. And you're not supposed to tuck your shirt in, by the way. But we can't make it a rule 'cause I told you last week, legalists are wrong, so you get to do whatever you want, tuck your shirt in, don't tuck your shirt in. Some of the people on the team drink alcohol, some don't drink alcohol, some speak in tongues, some don't speak in tongues. Some are in their seventies, some are in their twenties, some are grandfathers, some are infertile. Some have a PhD, some have a GED, a good enough diploma. It's just a whole different—it's a weird team, and if you walk in you're like, "What's up with this team? Ah, Jesus, brought this team together." It's a weird team. And people will ask, "What—how does this work? What, what?" Oh, when Jesus is the center, you get a weird team, 'cause see, if you're Christ-oriented and not cause-oriented, you get community and not affinity.

If you're cause-oriented, you get affinity. All the people who agree with you come together. If you're Christ-oriented, people who disagree on a whole lot of things, they come together. That's actual community. What passes for community in our day is pretty much affinity. Everybody like me hangs out and does what I like. Community is people totally unlike me, and don't have much in common with me, come together with me, because we're Christ-centered. It's all about Jesus, and as we're all walking closer to Jesus as disciples of, followers of Jesus, we happen to get closer together and become a team. That's what's cool about Christianity. People who—I mean, you guys know this, in your community groups, your social networks, you're like, "Man, my Christian friends, I would never pick these people. I don't have anything in common with them—bipedal, upright—other than those two factors, we got nothing in common. But you know what? They love Jesus, I love Jesus, and you know what? I love them, and together we make each other more sanctified, and together when we serve Jesus, it goes better, so praise God for a weird, diverse, collective team of different kind of people." So on our team, there's artists, there's accountants, people who are good with pictures, people who are good with numbers, all important, very vital.

Weird teams are the best teams. You see that with Jesus. It's kind of a weird team. He's not picking the guys you'd expect, he's picking a bunch of no names and nobodies.

## 6. UNDER AUTHORITY BEFORE IN AUTHORITY.

Number six: under authority before in authority. And here in Luke 6:12–16, it uses two words: disciple, apostle. It says, "He took those who were disciples, and he commissioned them as apostles." A disciple literally means a humble, follower servant of. Jesus is teaching, they're listening. Jesus is commanding, they're obeying. Jesus is leading, they're following. They're under authority. And Jesus had a lot of disciples, hundreds, thousands of people come out to hear him. They're all part of the come-and-see, and he picks those who are under authority, and he appoints a handful of them into authority.

And here's why this is so important, some people love to be in authority, but they don't like to be under authority. They want to boss other people around, but they don't take orders well. We've had this situation at various times at Mars Hill where somebody's like, "Okay, I'm a leader now. You can't tell me what to do." No, everybody's under—I'm under authority, everybody's under authority. We're all sinners, we all make mistakes. We all gotta be under authority. We could all blow this great gift called Mars Hill that God's given us at anytime. God opposes the proud. He gives grace to the humble, so humble yourself. Alright, so the Bible says, "Come under some authority." Those who are above the law, those who are the exception to the rule, those who get to do whatever they want, they're dangerous. They're very dangerous. They like sheep, but they bite shepherds. They like being in authority, they don't like being under authority, and you've gotta be good at both to be a leader, because when you go into authority, you still need to be under authority. Being under authority is something for everybody, including the leaders. And if you're gonna be in authority, you've gotta be under authority.

So he takes those who are under authority, disciples, and he gives them a new title and job description and office. He calls them apostles, that means one who is sent. This is like an ambassador. The language here is like a king who rules a mighty kingdom, and he selects someone to be his emissary or his ambassador, and sends them on a mission into another nation, into another kingdom representing their authority and speaking on their behalf.

So let me explain "apostle." This is very important. First of all, Jesus is the apostle. Hebrews 3:1 says, "He's our apostle." So when God the Father wanted to send a representative, ambassador, emissary from heaven to earth to represent his kingdom, he sent God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He's our apostle. He's the sent one. That's why it says repeatedly, particularly in John's Gospel, "The Father has sent me." He's the apostle, the sent one.

And then there's the office of apostle. We'll call this capital "A" apostle, and those are the twelve hand-selected by Jesus. So their number's fixed. Ephesians 2:20 says, "They set the foundation of the church with the prophets and apostles," that's who's at the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. The apostles included Judas. He's going to betray Jesus and hang himself. Another man will be selected early on in the book of Acts. One of the requirements is that he would need to be an eyewitness to the resurrection of Jesus. Paul is later added as an apostle, Jesus comes down and commissions him as an apostle as well. And so we see that the apostles are a set number of people hand-selected by the Lord Jesus, eyewitnesses to his resurrection, given a very special authoritative designation, some of them actually writing books of the New Testament. That's the level of authority they enjoy. To that degree, there are not apostles today like that. No one has that kind of authority. No one could say, "Well, you know, Peter and I, we're at the same level. John and I, we're at the same level of spiritual authority." No, you're not.

But under the capital "A" apostle, there's the lowercase "a" apostle and that's not the office, but the gift. And the gift of apostle is one that the Bible includes. You can read the gifts lists. It does list it, 1 Corinthians 12–14, Romans 12. It's listed in the various gift lists. It's a gift. It's a spiritual gift like serving or teaching or administration. It's a capacity. It's a capacity that God gives to men and women. God gives spiritual gifts to men and women, teaching, leadership, whatever it is. And there's a difference between the gift and the office. And so the gift of apostle includes a couple things, like the ability to cross cultural ministry, so he could go into another country and be a missionary, start a church plant, start a campus plant. Sometimes it's a movement leader who works across multiple churches, multiple pastors, writes, travels, preaches, speaks, teaches, sometimes internationally. This is one of my gifts.

Okay, but just 'cause you have the gift of apostle doesn't mean anything unless you qualify to be an elder or a deacon, 'cause you can have a gift and not have character. You can have a gift, and not be qualified. So we hold the offices are different than the gifts, but the gift of apostle does exist. We believe in that.

And then there's false apostles. The Bible talks about false apostles, people who are sent by Satan, not Jesus. They minister by the power of demons, not the Holy Spirit. They tell lies, not the truth. They lead people astray, not toward God.

So he takes these twelve who are under authority. He positions them into authority. "You are now apostles, and you're gonna lead," and then there's gifted people under them that have the gift of apostle, and part of our job is to keep people from false apostles, leading people astray.

But here's the big idea. Some of you bounce from church to church, ministry to ministry, 'cause you just don't want to be under authority. You don't want anybody to know you, or what you're doing. You don't want to become a member. You don't want to join anything. You don't want to be held accountable to anything. You just want to live in this come and see, come and see, come and see. But let me tell ya, it's an immaturity is what it is. It's an immaturity, and today I invite you to go and die, to settle in somewhere, to commit to something, to make it ours and yours, and to come under authority, and then grow and be trained, and maybe one day God would have you to be in authority.

I mean, I can't tell ya how many hundreds, there may be thousands of people at this point that I've met, they bounce from church to church to church, ministry to ministry to ministry because they want to be in authority, and they don't want to qualify. They don't want to get trained. They don't want to

prove themselves. They just want to walk up to the leader and say, "You need to do this. Obey me. I'm in charge." Now, they don't say, "I'm in charge," but they act like it. Really, you walk in off the street and start bossing people around? It doesn't work like this anywhere else in the world. You can't do this in the Marines. You can't do this in a college. Can't just walk up to your professor, "I disagree with the degree. We need to do it this way, now." No. Sit down, learn. Be under authority, prove yourself. If you demonstrate faithfulness, someday you can be in authority, and when you get in authority, you can make some changes. Some of you love the idea of being in authority. You resist at the thought of being under authority. Please don't pursue being in authority until you've had a season where you've proven yourself under authority.

## **7. EVERY TEAM NEEDS A LEADER.**

Number seven: every team needs a leader, okay? The disciples, the apostles, now they're a team. Obviously, their leader is Jesus. Ultimately, he's the leader of every team, in any ministry, or any Christian group, but the human leader is Peter. The human leader is Peter. How do we know? Every time that the disciples, apostles are listed in Acts and the gospels, and they appear many times, here's what happens, Judas is always listed last. Not a lot of, all right, not a lot of enthusiasm for Judas, and Peter's always listed first. You know why? He's the leader. He's the first among equals. Every team needs a leader.

Now, some of you are already bored. You're like, "What does this sermon have to do—" It's about us. It's about our church. Do you love Mars Hill? Do you want this to be a good, holy, healthy, helpful church? Do you want it based on Jesus' ministry? You want it biblical? Do you want to do things that Jesus did? You want to give your life to what Jesus gave his life to? Here's why it matters. I love this church. We want this to be the best church that it can possibly be by the grace of God, and here a big issue is leadership.

And see, you guys grew up in a culture—this is a sick world that hates leadership. Everybody thinks they should be able to text message the president and boss him around. I mean, it's a weird day from social networking to continual comments to consumerism. People don't want to follow a leader, all they want to do is criticize a leader. They don't want to even recognize leadership. And some Christians will even say, "I don't believe in leadership." Really? Do you believe in God? 'Cause God's in charge. So you gotta recognize at least one leader.

And even the way God has organized himself in the Trinity: one God, three persons, all equal but submissive, is that there's God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit, and God the Son submits to God the Father, recognizes him as the leader. Though they're equal, there's what is called subordinationism. He submit—Jesus submits himself. So he says, "The Father sent me. I speak what the Father tells me to say. I do what the Father tells me to do." And even when Jesus prays, he says, "Father, not my will," but what? What's the line? "Your will be done." That's submitting to the leader. That's what it is. And then the Bible says in John that God the Father and God the Son sent God the Holy Spirit. So, in the character of God, there's leadership within the Trinity.

So this plays itself out in the government of home. Mom, dad, the kids are equal, but dad's supposed to lovingly, humbly, sacrificially lead. In the church, elders, members, deacons are equal but the elders are supposed to lead. In a community group, everybody's equal, but the community group leader is supposed to lead. In a redemption group, everybody's equal, but the redemption group leader is supposed to lead. On a worship team, everybody's equal, the team leader is to lead. In a serving team, everybody's equal, but the team leader leads. So there are teams that have leaders, and leaders, according to ministry, they do doctrine: what do we believe and not believe? Direction: where are we going and not going? And discipline: what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior? That's what a lot of leadership is: doctrine, direction, discipline.

And in saying this, we look back to the text, Peter's always listed first. He's the leader. Jesus appoints him as the leader. And when the day of Pentecost comes after Jesus dies on the cross and rises from the grave, it says that all the apostles are together. Jesus ascended into heaven. And the Bible says it this way in the opening chapters of Acts, "Peter stepped forward to preach." You know why? He's the leader. Okay, we don't make leaders, we recognize the leaders that the Holy Spirit has chosen. Some people, you're following them, you're listening to them, you're learning from them, they're the leader. So every team needs a leader, okay? In this day when authority is jettisoned and leadership is despised, and everybody thinks that they're smart, and everybody thinks that they should be obeyed. Everybody still believes in leadership, they just think that they should be the leader. So we have a day of complete anarchy. It's like the days of the judges, everybody did what was right in their own eyes.

And biblically, what we see with Jesus, every team needs a leader. So every team at Mars Hill has a leader. The campuses, the campus pastor is the leader. Within certain areas, community groups or kids or student ministry or redemption groups, there's a leader. There are leaders within all the teams and nobody leads all the teams at Mars Hill, particularly among the elders, and there is no one who's the leader of every team of leaders that they're on. So I'm on different teams, and I'm not the leader on every team. On some teams, I am down the chain of command and not the senior leader. On other teams, I am the senior leader. We intentionally have a structure whereby everyone in authority is also under authority, without exception, including myself. Every team needs a leader, and nobody's above the law, gets to do whatever they want. I tell you that because you're gonna give your life, I hope and pray to Mars Hill, give your money, give your time, give your prayers. You ask, "What is this? Is this a Ponzi scheme where I just give and serve, and then somebody gets to act like king at the top of the pyramid and take whatever they want?" No, 'cause that's not the way Jesus set it up. That's not the way it's supposed to be.

## **8. BIG TEAMS NEED A SMALLER TEAM WITHIN THE TEAM.**

Number eight: big teams need a smaller team within the team. Mars Hill's a big team, right? Ten campus, couple dozen services, I don't know, forty-something elders and growing. I don't know how many hundreds of deacons, hundreds of community group leaders. There are a lot of big teams, need smaller teams within the teams. So Jesus has the seventy. They're mentioned as a number in the Bible. The twelve that he's appointing as apostles, and within that team he's got Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Peter's the senior leader, but the inner team of leaders, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

They're listed together. They get special access to Jesus. They get special training from Jesus, and they make certain decisions that others don't get to make. So teams within the teams.

## 9. HURT BEFORE FRUIT.

Number nine: hurt before fruit. Who's on the team? Who's the last guy listed? Judas. That one hurt. Do you think it hurt Jesus? Years feeding this guy, loving this guy, training this guy, praying for this guy, investing in this guy. This guy betrays you with a kiss for thirty pieces of silver so you can get murdered. That hurts. Do you think it hurt the disciples? "Judas? We thought he was our friend. He was in our community group with Jesus. He murdered Jesus." Imagine somebody in your community group murders the leader of your community group. Does that affect the community group? Yeah. What in the world? It hurt. You think the disciples had some late-night conversations, "What happened with Judas? What happened? I mean, what, he was stealing money from our ministry the whole time? The guy was a con man? He didn't even love Jesus, are you serious?" It hurt.

You think it hurt the followers? You think for a while there were rumblings? "Maybe Judas is the bold one. Maybe Judas is the courageous one. Maybe Judas is like the Old Testament prophets, and he's up against Jesus and the disciples 'cause they're wrong." Religious people are already criticizing Jesus. Do you think they love Judas? "Yeah Judas, throw some rocks at him. We don't like him either." I'm not glad that he hung himself, but it did simplify things. Had Judas not hung himself, he might have started his own ministry, his own church, competed with the disciples. We could have had war. We could have had war. I'm so glad he didn't plant a church, start a ministry, just go do somewhere else what he was doing with Jesus.

See, there's sheep, there's shepherds, there's wolves, and some lead as shepherds, others lead as wolves. Judas was a wolf. It hurt. But in the providence of God and the sovereignty of God—God did not make Judas sin. He sinned of his own accord. He was ripping Jesus off. He opened his heart to Satan. He has nobody to blame but himself. But in the providential sovereignty of God, God used it for good. Hurt became fruit. Genesis 50:20 says that, "God will take what is intended for evil and use it for good in the saving of many lives." Judas' betrayal and murder of Jesus was intended for evil, and God used it for good and the saving of many lives. A few billion of us today claim to be Christians, and say that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. God took the worst horror and made it the greatest gift. That's how God works. Romans 8, "God works out all things for the good of those who love him, and are called according to his purpose," all things.

Have you ever been betrayed? Have you ever been absolutely devastated by someone who is supposed to be a friend? God could use that. God wants to use that so that it's not just hurt, but that hurt becomes fruit. You've been raped, work it through, help the rape victims. You've been cheated on, work it through, help those who have been sinned against. You're dad left, work it through, become a good dad, and train others to be good dads. Your spouse has committed adultery, work it through, help those who have been devastated by adultery. You got cancer, use it to help others who are battling cancer.

Alright, hurt becomes fruit. And I'll tell you, this is the painful part of ministry. I mean, I can honestly tell you, there are people I pray for every single day 'cause it's just a deep, brutal, non-stop ache in my soul. No, man, that—I just, they're not walking with Jesus. They're shipwrecking their own life, doctrinally, maritally, sexually, financially, whatever it is. It's just bad. It just feels like a noose around the neck that they've picked, and they're determined to self-destruct. It hurts, and you want good for those people but ultimately, God can turn the hurt into fruit. And that's a painful lesson for all leaders.

## 10. DON'T GO DIOTREPHES.

Number ten: don't go Diotrephes. And I know you were all thinking about this on the way in, so I thought I would hit it. You're like, "Yes, Diotrephes. I've been meditating on that at great length, and I was wondering what our position was at Mars Hill on Diotrephes." Diotrephes is a guy who's only mentioned once in the Bible in one of the epistles written by John and it says this, "Diotrephes always wanted to be first." If they're gonna put your name in the Bible for one thing, that's pretty sad. He was really proud, and he always wanted to have all the attention.

Now, the truth is some leaders will get attention. Some of us, more than we like, at least certain kinds of attention. But the sin of Diotrephes is, "I don't want to be on the team, I gotta be the face of the team. I don't want to just humbly serve, I want my name to be famous." And we live in that sort of celebrity-addicted culture where people get famous who don't even do anything. Isn't that weird? You ever watch *TMZ* or pick up a *People* magazine? You're like, "All these people are famous and they didn't do anything." I mean, some people are just famous, like there's their dog in their handbag, and what did they do? Nothing. Why are they famous? Because we're desperate to talk about somebody. And the sin of Diotrephes is, "I want them to talk about me, not Jesus."

Jesus chooses twelve apostles, but they all don't get the same press. If you read the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and if you read Acts together, Peter is mentioned 189 times. John, 50. Philip, 17. Andrew, 13. Thomas, 11. Matthew, also called Levi, some of these guys have two names, 9. James the son of Alphaeus, 7. Thaddeus or Judas, he had two names and you know why. There were two disciples with the name Judas; the other guy was really bummed, right? "So what do you do?" "I'm an apostle." "What's your name?" "Judas." "Oh, I heard about you." "No, I'm the other Judas, call me Thaddeus. I'm not rolling with Judas anymore." Simon the Zealot, four times. Bartholomew, also called Nathaniel, same man, is mentioned once. Judas Iscariot, 22.

Here's the deal, some of these people like Peter, get mentioned a lot, others, hardly at all. Like here's what I would tell you, you're—if you want to do a really simple Bible study, do one on Bartholomew, right? You could Tweet his whole life story 'cause that's all we know. His name is Bartholomew, he was an apostle. I don't even need all the characters. That's all I got. We don't know much. Peter we know, oh, he's impetuous. Cut a guy's ear. Oh, we know lots about Peter. Thomas, he's the doubter. Thomas has one bad day. That's the one day he made the press. It's like "Come on, man, I finished well." He had a bad day, so we're just gonna keep talking about that one. And other people, we don't know anything about.

So here's the deal, on a team, especially a good diverse weird team, some people are gonna be real prominent, others less prominent. Some are gonna get a lot of press time, others not so much. Be okay with that. Some of you, God's called you to be up front. Don't be cowards. Some of you, God's called to lead, visibly, publicly. Don't be cowards. Others of you, that's not you. Be number two, be behind the scenes. Be number three, help it happen, get it done. The truth is these guys were all doing important stuff, some of them we just don't know what it was 'cause they weren't up front, they were behind the scenes. And you know what? That's important too. And I say that with all sincerity.

## 11. DIE WITH YOUR BOOTS ON.

Number eleven, last one: die with your boots on. It's a great close. Die with your boots on. You're either gonna go out like Judas or Jesus, that's how your life is gonna end. You're gonna go out like Jesus, faithful to the end, whatever the cost, or you're gonna go out like Judas, prematurely, tragically, rebelliously, shamefully. Every one of you is gonna finish like Jesus or Judas. I want you to keep your boots on, finish strong, run your race, see it through to the end, be a completer, a finisher, a closer of the things God has given you to do. And as you read this, maybe you're like me, you may wonder, "What happened to these guys?" We know in the Bible, they went forward, some of them were cowards, but they toughened up. The resurrection put some steel in their spine. They preached, they taught, they planted churches. John wrote five books of the Bible, Peter wrote two. These guys did get some stuff done, but the Bible doesn't tell us how they finished, for that we've gotta go to history. Did they die with their boots on? And I'll read for you some of their stories, historically from *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It was first written in 1559, and it's fantastic. Gotta love the Puritans.

James—wonder how James died?

The first apostle to suffer after the martyrdom of Stephen was James, the brother of John. Clement tells us when this James was brought to the tribunal seat, he that brought him and was the cause of his trouble seeing him to be condemned and that he should suffer death was in such sort, moved within heart and conscience that he went to the execution and confessed himself false of his own accord to be a Christian. And so were they led forth together, where in the way he desired of James to forgive him what he had done. After James had a little pause with himself upon the matter, turning to him he said, "Peace to thee, my brother," and kissed him and both were beheaded.

James had a critic who wanted him murdered. He had a Judas and on the way to be crucified, apparently he had some conversation with his Judas, and his Judas repented, said, "I'm sorry. Let's get beheaded together for Jesus," and they did. James is a bad man in a good way.

Thomas—"Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Carmanians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and Margians." Say it fast and bold and everybody thinks you're saying it right. "He was killed in Calamina, India." Most of these men died murderous martyrdom. You know what? Mars Hill would be much smaller but much holier, more effective, more fruitful, I think, if we had a little bit of suffering. Can't make it happen, can't make it happen, I've tried. But what happens is when people start giving their life for the cause of the gospel, all of a sudden those who are playing church, stop playing. They either step up for Jesus, and go from "come and see" to "go and die," or like Judas, they just walk away and go do something else.

Simon—"Simon, brother of Jude and James the younger who were all the sons of Mary Cleophas and Alphaeus, was bishop of Jerusalem after James," Jesus' brother. "He was crucified in Egypt," crucified. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says it well, the old German, said, "When Christ calls a man, he calls him to come and die." Come and die. When Jesus says, "Pick up your cross and follow me," that's what it means to be a disciple, that you go the way of Jesus. You give your life for what he gave his life to, the glory of God and the good of others for the church. "The other Simon, the apostle, he was also crucified."

"Bartholomew is said to have preached in India and translated the Gospel of Matthew into their tongue, he was beaten, crucified, and beheaded."

Andrew—

Andrew, Peter's brother, was crucified. Bernard and St. Cyprian mentioned the confession and martyrdom of this blessed apostle. Partly from them and partly from other reliable writers, we gather the following material: "When Andrew, through his diligent preaching had brought many to the faith of Christ, Egeas the governor asked permission to the Roman senate to force all Christians to sacrifice to and honor the Roman idols. Andrew thought he should resist Egeas and went to him, telling them that a judge of men should first know and worship as judge in heaven. 'While worshiping the true God,' Andrew said, 'he should banish all false gods and blind idols from his mind.' Furious at Andrew, Egeas demanded to know if he was the man who had recently overthrown the temples of the gods and persuaded men to become Christians, a 'superstitious' sect that had recently been declared illegal by the Romans. Andrew replied that, 'The rulers of Rome didn't understand the truth. The son of God who came into the world for man's sake taught that the Roman gods were devils, enemies of mankind teaching men to offend God, and causing him to turn away from them. By serving the devil, men fall into all kinds of wickedness.' Andrew said, 'And after they die, nothing but their evil deeds are remembered.' The proconsul ordered Andrew not to preach these things anymore or he would face a speedy crucifixion." [If you were gonna get crucified, would you stop calling yourself a Christian?] "Whereupon Andrew replied," [and this is an amazing line] "'I would not have preached the honor and glory of the cross if I feared the death of the cross.' He was condemned to be crucified for teaching a new sect and taking away the religion of the Roman gods. Andrew, going toward the place of execution, and seeing the cross waiting for him, never changed his expression, neither did he fail in his speech. His body fainted not, nor did his reason fail him as often happens to men about to die. He said, 'Oh cross, most welcome and longed for, with a willing mind, joyfully and desirously I come to you being the scholar of him which did hang on you because I have always been your lover and yearn to embrace you.'"

"You boys want to crucify me? There's a good spot, go for it. I belong to Jesus."

Matthew—"Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews in the Hebrew tongue after he had converted Ethiopia and all Egypt. Hircanius, the king, sent someone to kill him with a spear."

Philip—After years of preaching to the barbarous nations, Philip was stoned, crucified, and buried with his daughter.

Peter:

The first of the ten persecutions was stirred up by Nero about 64 A.D. His rage against Christians was so fierce that Eusebius records, "a man might then see cities full of men's bodies, the old lying together with the young, and the dead bodies of women cast out naked without reverence of that sex in the open streets." Many Christians in those days thought that Nero was the Antichrist because of his cruelty and abominations. The Apostle Peter was condemned to death during this persecution. Although some say that he escaped, it is known that many Christians encouraged him to leave the city and the story goes that as he came to the city gates, Peter saw Jesus coming to meet him. "Lord, where are you going?" Peter asked. "I am coming again to be crucified," was the answer. Seeing that his suffering was understood, Peter turned around, returned to the city where Jerome tells us he was crucified upside down at his own request, saying he was not worthy to be crucified the same way his Lord was.

Lastly, John—"The second persecution began during the reign of Domitian, the brother of Titus. Domitian exiled John to the island of Patmos." It's an actual spot and I've been there. "But on Domitian's death, John was allowed to return to Ephesus in the year A.D. 70. He remained there until the reign of Trajan, governing the churches of Asia, and writing his gospel until he died at about the age of one hundred." But at a hundred, he may have had a lot of scars on his body, because before they exiled him, they tried to kill him. They boiled him alive, and he lived through it, so they exiled him for a while. He got out and wrote books of the Bible, as a boiled old man. We're glad you come and see. You need to go and die.

Father God, I pray for us as a people. We're in a day where we get a lot of come and see. There's free sermons on the Internet, classes, trainings, Christian music, radio stations, radio preachers, church events, mass crusades, services, small groups. It seems, Lord God, like there are more come-and-see opportunities than any people have ever been offered in the history of the world. And God, we rejoice in the come-and-see opportunities. We rejoice that people come to hear the Bible and see lives change through Jesus. But God, I pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit and the hearts and minds and the lives of our people, that they would respond to your call to become Christians, that they would respond to your call to persevere as Christians, that they would give like Christians should give, that they would serve like Christians should serve, that they would suffer like Christians should suffer, that they should testify like Christians should testify, that Lord God, I pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit on us as a people that we wouldn't just be a come-and-see people, that we'd be a go-and-die people. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*[End of Audio]*

*Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.*