

Bible Study Class
Clayton Presbyterian Church
Lesson 6 Jesus
The Early Ministry and Selection of Disciples

Opening Prayer: Dear Lord, remove our blinders and help us to see people as you do, with love and compassion. Amen.

Jesus Heals a leper

Read Mark 1:40-45

Q 1. How long did it take for the man to be cleansed of his leprosy once Jesus had spoken? It was immediate. To the Jew uncleanness was more horrible than disease. It meant to be an outcast from Israel, and to be classed with swine, dogs and other abhorrent creatures. The leper, therefore, prayed that the Lord would remove his shame and pollution.

Q 2. What did Jesus charge the man to do? Jesus sternly forbade the man to tell what had been done. He required the decision of the priest to make him legally clean; and too much talk might so prejudice the priests as to lead them to refuse to admit his cure. Jesus wanted to suppress excitement, and thus prevent too great crowds from gathering about him and hindering his work. To take this view is to say that Jesus meant to prevent exactly what happened. What happened instead? The man talked before going to the priest and being declared clean.

Jesus heals a paralytic at Capernaum

Read Matthew 9:2-9

Q 3. What did the four men who were transporting the paralytic have to do? An Oriental bed is a thin mattress, or pallet, just large enough for a man to lie upon; and those generally used by the poor today are made of sheepskin with the wool on it. Such a bed could be easily carried by four men, with each holding a corner. We are not told in what part of the house Jesus stood, but evidently an opening was made in the flat roof above him, and the man was lowered to the floor in front of Jesus by means of short straps or pieces of rope fastened to the four corners of the bed.

Q 4. What did Jesus first tell the paralytic? Be of good cheer your sins are forgiven. What did the scribes say among themselves in response to this? They were saying that He claimed an attribute, power, authority which belongs to exclusively to God. It was a just accusation if he had not been the Son of God. The Pharisees were not faulty in their logic, but were mistaken in their premises. Jesus does not deny their doctrine; he merely corrects their mistaken application of it to

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himself. Whether his words were truth or blasphemy, was the controversy between Christ and the rulers from that day to the end of his ministry. What was Jesus' response to them? "You think that forgiveness can only be granted by the Father in heaven, but it can also be granted by the Son upon earth."

Q 5. What effect did this incident have on the multitude who witnessed it?

They were filled with fear, saying, we have seen strange things today. They had seen three miracles: sins forgiven, thoughts read and palsy healed.

The call of Matthew

Q 6. What was Matthew's occupation? A tax collector. Where was he when Jesus called him? Orientals sit at their work. The taking of a toll was usually at a booth or a small hut. Whether Matthew's booth was by the lake, to collect duties on goods and people ferried across; or whether it was by the roadside on the great highway leading from Damascus to Acco, to collect taxes on all produce brought into Capernaum, is not important.

Q 7. What was Matthew's response to this call? It indicates that Matthew was already a disciple, as were the four fishermen when they also received a like call. Matthew was now called to become a personal attendant of Jesus, preparatory to being chosen an apostle. It is probably a mistake to assume that he went off without settling accounts with the head of his office.

The healing of the infirm man on the Sabbath

Read John 5:1-17

Q 8. Describe the problem of the man and how Jesus solved it.

The time is given to mark the length of the disease, and to show the pathos of his situation. The facts that he had a bed, and that his healing was demonstrated by his walking, argue that his disease was either rheumatism, or some form of paralysis. The man had no one help him get into the water before others as the water was active. Jesus said to him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.

Q 9. What two charges were made against Jesus for healing this man?

Breaking the Sabbath and calling God his Father. In this case a man lying on his bed, away from home, is suddenly healed. Under such circumstances Jewish tradition said that he must either spend the rest of the day watching his bed, or else he must go off and leave it to be stolen.

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How did Jesus respond to them? My Father works and I work.

Read John 5:19-22

Q 10. Since Jesus basically claims that He does the works of the Father, show how this claim is elaborated in the text. The central point in the discourse is the relation of a father and a son as it would be viewed in this culture through the trade or skill the son was learning. We can think of Jesus growing up with Joseph in the carpentry shop, obediently learning skills and later imitating them. In a similar manner, Jesus is connected to the Father. His activity is never independent or self-initiated but always dependent, deriving its purpose from his Father's will. The Son does not simply draw inspiration from the Father, but imitates him tirelessly and successfully.

Q 11. List the witnesses to whom Jesus appeals to defend Himself and His actions. He cites God the Father, John the Baptist, Jesus' divine works, Moses and the scriptures.

Q 12. Why did the Jews, in spite of all the testimony, refuse to believe? Cite several reasons. They wanted power. They believed that their heritage from Abraham would save them. They didn't have God's love in their heart.

Jesus defends His disciples plucking grain on the Sabbath

Read Luke 6:1-5

Q 13. What did the Pharisees accuse the disciples of Jesus of doing?

When the Pharisees see Jesus' disciples picking some grain to eat, they accuse them of breaking the law. Why? God gave the Israelites the commandment that no work was to be performed on the Sabbath. The Pharisees' interpretation of this commandment gave rise to an extensive set of oral laws to keep people from violating the Sabbath.

Q 14. Describe how Jesus properly used the following people to defend the actions of His disciples.

- a. David: Twelve loaves of bread were prepared for the tabernacle on each Sabbath as an offering. This consecrated bread was to be eaten only by the priests. Scripture does not condemn David for eating the bread during his escape from Saul.

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b. The priests in the temple. Since the law required the priests in their duties to God to work on the Sabbath, God made allowances within the law for them to eat.

Q 15. What is meant by the statement, "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath?" Jesus declares himself, as the Son of Man, to be "Lord" of the Sabbath. Jesus authoritatively states God's purposes for the Sabbath. Jesus has the authority to overrule human regulations concerning the Sabbath, such as those reflecting the interpretations of the Pharisees

Q 16. What does "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" mean? The Sabbath law was to free humankind up to rest and enjoy God, not to shackle them from serving others or prevent basic needs from being met.

Healing a withered hand on the Sabbath

Read Matthew 12:9-14

Q 17. Why were the Pharisees closely watching Jesus?

They sought to accuse him before the local judges or officers of the synagogue of which they themselves were members. Jesus gave them abundant opportunity for such accusation, for we have seven recorded instances of cures on the sabbath day.

Q 18. What question did Jesus ask the Pharisees just before He healed the man's withered hand? He asked them if they would remove a sheep from the ditch on the Sabbath. Why did He ask it? He wanted to show them that some actions supersede their Sabbath rules. What was their response? That it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath. What did that response illustrate?

One commentator states that to know good to do is an obligation to do that good.

Q 19. What did the Pharisees do after Jesus had healed the man? They held a meeting to see how they might destroy Him.

Multitudes healed beside the Sea of Galilee

Read Matthew 12:15-21

Q 20. Where was the multitude who followed Jesus from? Jesus withdraws at this point to around the Sea of Galilee people come from Judea, Jerusalem, Edom, beyond the Jordan, and around Tyre and Sidon. Why were they following Him? They had heard about the great things that He has done.

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Now we will hear the same from Mark.

Read Mark 3:7-12

Q 21. What did Jesus do for the multitude? He healed them. What did he warn them to do? He told them to keep this to themselves. Whose prophecy did this fulfill? Isaiah. Jesus was trying to withdraw from the Pharisees and their arguments.

The selection of the Twelve Apostles

Read Luke 6:12-16

Q 22. What did Jesus do before appointing the twelve? He went up on a mountain and prayed.

Q 23. What authority and ability did Jesus give the twelve? Jesus gave these disciples the power to heal and drive out demons, and he sent them in pairs to test the hospitality of the places he was going and to spread the gospel.

Why? The apostles were to be with Jesus, that they might be taught by his words, and that they might become teachers of that word and witnesses as to the life and actions of Jesus.

Q 24. Name the twelve disciples who were to be the apostles of Jesus. Give a brief description of each. My order of the disciples is based on their order in Matthew.

Peter, also known as Simon, Simon Peter, and Cephas, was one of Jesus' three main disciples along with James and John. Like many of the apostles, Peter was a fisherman by trade, but he grew into one of the most prominent leaders of the early church after the resurrection. According to Catholic tradition, he was also the first pope. In the gospels, Peter is portrayed as impetuous, always speaking his mind and acting on impulse. In the Book of Acts, Peter's decisiveness transformed him into someone the early Christians constantly relied on and turned to. Tradition holds that the Gospel of Mark records Peter's account of Jesus' ministry. 1 & 2 Peter written by Peter or dictated them to a scribe. According to tradition, Peter was crucified by Emperor Nero around 64 AD, around the time of the Great Fire of Rome, which Nero blamed on Christians. The *Acts of Peter* claims he asked to be crucified upside down because he didn't believe he was worthy of dying the same death as Jesus.

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Andrew The name comes from the Greek word for 'manly'. Andrew was the first apostle of the Twelve whom Jesus called, but he was quickly overshadowed by his brother Simon Peter, whom he brought to Jesus. From Bethsaida of Galilee, Andrew had previously been a follower of John the Baptist and had heard him point out Jesus as the Lamb of God. Like the other three disciples whom Jesus called in John 1, Andrew received his more formal commission to full-time itinerant apprenticeship with the Lord at the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Andrew not only brought Peter to Jesus, but he told him Jesus was the Messiah. Andrew is the disciple who finds the boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. Philip wanted Andrew to decide what to do about the Greeks in John 12, could indicate that Andrew held a position of leadership among the disciples. Andrew, Peter, James and John were all fishermen at the time. One commentator suggests that at least part of the time the two brothers ministered as a team. In Mark 13, Peter, James, John, and Andrew share a private moment with Jesus and ask him about the destruction of the temple. Tradition claims Andrew was crucified in Patras around 60 AD. Instead, he was bound to an X shaped cross, which became a symbol known as Saint Andrew's Cross. According to Acts of Andrew, he hung there for three days, preaching the entire time.

James son of Zebedee also known as James the Greater was another one of Jesus' three main disciples, along with his brother John and Peter. Like many of the disciples, James was a fisherman before Jesus called him. Mark tells us that Jesus nicknamed James and John "sons of thunder". Unfortunately, he doesn't tell us what the nickname means or where it comes from. This has led many to assume it referred to their speech, temperaments, or ambition. He asked Jesus if he and John should call down fire from heaven to destroy a village which failed to show them hospitality. He asked Jesus if he and John can sit on either side of Jesus' throne in heaven, and unwittingly promising to follow Jesus into martyrdom.

Read Acts 12:1-2

This seems to imply that he was beheaded. A popular Christian pilgrimage is the Camino de Santiago—a pilgrimage to the church where James is allegedly buried in Spain. Compostela the shrine dedicated to Saint James is still a destination for more than 300,000 people every year.

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John son of Zebedee was the third disciple considered to be part of Jesus' "inner circle" with his brother James and Peter. Like James, Peter, and several other disciples, John was a fisherman. Like his brother James, John was given the nickname "son of thunder." They had some characteristics in common. Besides the two "asks" of Jesus mentioned above. Took care of Jesus' mother, Mary. Beat Peter in a race to Jesus' empty tomb. He was described as a "pillar" of the church in Galatians. According to tradition, the Apostle John wrote *The Gospel of John*, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John and Revelation. Christians have commonly assumed John of Patmos and John the son of Zebedee were the same guy. According to tradition, John died of old age: a rare feat among the apostles, most of whom were martyred. Interestingly, John records that Peter asked Jesus what would happen to John, and Jesus basically said "It's none of your business" in a way that implied there might be something different planned for him.

Philip like Peter and Andrew, he comes from Bethsaida, a town near the Sea of Galilee. Later, when some Greek men from Bethsaida want to see Jesus, they come to Philip first, presumably because they knew he was from the same town as them or possibly because he spoke Greek the best. Philip's most notable moment in the gospels is his role in bringing Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael is only mentioned in the Gospel of John, but many assume this is another name for Bartholomew. Philip and Bartholomew are almost always listed together, and they're closely associated in church tradition. Philip invites Nathaniel to "come and see" him, "the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote". Jesus tests Philip by asking him where they should buy bread to feed the crowd of 5,000 people. Philip asks Jesus to show them God the Father, and Jesus responds by saying "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. One tradition says he died of natural causes. But others suggest he was stoned to death, beheaded, or crucified upside down. According to *Acts of Philip*, he was crucified upside down with Bartholomew. Philip preached to the crowd while hanging on the cross, and they wanted to release the two disciples, but Philip told them to free Bartholomew and leave him hanging there.

Bartholomew or Nathanael was an early disciple of Jesus. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry Philip brought Nathanael to Him. Nathanael was skeptical about the

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Messiah coming from Nazareth, but when Jesus manifested His supernatural knowledge of Nathanael, he believed and followed Him. Jesus believed him to be 'a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false. Some sources say that he traveled with Philip to Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, and Armenia where he was "martyred."

Thomas other than in John's gospel, Thomas is mentioned only in the listings of the Twelve. On three of four occasions where John mentions Thomas, he also refers to him as Didymus. Thomas is an Aramaic name meaning "Twin" Didymus in Greek. He seems to be inquisitive and impulsive. In John 11:16, thinking that Jesus is going to Bethany to die with Lazarus, he exhorts his fellow disciples to go and die with Jesus. When Jesus speaks of His return to heaven, Thomas confesses his ignorance of where Christ is going. Thomas thus reveals that he was spiritually ignorant and was lacking in faith, as were also the majority of the disciples during Christ's earthly ministry. Thomas is remembered primarily for his doubts concerning Christ's resurrection. He was absent at Christ's first appearance to the disciples and refused to believe without tangible evidence. Jesus' later appearance removed Thomas's doubts. He allegedly died in India. For such a minor apostle, church tradition is remarkably consistent about his death. An early church calendar reads: "3 July, St. Thomas who was pierced with a lance in 'India'." Tradition specifies that the year was 72 AD.

Matthew, also called Levi, was a tax collector. He seems to have been an agent for Herod Antipas, stationed at Capernaum to collect revenue on goods passing between Damascus and the Mediterranean ports. Tax collectors or "publicans" were despised by the Jews and regarded as the lowest of sinners. They were perceived as extortionists and even as traitors since they served Rome. When Jesus called him, he immediately obeyed. Matthew's inclusion among the Twelve presents a powerful picture of how God partners with all kinds of people—even those you'd least expect—to accomplish his purposes. And despite the fact that Matthew would have been considered a religious outsider, Jesus brought him into the inner circle of what would eventually become the world's largest religion. From early times the church has regarded Matthew as the author of the first gospel.

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James, the son of Alphaeus, or sometimes called James the less. James 'the less', which could refer to his size but more probably means that he is younger than the other apostle with the same name. He could have been one of Jesus' cousins. Nothing else is known with any certainty about the man.

Thaddueus is also known as Jude of James, Judas of James, Judas Thaddeus, and Lebbaeus. Church tradition and most modern scholars have always assumed Thaddeus was a nickname for Jude of James. Some identify him with Jesus' brother Jude, the traditional author of the Epistle of Jude, but the Bible doesn't tell us these Judes are the same people. He traveled to Arabia, Syria, and Persia to preach the gospel.

Simon the Zealot may have belonged to a Jewish sect known as the Zealots, who were bent on revolution and looking for a Messiah to violently overthrow Rome. Or he may have simply been zealous for the Mosaic Law. Or zealous for Jesus and his teachings. While the Bible doesn't tell us anything more about Simon the Zealot, a later tradition claims he preached in Egypt, then partnered with Judas, the brother of Jesus.

Judas Iscariot is one of the most widely known disciples. He infamously betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, which led to Jesus' death on the cross. Today, "Judas" is virtually synonymous with "traitor." Judas appears in several New Testament stories, and while the Gospel writers are in unanimous agreement that he betrayed Jesus, they present various takes on his motives and the circumstances surrounding his death. He was the treasurer of the group, though he was portrayed as untrustworthy. The chief priests then used the money to buy a potter's field presumably the field Judas hung himself in, because it was blood money, so they couldn't put it in the treasury.

The 12 apostles were some of his closest disciples. But three members of the Twelve were closer than anyone else: Peter, James, and John. Together, they witnessed miracles and moments the other apostles weren't privy to, including:

- The time Jesus raised a girl from the dead in Mark
- The Transfiguration in Matthew

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- Jesus' moment of weakness in the Garden of Gethsemane

Closing prayer: Lord, you call us to service just as the disciples were called. May we learn to be better servants. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Matthew 9:2-9	Mark 1:40-45	Luke 6:1-5	John 5:1-17
Matthew 12:9-14	Mark 3:7-12	Luke 6:12-16	John 5:19-22
Matthew 12:15-21		Acts 12:1-2	