

'He Appointed twelve.'- Mar 3:14

by G. Campbell Morgan

Our Lord's election of the twelve was based on reason within personality, choosing from within, the choosing of His own sovereignty, and He appointed them to be with Him and to go forth to preach and to have authority to cast out demons.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Mark 3:14, John 15:16

Topics: "Divine Calling", "Apostolic Ministry"

Description

G. Campbell Morgan emphasizes the significance of Jesus' deliberate choice of the twelve apostles, highlighting that their selection was based on His sovereign will and purpose. He explains that Jesus appointed them not only to be with Him for intimate training but also to send them out to preach and exercise authority over evil spirits. Morgan reflects on the unique characteristics of each apostle, noting that while they were imperfect, they were chosen for their potential and the power Jesus would provide. He concludes with a call for believers to recognize their own calling and the responsibility that comes with it, reminding them that Jesus is responsible for their effectiveness in ministry.

Transcript

Mar 3:7-19a.

THE opposition to the Servant of God was by no means universal, nor indeed at the time was it general. Our Lord attracted men irresistibly, and among them He exercised a ministry of mighty and prevailing power. When the coalition of Pharisees and Herodians took counsel to destroy Him, He withdrew to the sea f and here again Mark summarizes the story of very much service in a few sentences. The multitudes grew in number, and gathered from all quarters. Not only did the Galilean crowds go after Him. There were also those who had travelled north from Judaea, and among them were some from Jerusalem itself. They came moreover from Idumsea, that is from Edom; from the region beyond Jordan, that is the region usually described as Persea; and from Tyre and Sidon. From all these places they came, the fame of Jesus having travelled far and wide; they came to hear His words, observe His works, and share in the benefits which He was so lavishly conferring upon men. Those with plagues pressed upon Him, in order that they might touch Him, and receive His healing; wherever He went, unclean spirits recognizing His presence, confessed Him Son of God, only to be silenced and cast out from their possession of men. In order to escape a while from the pressure of these crowds, He secured a little boat from which, in all probability, He taught the people, and in which He may have sailed away to some other place. That, I

think, is the inference of the story.

At this juncture He selected His apostles. Going up into a mountain He called twelve from among His disciples. This was action in advance, preparatory to a wider ministry, before the hour of His arrest and passion. Hostility had manifested itself to Him in Judaea, and He had left that region when John was imprisoned, and had begun His ministry in Galilee. Hostility manifested itself to Him in Nazareth, as He passed on His way to Capernaum. In Capernaum itself it had already been manifested when the scribes and Pharisees criticized Him for forgiving sins, and it had grown until now the Pharisees and Herodians were taking counsel to destroy Him. He knew that the hour would come when they would be successful; for that was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and ere that hour arrived He would increase the scope of His own ministry. This He did by calling into yet closer cooperation with Himself a certain number of men in order that they might exercise an immediate ministry, and thus be prepared for that larger ministry which should follow His exodus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The story then of this paragraph is full of value in this matter of His appointment of some within the circle of discipleship, to special relationship with Himself, and to special service in fellowship with Himself. Already all His disciples were witnesses to Him. Those who had yielded their allegiance were those who spread His fame far and wide as they told the story of what He had done for them. It was His intention, as we know full well, that to the end of time all His disciples should be witnesses for Him. Nevertheless, it was necessary, within the circle of those earliest disciples, to call some into special relationship, and into special fellowship in service. Let us observe three things; first, His election of the twelve, "He calleth unto Him whom He Himself would: and they went unto Him"; secondly, His appointment of those whom He elected, "He appointed them that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons"; and finally, His distinctions within the circle of the twelve; three He surnamed, and the rest He did not.

First then as to this matter of our Lord's election of the twelve. I have most resolutely chosen the word "election" for it brings us face to face with the central fact, a fact which is of supreme importance. The words of Mark read thus, "He goeth up into the mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He Himself would, and they went unto Him." Now if we put that statement into the order of its procedure, we must begin at the centre first, "Whom He Himself would"; secondly, "He calleth unto Him," that is those already chosen; and finally, "they went unto Him," that is those chosen and called.

"Whom He Himself would"; that is, those whom He preferred. The word suggests an active option resulting from a subjective impulse. There is another word in our New Testament which might be translated in the same way, but which does not at all mean the same thing. There is a verb which we translate "to will" which suggests passive acquiescence, the decision of the mind which is the result of objective considerations, the thought being that of disposition toward a certain action as the result of facts without. That is not the word of Mark here. This word suggests self-determining sovereignty, choice based upon reason within personality. "Whom He Himself would." He was entirely uninfluenced by temporary appeals. No appeal that any man might have made to Him would have influenced Him in the least. No protests of inability that any man might have suggested would have changed His purpose. His choosing was choosing from within, the choosing of His own sovereignty; a choosing therefore in which He assumed all responsibility for what He did. "He called unto Him twelve, whom He Himself would." That is the fundamental fact.

His choice proceeded out of His infinite wisdom and understanding. When He called them, it was not because they had asked to be called; and when He called them, there was no room for protests of inability. He assumed responsibility.

Those whom He Himself had thus chosen He called unto Himself, and by that call first set them free from all responsibility; and secondly, imposed upon them serious responsibility. He set them free from all responsibility. If there were any mistake, He made it. They were not responsible. If there were defects in them, He must deal with them and remedy them. They were not responsible. They did not choose to be His apostles, and at the last, in the Paschal discourses He said to them with infinite tenderness, and yet with wonderful illumination, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." That was surely a word of infinite comfort to those men to the end of their ministry. There is an infinite ease in doing things He gives us to do, when we can say to Him, Lord, we did not choose this. Thou art responsible!

And yet that call brought them into a place of very definite and real responsibility. It called them to confidence in the wisdom of His choice. How much these men must have needed this, in subsequent hours of fear and failure, of faltering and denial. It called them also to obedience to His commands, and therefore to yield to His power.

Think of the comfort of all this. Truly it was a strange and mixed group of men; not many mighty, not many wise; some of them full of that human force which compels attention, some of them unobtrusive and willing to be obscure. Yet they were His choice, and He chose them in the interest of the work. He had chosen them because they already had powers which He needed. He had chosen them because they were capable of appropriating the power He supplied.

In his Theological Essays R. H. Hutton has this most interesting paragraph:

"The chosen apostles themselves misunderstand and misinterpret their Master. Peter, after being told that his confession is the rock on which the Church should be built, is spoken of as a tempter and an offence to his Master, as one who savours not of the things which are of God, but of those which are of men. John is twice rebuked, once for his revengeful spirit, once for his shortsighted ambition. Judas's treachery is predicted. All the twelve are warned that they will fail at the hour of Christ's trial, and that warning, like the more individual prediction addressed to Peter, is certainly most unlikely to have been conceived after the event. In a word, from beginning to end of the Gospels, we have evidence which no one could have managed to forge, that Christ deliberately chose materials of which it would have been impossible for any one to build a great organization, unless he could otherwise provide, and continue to provide, the power by which that organization was to stand."

All that is true. When He chose those men He did indeed choose men utterly inadequate to the doing of His work, knowing that He Himself could empower them to do it; but it is also true that He chose men in whom there were capacities which He would sanctify and employ. That is a principle never to be forgotten. I sometimes hear it said that God chooses men entirely unfitted for certain work by nature, and fits them by grace. I deny it absolutely. There is no such discord between God's original creation of a man, and His use of him for the purposes of His work. How often have I heard it said that D. L. Moody was a man with no natural gift of speech. I deny it. Those who knew Moody best would agree that had he never been a Christian man he would yet have been a master of assemblies, an orator, sweeping and swaying men by the force of his natural eloquence. Upon that capacity God fastened, sanctified it, cleansed it, filled it with

the true fire, gave him the godly vision, and made him the mightiest evangelist of the last century.

So, when our Lord chose these men, He chose them, knowing His power and their powers; and knowing that in the fact of their cession to Him, and His cession of Himself to them in the Spirit's fellowship, He had found the men best suited to the doing of His work.

Let us proceed to consider what Mark tells us concerning the appointment of the men thus elected. He appointed them to two things; first to be with Him; and secondly that He might send them forth to preach and to have authority to cast out demons.

The first was initial, preparatory, fundamental, and necessary. He appointed them to be with Him. The immediate application of the words undoubtedly was, that He called them at this time in some senses-all the details of which we cannot explain, for we have no record-into closer association with Himself. He called them to a special training which was to consist of more intimate nearness to Himself. I am inclined to think that from this hour, He spent a great deal of time in private with them, gave Himself to them more completely than He had done before, and began that process which was so marked in the latter part of His ministry, of withdrawing Himself from the multitudes, and devoting Himself more and more to them. He appointed them to be with Him.

This, however, does not for a moment exhaust the meaning of the phrase. The very preposition made use of is illuminative. The preposition with indicates the very closest association, an association which inevitably and invariably issues in resemblance, and consequently in true instrumentality. They became men through whom He could act unhindered. In the mystic mystery of Pentecost they became actual members of His body, mastered by His intelligence, driven by His emotions, governed by His volitions. In this sense also He appointed them to be with Him.

In the last great prayer of Christ He made use of this same preposition several times. First, "And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." That threefold use of that particular preposition illuminates its value in my text, "He appointed them to be with Him." Again, "While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition." And yet once more: "Father, I desire that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me."

I know how unsafe it may be to build doctrines upon prepositions, but there is much of suggestiveness in this; and in our Lord's use of this one in that great prayer, we have a revelation of union with His Father, of His giving of Himself to His disciples in the days of His flesh, and of His perpetual purpose for them that they should be with Him to behold His glory not in heaven only, but here in travail with Him, and presently in triumph.

Having appointed them to be with Him, He appointed them also to go forth to preach and to have authority to cast out demons. In a flash their relationship to Himself, to men, and to the underworld of evil is revealed. Their relationship to Himself was that He appointed them as His apostles. Originally the word means those who are set apart. Resultantly it means those who are sent forth. The suggestiveness of the word is that He only sends forth those whom He has set apart. This was their relationship to Himself. Wherever they went, and whatever they did, and whatever they said, they were His apostles, set apart to Him, and in the power of that setting apart, sent forth.

They were sent forth to preach. The word made use of here suggests that preaching which is the work of the herald. It was a common word in the Greek language, and from Homer was used to describe the work of the messengers of kings, magistrates, princes, military commanders, those vested with public authority. The word always suggests formality, gravity, an authority that must be listened to and obeyed. He sent that strange group of men, so mixed and so varied and so lacking in strength and wisdom, to preach.

He sent them, moreover, to have authority over demons; authority, not power; power was always His. They had authority to speak in His name, so that His power might become operative for the casting out of demons, and the mastery of the underworld of evil.

He appointed them, and the very word made use of here is poetic and beautiful with the poetry and the beauty of Greece. Paul writing his Ephesian letter, said, "We are His workmanship." That is the same root idea, and might be translated, We are His poems. His work is always a thing of beauty and a thing of use. His appointments are of the same character. Their appointment was infinitely more than official. It was an enabling. His appointment is His workmanship.

This was the secret of strength in both applications. He appointed them to be with Him, and because He appointed them to be with Him, they must be fitted for the fellowship. Because He appointed them to service, they must be strengthened for the service, difficult as it inevitably would be.

Thus we come to the last matter, one of interest and suggestiveness, that of His distinctions. He surnamed three of them, Peter and James and John. Our word surnamed is the translation of a phrase, which quite literally means He imposed a name upon them; the phrase itself suggesting a naming indicative of His authority, and the outcome of their character.

With His naming of Peter, we are all familiar. It has been the subject of many a consideration. He surnamed him prophetically when He first met him. That was Peter's introduction to Jesus. It came in that hour when Jesus, looking into his eyes said, "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called rock." Later at Caesarea Philippi, when Peter made his great confession, Jesus looked again into his eyes and said, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonah." He named him rock-the symbol of strength and solidity-the most changeable and vacillating man among them.

Now let it be observed that He did not name him something that he could not be. There was no contradiction of the true nature of this man in this name. It was a contradiction of the experience of the man, but not of his nature. Peter stands out on the New Testament page as the elemental man, the man in whom all elemental forces were found. He was a man of intellectual strength; a man of emotion; a man of marvellous volitional powers; strong-willed and yet weak and frail; all the elemental forces there, but lacking cohesion, consistency, because lacking a principle, which would weld them into strength. To him Jesus said, I have chosen you, Simon, and I have appointed you to be with Me, and to preach, and to cast out demons, and I impose a name upon you that will indicate what you will become. Peter would never have become rock apart from Christ, but the capacities that became rock were in his nature. What Christ did was to take hold of the elemental capacities which were in him by his first birth, and by supplying the one thing he lacked, to weld them into strength.

James and John He surnamed Boanerges. Now it is generally imagined that Jesus called these men Boanerges because of what they were. As a matter of fact, exactly the same principle obtained in their case, as in that of Peter. He named them for what He would make them, Boanerges, sons of Thunder; a poetic description of force and high enthusiasm. The capacities were there, and yet how different these

brothers were. John was poet, dreamer, and visionary. Of James we know little, and in that fact there is a revelation of the man; he was quiet and retiring. Christ saw the capacities of the men, and named them Boanerges, sons of Thunder. James, when for loyalty to his Lord, he yielded himself and died by the sword of Herod; and John, when in the Isle of Patmos, he saw his visions and wrote, were true sons of Thunder.

There were a number not surnamed. Some of them we know. Andrew, the first enquirer; Philip, the first whom Jesus really called; Bartholomew, undoubtedly Nathanael, the guileless; Matthew, the publican. Here are also some new names. We have not met them before in our study of this Gospel. Thomas, we shall find him presently, the magnificent sceptic; another James, about whom we know nothing; Thaddseus or Jude, whom we shall hear speak once in the upper room; Simon the Canaanite, that is, the Zealot, a member of a very troublesome political party who had now become a Christian and doubtless would bring his enthusiasm into Christianity, as he ought to do. That is all we know about these men.

Yes, but there is one other, a tragic figure, Judas. As the rest, he was chosen, called, appointed to be with Him and to preach and to have power over demons. And as God is my witness I hardly know how to speak of this thing, this appallingly solemn fact that He appointed one to be with Him who never by any means came into that close and mystic association which was his appointment; appointed one to preaching, whose preaching if it ever began, ceased, and changed into betrayal; that He appointed one to cast out demons, who so failed to respond, that Satan entered into him. I do not think any words of mine are necessary. The appalling fact is one to be faced alone; and I resolutely leave it there for myself when I am alone, for you when you are alone.

The same Lord is still directly, immediately, choosing, calling, appointing. We cannot choose to be His apostles. We must be His chosen or we can never serve. I cannot choose to be a missionary or a Christian minister. I must be chosen. The restfulness of this consideration lies in the fact that His choices are right choices, and that His calls are vindications. If He has called me I know it, and if He has called me. He has chosen me.

Every day I live I wonder more why He called me; but I know He did, and therein is my rest, my peace.

Now for a solemn enquiry. I have emphasized the fact that none can choose to be minister or missionary. He must choose. This, however, leads on to the solemn enquiry as to whether perchance He has called and chosen, and there has not been obedience. I think this is a question that young men should be asking very seriously today everywhere. I cannot go to young men and ask them to become missionaries. They cannot choose to be ministers or missionaries. But I can and I do ask them whether the call has come to them. It may have come in some early morning hour of quiet communion, or in the appalling solemnity of some great convocation of the people of God; and yet they may have been busy ever since trying to persuade themselves that it was no call, listening to the voices of time and of the world and of earthly advantage.

Young men my brothers within the Christian Church, young women, my sisters within the Christian Church, you cannot elect to serve. But if He has elected and called you, how solemn the responsibility that rests upon you. I pray you, be of good cheer, for if He calls it is because He has chosen, and your responsibility is only that of yielding. He is responsible. If it is a mistake it is His mistake. If there are difficulties in you, He knows them, He is responsible, He will deal with them. Blessed be God, He is able to deal with them; for He takes the weak things to confound the mighty, and the foolish to bring to naught the

wise, and the things that are not, in order that He may destroy the things that are.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/g-campbell-morgan/he-appointed-twelve-mar-314/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net