

The Making of the Master's Men

by Victor Maxwell

Jesus chose ordinary men to be his apostles and transformed them into extraordinary servants of God.

Scripture: Matthew 10:1, John 15:16, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 2:20, Colossians 1:6, Revelation 2:10, Revelation 21:14

Topics: "Apostle Selection", "Discipleship Training"

Description

Victor Maxwell preaches on 'Men the Master Made', focusing on the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus and their transformation from common, imperfect men to chosen, changed men who became Christ's representatives with a worldwide commission. The sermon highlights the unique qualities and martyrdom of each apostle, emphasizing their faith, obedience, and willingness to sacrifice for the cause of Christ.

Transcript

Men the Master Made Matthew 9:36-10:5 Study #1 - The Making of the Master's Men How many of us can quote the names of the twelve apostles Surprisingly, after the first four most Christians get stuck. Their names are recorded in four places in the New Testament and that is not without significance. (See Matthew 10:1-8; Mark 3:13-21; Luke 6:12-19; Acts 1:13) The Bible also reminds us that their names are also recorded on the foundations of the walls of the Holy city (Rev.21:14) and that the church is built upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets". (Eph.2:20;) When we think of the apostle's or disciples of our Lord we should always remember Revelation 2:10; "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life".

All of the disciples save John and Judas died a martyr's death. Who are these apostles SIMON PETER was the impulsive fisherman who later became a great preacher. He was one of the three at the inner core of the disciples who recognised Christ as the Messiah and yet disowned the Saviour. Besides leading the early church he also wrote 1 and 2 Peter. Tradition says that he was crucified head downwards in Rome. He teaches us that even though Christians may fail at times, yet when they repent and return to Jesus, he forgives them and strengthens their faith.

JAMES, a son of Zebedee and an older brother of John. Also a member of the inner core of disciples. Together with John he was a fisherman and yet they were known as "the sons of thunder". He was also very ambitious. and yet was the first apostle to die for the cause of Christ when he was beheaded in Jerusalem. (Acts 12:2) James shows the example of how Christians must be willing even to die for Jesus Christ. JOHN, a son of Zebedee, a brother of James and a fisher man, he was the third disciple of the inner core of our Lord's followers.

Although like his brother he was judgmental yet he became the apostle of love. He was the author of five books in the New Testament. Although John is the only disciple never to have died a martyr's death yet he was greatly persecuted, plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil and miraculously saved. He was banished to the isle of Patmos from which he returned to Ephesus where he finally died of old age. This apostle of love testifies to the transforming power of the Gospel. ANDREW A brother of Peter and a fellow fisherman who was always eager to bring others to Jesus Christ.

He first heard of Jesus from John the Baptist and followed the Master. He brought Philip to Jesus and brought his own brother to the Lord. He introduced a boy with five loaves and two fishes to the Lord and brought the Greeks to meet the Saviour. It is reported that he died in Patras Greece on an X shaped cross because he refused to be crucified like the Saviour. Tradition says that from the cross he still introduced others to Christ. He always had a heart for missions. PHILIP - Although he was a fisherman he had all the traits of a business man, he was always curious calculating and cautious.

He told Nathaniel about the Saviour, questioned the Lord about the feeding of the five thousand. He was hanged or stoned in Asia. There is confusion about his demise but it is commonly thought he died a martyr for Christ's cause in Asia where he was either hanged or stoned. The Lord can use our questions to teach us the lessons of life. BARTHOLOMEW sometimes called Nathanael was a frank and honest man. Although at first he rejected Christ yet afterwards he confessed that Jesus was the Son of God and King of Israel.

The Saviour called him an Israelite indeed". It is reported that he died the martyr's death in Armenia where he was flayed and then beheaded for the sake of the Gospel. He found that Jesus was the only ladder to God. MATTHEW was the Tax collector from Galilee. He was probably despised by the other fishermen who must have fallen foul of his charges. He abandoned his corrupt but profitable lifestyle to follow the Saviour. He wrote the Gospel of the King and His Kingdom. He died from the thrust of a sword while he was a missionary in Ethiopia.

Matthew teaches us to employ all of talents for the glory of God. THOMAS was sometimes called Didymus. This name simply means "twin". Thomas had a twin somewhere and I always feel that twin is in everyone of us. He is frequently known for his doubts but he followed his Lord after the resurrection and became a missionary to India where today there still exists the Sao Tome Church. He was killed by the thrust of a lance into his side. In spite of our doubts God is still faithful and will accomplish his plan in us.

JAMES was the son of Alpheus who was sometimes called James the Less. We know little or nothing of anything he ever did or said other than he was chosen by God and was faithful to the Lord. He was clubbed and beaten but recovered only to be sawn in pieces later for his service for the Saviour. He represents all those anonymous believers who remain faithful in supporting God's work. THADDAEUS sometimes called Judas son of James and not Iscariot. Again we know little about him other than he carried the distinction of not being Iscariot.

There are blessings in not being like the world. He is quoted in John 14 as asking the Saviour why he revealed himself to His followers and not to the world. Thaddaeus became a missionary to Iraq where he was murdered by arrows to his side. He teaches us to trust the Lord when we do not understand. SIMON THE ZEALOT was a Jewish patriot and a political activist who rebelled against Rome but was transformed by the grace of God sat down with his former political enemies. He was a widely traveled missionary who was murdered by a mob in Persia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT was the best educated of all the disciples and the only one who was not a Galilean. He became a disciple of the Lord Jesus but was always treacherous and greedy. He betrayed the Saviour for the price of a crippled slave and revealed he was a son of perdition. In deep remorse he went out and hanged himself. Judas is probably the person who humanly speaking would be best qualified for the job of being an apostle but he was false. God does not choose as men would choose.

He has chosen the nothings and nobodies of this world to serve Him. When we see the prominent place they are given in the New Testament we might be excused for thinking them to be wonderful men. When Oliver Cromwell was reforming the church in England he gave the command to melt down golden images of saints and apostles and make the metal put into money. His command was, "Melt the saints and put them into circulation". In our study we want to "melt down the apostles" and put ourselves into circulation.

In our general study of them we note: 1. the Apostles Were Common Men (a) They were men. Ladies in the life of our Lord never let him down, never denied Him nor betrayed Him. Remember that two women played a major role in the martyrdom of John the Baptist but for our Lord they were supportive of his ministry, present at the Cross, attentive at the tomb and were first to carry the message of the resurrection. However, it is important to note that there is a role for women in the church but it is not to office in governing the church. (b) They were ordinary men.

We have here Mr. Average from the back streets of a Galilean town. There are no graduates from the higher schools of Jewish learning. You can almost smell the oil of the fishermen. They were twelve ordinary Jewish young men who were not exceptionally talented but the Saviour chose them to do an extraordinary work. (c) They were imperfect men. Weakness and failure were common to them all. In a storm they had fear. (Mk.4) When they faced demons they lacked faith (Mt.17) They forgot the miracles the Lord performed (Mt.16:5;) They fell asleep at Gethsemane and forsook the Saviour in hour of tribulation.

They also had false ideas about sin and the Kingdom and tried to block mothers who sought to bring their children to Jesus. (John 8:3; Acts. 1:6; Mark 10) There were rivalries amongst them and even John and James requested the destruction of a Samaritan town while Peter cut off Malchus' ear. Jesus said that they were fools and slow of heart to believe what was written in the Scriptures. (Lu.24.) They were not the sort of people for whom you would readily write a reference. Many apparent failures turn out to be great successes.

Thomas Edison's teacher put on his school report that he was too stupid to learn anything. Amazing that the Lord combined such an incompatible group. Who would have chosen Matthew and Simon the Zealot to be colleagues Would you choose Peter who believed all to walk with Thomas who doubted most things Andrew and Judas were opposites and James and John wanted to cut their colleagues out of the Lord's plans. God always does delight to use the common things in life. 2. The Apostles Were Chosen Men (a) They were sovereignly called to be disciples. (Mt. 10:1) We are all called to be disciples of the Saviour. (b) They were individually chosen to be Apostles.

It is important to know the call of God when hard times come. John 15:16. A disciple is a learner. How much these disciples had to learn! Jesus taught them to pray (Mt.18) To obey, to love, to be humble and to discern the times. Jesus was their Teacher and for three years they were in the school with Christ. Apostleship. Although the word apostle is not exclusively used to these twelve in the New Testament yet the official term "apostle" is limited to twelve. An apostle is basically "a sent one".

In the particular sense of the New Testament an apostle was one who had been with Jesus, witnessed the resurrection and was a foundation layer of the primitive church both in structure and doctrine. Who are "the twelve" and why the number twelve In the Bible twelve has always been the number of government. There were twelve tribes in Israel; there were twelve stones on the High Priest's breastplate. There are twelve thrones in heaven and twelve gates to the Holy City. 3. The Apostles were Changed Men It has been said that the greatest miracle in the ministry of the Lord Jesus was the change he wrought in his disciples.

John 1:42 "Thou art Simon...thou shalt be called Peter". James and John were known as the sons of thunder. God so changed them that one laid down his life for Gospel and the other became "the Apostle of Love" 4. The Apostles were Christ's Men When Jesus left them on earth they were His representatives with a commission to the uttermost (Acts 1:8;) Tradition says that the early apostles decided on a plan for worldwide evangelization. They divided the world into zones of responsibility then each travelled his separate way.

They had no educational background, no financial backing, no political support and no religious clout. Rather the world, political, social and religious was hostile to them and still they fulfilled their task. They did their job well. (See Colossians 1:6,23) These disciples were with our Lord. The Lord Jesus has gone to heaven but He sent the "Other Comforter" to be with us. The same Comforter is with us still. They did their job well but what about our job.

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