

Chosen for Obedience

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the significance of obedience in the calling of the apostles and the spiritual implications of their selection by Jesus.

Duration: 1:22:13

Scripture: Matthew 9:37 - 10:1, Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 3:14-15, Ephesians 4:25-26, Ephesians 4:28

Topics: "Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of delivering a clear and concise message. He expresses his dislike for long sermons that cause people to lose focus and become restless. The preacher encourages the congregation to be attentive and quiet their hearts to hear the word of God. He highlights the need for believers to live out the teachings of Jesus before preaching to others. The sermon references Mark chapter 3 and emphasizes the importance of practicing what one preaches.

Transcript

We thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to sit at your feet. We remember how Mary sat at your feet. She forgot about everything else and was just attentive to hear what you say.

Now help us not to be like Martha who was busy with so many other things and distracted but that we will quieten our hearts and listen to your word. Thank you, Lord, for the privilege that we can meet around your word, not around beer pots or other worldly things, but around your holy word. Be in our midst as you promised that you would be.

Touch our hearts and our minds through your holy spirit. Amen. Now we'll turn to Mark for our text, Mark chapter three.

Verse 13, and he went up on the mountain and called to him those he himself wanted, and they came to him. Then he appointed 12 that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach. And to have power to heal sicknesses and cast out demons, Simon to whom he gave the name Peter.

James, the son of Zebedee and John, the brother of James, to whom he gave the name Bernoughis. That is, sons of thunder. Andrea, Andrew, Philip, Matthew, Thomas, James, the son of Elphias, Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Read again verse 13. And he went up on the mountain and called to him those he himself wanted, and they came to him. Then he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach.

Let's stop reading there. I remember when I was still a small child, I wasn't even a teenager yet. And I said, oh Lord, it's really not fair that the disciples lived at a time when you were on this earth.

I would have rather lived at that time. And I always was sorry that I lived now and not at that time. And I then gave my life to the Lord and followed Him, and it was better.

But I still felt sorry that I didn't live at that time and that I was living today. But then, when I received the Holy Spirit, then I was satisfied. And then I said, Lord, now I'm happy.

And in fact, I said, I even am better off than the disciples before they received the Holy Spirit. Now, here we read about the calling of the twelve, the disciples of the Lord Jesus. That was no small thing, to be called, to be numbered among the twelve apostles of the Lord.

It's actually a very high position. In fact, it went together with the promise, because the Lord said to His disciples, as you are the twelve here, there are twelve thrones in the kingdom of heaven reserved for you. In fact, even Judas Iscariot had a marvelous promise just for him.

He was chosen by the Lord. Peter was the first one. And then James and John.

And the Lord gave them new names, because Peter previously was Simon. And the Lord said, Simon, from now on you'll be known as Peter. Now, He didn't say Petra.

Now, those that know Greek will know that there's a big difference between the word Petra and Petros. Petra or Peter is just a piece of a big stone. So, in the Greek, Peter stands for just a small rock that's broken off the big one, whereas Petra is a huge, massive mess of rock, like the rock of Gibraltar.

When the Lord asked the disciples, what do the people say, who am I? And He said, well, some people say you're John the Baptist that's come back to life, or Jeremiah, or one of the other great prophets that have come back to life. And He said, well, yes, I hear what the others say, but now what do you say, who am I? And Peter then said, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And the Lord said, Peter, this has not just been revealed to you by the flesh or by man, that's not human wisdom, this has been revealed to you by God in heaven.

And then He said, you are Peter, but on this Petra, I will build my church. So, the Petra was the Lord Jesus Himself, the one Peter referred to as the Son of the living God. On that rock, He will build His church.

And so He appointed Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter. And James and John. He gave them the name Baranagis.

That is, sons of thunder. Now, if one looks at John, and one studies his life and his character, one gets the impression he was a very soft-natured person. Yet the Lord, when He gave them new names, He referred to them and called them the sons of thunder.

And now, why is it that they were given this name of thunder? Is it because of their voices, that they had voices like thunder? Perhaps. But I think it refers more to their spiritual life. That is, they were like thunder in that sense.

Thunder shakes things. If you read the book he wrote, and what he wrote, I often say, well it's good he didn't live in this time that we live in today, because he would probably have been condemned by most Christians. He says, if someone claims to be a child of God, and yet he sins, he is a liar.

Do you hear that thunder? And he also writes about those that are children of God and those that are not. He says it's quite easy to know which group they belong to, a person belongs to. A child of God does not sin.

The one who sins belongs to the devil, is a child of the devil. Do you hear that thunder? He says, if someone claims to be a child of God, and yet he sins, he is a liar. Do you hear that thunder? And he also writes about those that are children of God and those that are not.

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Do you hear that thunder? And he also writes about those that are children of God and those that are not. Do you hear that thunder? And in fact, they were in a very high position. And in fact, they were in a very high position.

In fact, the history of Christianity was started through them. They were involved as the founders. They were the founding fathers.

They laid the foundation. The one mentioned last is Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. He was the treasurer, and often when people made their donations, he would take off that money and just put it in his own pocket, 5 cent, 10 cent.

In fact he had a very responsible position among the apostles because he was the treasurer. But he was not faithful in money matters. And the Lord Jesus said if you are not faithful in money matters, the Heavenly Father cannot bestow upon you His Spirit and His gifts.

And if you are a thief, then remember that your eldest brother is Judas Iscariot, and your surname is Thief. And you take after your oldest brother, Judas Iscariot, he is your oldest brother. You are in that same family because you are unfaithful with money, just as Judas was.

So if you are not faithful with money, even if it's a farthing, if it's a cent, you make that right before the sun goes down today, otherwise you'll end up with the same fate as Judas, who betrayed the Lord, and his death was terrible. He committed suicide, hanged himself, hanged himself. Now we don't know whether the rope snapped, or whether the branch broke, which he was had hung it onto, but he fell to the ground, and his stomach burst open, and all his dirt came out, and everything was full of it.

That's what history says. Now, they probably get that from the report in the Bible where it says that he fell, and his stomach burst open, and his insides came out. Now you know what those insides are, it usually comes out in the toilet.

Now, that's what the Bible actually does say, not just what church history says, that he did fall, and his stomach burst open. So, one understands why he is mentioned last. Even though he had that wonderful promise that there was a throne reserved in heaven for him, he lost out on all of that.

Now Peter also denied the Lord, but when he had done it, he realized what he had done. There was godly sorrow, and he repented from it. Now, Judas also eventually admitted that he had made a mistake, but then he went to the wrong people to go and admit it.

He went to the high priests, to the very people who had crucified the Lord, so if you want to make right your sin, don't go to the wrong people, and go as a blind person to other blind people to lead you. He should have been sorry for what he had done, and so he went, he admitted it, he even brought the money back to the people that had given it to him. He said, I have betrayed innocent blood.

But they couldn't help him. They couldn't help this poor man. He was in desperate need and trouble, but they couldn't help him.

They were just indifferent and said, well, what has that got to do with us, instead of them being able to help him and saying, look, even if your sin is a scarlet, it can be washed whiter than snow. If you confess your sin, God is faithful, he can forgive you, and will forgive you. So, even though he eventually admitted his sin, he said, I have betrayed you, and I will He went to the wrong people with it, to the wrong people to find help.

He should have gone to his fellow disciples and said, brothers, I have sinned. I have sinned grievously, and it didn't just start now, I have been stealing all along. And Peter could have shared his testimony with him and said, but you know, Judas, I also sinned, but what helped me is when my eyes met with the eyes of the Lord, I realized how grievously I had sinned, and I asked the Lord for forgiveness, and he forgave me.

So, you as a counselor need to be on the station, you need to be able to help people that come to you for help, that you won't be a blind person leading the blind. Now, if someone comes to you, And if someone comes to you with a problem, and there's a sin that's just got the better of him, and it goes on and on and on, he comes to you now, and next year, and the year thereafter, just has no end, nothing changes. Well, if you were a doctor, and you've helped and treated a patient and didn't help, that doctor would refer that patient to a specialist to get some special help.

He gives him some medication, antibiotic, and it didn't help him, and once again, and if he's not helped, he sends him to the specialist, refers him to the specialist. But you, if you carry on, carry on, carry on, then you've got to ask yourself, are you a rotten potato as well? All right, now these were just like words of introduction, so let's just go back to our text. First point.

Jesus went up on the mountain. He climbed up that mountain. Being a Christian means climbing a mountain.

Psalm 24. Who will ascend the hill in the mountain of the Lord? Who will receive the blessing of the Lord? So if you want God's blessing, you need to climb that mountain. Now, that doesn't mean you must go to any high mountain in the area like the Blinkwater and climb there, that mountain to go and pray up there.

No, this has a spiritual meaning. I'm always worried when people speak like that, when they say, no, I go up a mountain and that's where I pray. We once had a student who was very troubled, who was studying in Cape Town, and he also used to say, no, he goes up the mountain and he prays alone there.

But then the problem was he'd go up the mountain and go and pray there. And when he was up there, then a voice would say, but what are you doing here? You should be in class, attending class, because you'll never pass at the end of the year. Then he'd go back again.

And eventually I said to him, I said, look, if you carry on like this, you'll go off your head. It has a spiritual meaning, which means you need to ascend the mountain of the Lord. In other words, you need to make progress, reach greater heights than before.

You need to be growing spiritually, but it also refers to going deeper. Now those two things actually mean the same thing, just to go further and deeper and reaching greater heights with the Lord. Now I have to stop on that point now, otherwise I won't get halfway through the message.

In many churches, the preacher would now be saying amen already because he just preaches for 20 minutes and then it's over. But it's interesting, you sit for hours in front of the TV. But to be honest, I also don't like these long sermons.

So I don't like it when you have to sit in a service and you eventually don't know how to sit anymore. And all you notice is how long the service is. You don't even notice anymore what's being said.

I like it when the message is clear and to the point and not that you remember the length of the service when you leave it. So if you really can't sit anymore, then rather stand up and we can see that you're tired and I can maybe even arrange a bed for you then you can go and lie down. And I don't know, maybe it's also because I'm getting older and I realize my time is limited and yet my heart is so full, there's so many things I would still like to say.

All right, so let's pass to another point. Now Luke refers to this incident where and then he says that Jesus went up the mountain to pray. And that he prayed through the night.

I believe he must have been praying so earnestly regarding these apostles, who they should be, who they were the right people to become the founding fathers of the faith. Now apostle means messenger, one who is sent. He was about to appoint those or select those.

And so he was in this earnest prayer through the night, praying. And in the morning he met up with a crowd. Or crowds because multitudes followed him.

So here he got to this multitude. There were multitudes. And then he went and he then went and by name called them.

He said Peter, come. John, come. Or James.

And then John called them by name. He didn't take, he didn't take a call all of them and he didn't say well it's it's free those who want to can can come. He selected these specifically.

There had been, they weren't the only ones that had been following the Lord. There were many others who were often and constantly with them. Even young people that were part of that multitude.

They left everything and just followed him. And then like in Acts when we read later after Judas had betrayed him, the disciples, the apostles said let us now find someone to fill the place of Judas who was unfaithful. But let's not just choose anyone.

We need someone who was with us and with the Lord from the time of the baptism of John right through right to the end who was constantly there. And then eventually there were two candidates that qualified who had been with the Lord constantly from the baptism right through to his death. And then the apostles said but Lord now you must show us which one of these two it will be.

Now why do I mention this? That he was probably praying for the commissioning of these disciples and apostles. And why do I say so? The Lord Jesus said the harvest is great but the workers of the few pray that the Lord of the harvest will send workers to help bring in the harvest. If we need disciples we need to pray and ask the Lord our Heavenly Father to send workers to help with great work.

Then he called the twelve. Why twelve? In the Old Testament there were twelve tribes in Israel and so it was a continuation of that theme. Oh yeah there were twelve tribes and so it should continue.

And by that he was also showing that it was not the end of the Old Testament but a continuation of it the fulfillment of it. Some people say the Old Testament is no longer relevant just the New Testament is. I once heard someone myself who said that oh if we have to believe and practice what the Old Testament teaches then we wouldn't be allowed to eat pig meat, pork.

So the Old Testament is just a shadow of what was to come. Just like I say that when the Lord said going up the mountain we should go up the mountain doesn't mean a physical mountain it has a spiritual meaning. So when the Lord Jesus came it didn't come to do away with the Old Testament but rather that it is the fulfillment of what the Old Testament stood for.

So as the multitudes were there gathered he mentioned one name after the other he said so and so just come here so and so come here to me. So he didn't just call everybody in this instance but he called to himself. He said he himself wanted.

So he called. So he called them out of the crowd that they should separate themselves from the others. The crowd that was there he even called them away from their work.

He wanted them to be with him alone that they be dedicated to him that they spend time in his university which is the greatest university of all time. Now what is so great and wonderful to me is that they all

responded. They obeyed him they came to him and left everything else and came to be with him.

They obeyed him. Now we can say but why did he choose these specific men. Peter James John Thomas.

Why was it these men specifically. Did he choose them because they were clever. Intelligent.

Or because they were respected or people in high positions. Or whether they had because they had special faith. Or powerful people.

Or because they had very many gifts and talents. No. No he called them because they obeyed him.

When he called them they obeyed. They didn't argue with him. They just did what he commanded.

A general was once asked if he had to enlist a soldier into his army and he had two candidates the one strong man brave afraid of nothing. But he didn't always follow instructions as he should. Or someone and the other candidate someone who's timid rather afraid and not like the other one but always prepared to obey and to follow instructions.

And the general said well don't even talk to me about that brave man. If he's not prepared to follow instructions I don't want him in the least. Give me the other one that's timid but is prepared to follow instructions.

Can you obey. Or are you stubborn. Stiff necked.

You listen when you want to you don't listen when you don't want to. You just go against what others say when you feel like it. Overseas I met someone who told me this story.

Somebody there started a Bible school. And when people wanted to attend the school he tested them first. And then someone came who had been to university and he had had training with trees pruning trees and he was a specialist at that.

So he took this man. To a fruit orchard apple tree orchard and he said here is a pruning some pruning scissors. Please can you prune these trees for me.

And he said oh yes I'll gladly help you that actually I'm that's that's what I studied. I know how to do it. And then he said to this man he says well let me just show you he said come here here you see this tree.

I want you to cut off this branch and he purposely told him the wrong branch. And he went from one tree to the next and he told them all the wrong things he said this is what I want you to do here and there. Everything that was not supposed to have been done he said well go ahead.

After a while he came back to see what this man had done. And when he got there he found that this man had done everything exactly according to the instruction he had given him. Which he knew was the wrong thing to do.

But this man that had studied it knew exactly how the right thing was but he had done it according to how this man had instructed. He took that student. And he said.

So they obeyed except for the last one who wasn't obedient. And his end as we heard was that he fell and his insides just burst out. So I'm just really touching the fringe of all these things.

And then he appointed twelve that they might be with him that he might send them. In God's kingdom only one thing works. And that's his will.

Not your will. Not your parents will. Not your brothers and sisters will.

Only one thing is relevant and is needed and that's the will of God. Those he wanted. And it wasn't the mothers that determined.

It wasn't the mothers who came and said well here's my child. It's quite a clever child. Got good results at school.

Very talented. No. What was relevant was the one that he wanted and he chose.

The Lord said it's not all those that say Lord, Lord and say all the wonderful things they did in his name. He says it's but it's those that will enter the kingdom of heaven are those that have done the will of the Father. He had the mission in the church.

One thing must be relevant and that is God's will. That his will is done. That's why the Lord Jesus said that if someone wants to be my disciple and he doesn't turn his back on everything else, he cannot be my disciple.

And that even relates to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He gives each one a gift as he wills. Some people say oh but I want all the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

All nine of them. I want every one. Or other people say but you must have this gift or that gift.

That's nonsense. That's not how it works. What works is what God's will is.

Is that what your life looks like? And so we can be like even I was at that time where I thought oh my they were so privileged. They were chosen. They were called.

They were given this and that responsibility and even now one can have that attitude and say but why are those chosen and not me? Even being jealous of them. And sometimes even when just the disciples were together. Just the twelve of them.

Sometimes even then the Lord would say Peter, James, John just come along with me. And he'd just choose those three. Not all of them.

It works according to his will. And so it works according to his will where he calls them and then they come to him. And then he instructs them.

He teaches them God's words and he's their teacher. And we can say oh they were so privileged that they were chosen among the thousands. They were privileged.

And let me tell you what the Bible says. In Ephesians it says before the foundations of the earth were laid he already had chosen you. He chose you.

He called you. He appointed you to be dedicated wholly unto him to live a perfect and a holy life unto him. Often in the Bible even with the prophets it was often said that God says he chose you.

He called you while you were still in your mother's womb. He called you by your name. But then it goes even further than that.

Where it says even before the foundations of the earth were laid he already then called you by your name. Do you hear that? Do you realize the implication of that? Even the church itself in the Greek the ecclesia which meaning the chosen ones. You see God has chosen his people his church.

Are you aware that you have been chosen, that you have been called by your name? God has called you out from the crowd and from the world, separated you unto himself. And now tell me, do you live in like fashion? Is that how your life, what your life reflects? And you heard, are you aware of that? If you are aware, do you live accordingly from morning till sunset, from sunset to sunrise? Even if you are amidst the crowds, that you know, I'm a chosen one and I've got to live accordingly. And woe to me if I don't and I just live like all the people in this world.

And anyone can say, yes, there is the world, people do things this way, that way, that's how they do it. But I have been called, I've been chosen to be close to the Lord, to be dedicated, separated unto himself, so that he may teach and instruct me and that I in turn may go out and take the message to others. But how can you go out and preach to others when you yourself don't, haven't been taught? And if you don't keep it, because the Lord Jesus says, go and teach them to keep and do all that, which I have commanded you, but how can you do it? How can you tell them don't steal when you steal? And you tell them don't lie and you're a liar, don't get angry and you get angry.

A true messenger of Jesus Christ prays, Lord, speak to me so that I can speak to them. Yes. How can you go to someone else and say, you must obey when you yourself don't even do it? You want people to repent, to become Christians.

You want them to listen when you yourself don't even listen. If you want them to repent, you repent first. If you want them to hear God's voice, then you must first hear God's voice that he can reveal himself to you first, and that heavenly mystery is revealed to you in your own life.

Do you have an ear to hear? Do you have an ear to hear? Have you taken note of these points? Have you noted them that you will go out and do them? If you don't, then you're not one of the 12. Let's bow our heads and pray. Our Lord, grant us wisdom, not worldly or demonic wisdom, but heavenly, divine wisdom.

Reveal to us, Lord, what you're saying to us through your holy word. We hear how you called the 12, how you called them unto yourself. You taught them and then you sent them.

Now, Lord, we've heard this morning that you didn't just choose and call them, but you chose us. You chose us. You called us, not just when we were in our mother's womb, but right at the very beginning of the earth, before the foundations were laid.

Now, Lord, you know whether we are children of obedience or of disobedience. We know where the disobedient will end and where those that are obedient will end. How glorious and wonderful their end will be.

Amen. Amen. Now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all, that grace that enables us not just to be hearers, but doers of what he says.

That we won't just be illegitimate children, but true, obedient children of God.

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