

Guided Bible Study

The Twelve Disciples

(Week 10)

Luke 18 v. 18 – 30

An adapted version of Life Builder Study | Douglas Connelly

Welcome

For the purposes of our Bible Studies, we will be using Life Builder Study Series (Inter-Varsity Press). Our theme for these studies is: The Twelve Disciples. The studies were originally written by Douglas Connelly, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study as we seek to transition between the church building and our homes during the next several weeks.

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us. If you will be doing the studies at home, it is suggested that you do the study on Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30 am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

Hope that you enjoy it!

Pastor Ian

Context

Jesus had about three years to mould a dozen fearful and faithless men into the pillars of a worldwide movement. Despite this brief window, time spent with Jesus had a transforming effect on each of them; most would be inspired and emboldened to proclaim him as the saviour against great opposition. Through these ten studies, we too can experience the deep change that only time in Jesus' presence can bring.

Some Thoughts To Help You While You Study

The purpose of the study is to understand that some believers serve Jesus in obscurity, but they have eternal rewards from the Lord.

James, the son of Alphaeus, is the ninth name in Luke's list of the Twelve (**Luke 6 v. 14 – 16**). He is the second man among the apostles named James; the other is James, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee. In **Mark 15 v. 40** he is called 'James the less' or James the younger', an indication that this James was younger than James the son of Zebedee. In **Mark 2 v. 14**, Levi or Matthew is also called the son of Alphaeus. It could be that James the younger was the brother of Matthew. If so, this would make a third set of brothers among the Twelve – Peter and Andrew, James the older and John, and now Matthew and James the younger.

Along with two men named James, there were also two men named Simon among Jesus' closest disciples – Simon Peter, of course, and a man called 'Simon the Zealot' in **Luke 6 v. 15**. Simon at one time had been a member of the political movement known as the Zealots, one of the best – known and most – feared political groups of Jesus' day. The Zealots hated the Romans, and their single objective was to push the Roman overlords out of Israel. That was Simon's background. Coming into contact with Jesus changed him. Simon's zeal became focused on a different kind of kingdom, a kingdom of justice and

righteousness.

There were two men named Judas in Jesus' band too – Judas Iscariot and Judas son of James (**Luke 6 v. 16**). This man is also called Thaddaeus (**Matthew 10 v. 3**). Judas Thaddaeus asks only one question of Jesus (at least that's all that is recorded about him). In **John 14 v. 22** he asks: '***Lord, why do you intend to show yourself (reveal your true nature) to us and not to the world***'? it wasn't a rebuke or a challenge, just a question.

Space for you to make some notes

Study 10 - 3 Others

(Faithful To The End)

The Gospel writers give us the names of three other apostles, but not much more. If these men ever asked Jesus a question or had an extended conversation with him, Scripture does not record it.

But we do know that they were chosen by Jesus to be in the band of his closest followers, and like others, these three had left their old lives behind to follow him. They served, went out and preached, and witnessed Jesus' miracles like the others. They were faithful to Jesus but were not major players in the Gospel record.

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Jesus placed a high value on the spiritual disciplines that we carry out in secret – like prayer or giving to the poor. Evaluate your own life and ask yourself whether you do things to be noticed by others or noticed by God alone. Do you know a Christian who serves the Lord sacrificially and faithfully, but quietly and out of the spotlight?

Even though we don't have much written in the Gospels about these men, they are included in some of the scenes that involve all the disciples – like the day Jesus told a rich man to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor! **Read Luke 18 v. 18 – 30**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

What would have been the response of most people to a rich man who wanted to be involved with their ministry?

What does the ruler's question in **Luke 18 v. 18** tell you about his view of

eternal life? What is Jesus' view on the subject (**Luke 18 v. 27**)?

The man claims to have obeyed God's commands since his boyhood. What was Jesus trying to get him to realise by asking him to sell all his possessions (**Luke 18 v. 20 – 22**)?

How do you think you would respond if Jesus made the same request of you?

Why is it hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God (**Luke 18 v. 24 – 25**)?

Peter speaks for all of Jesus' disciples when he says: 'We have left all we have to follow you!' Do you think Peter's statement was true? What specifically had the disciples left?

What promises does Jesus make to those who leave anything behind (or who put other relationships in second place) to do God's will (**Luke 18 v. 29 – 30**)? How have you experienced those promises in your life?

What one sacrifice is Jesus asking you to make?

Does it help to know that you will receive eternal rewards for the sacrifices you make for the Lord in this life?

Now or Later

Later church tradition reveals that these three virtually silent disciples took seriously Jesus' command to make disciples in every part of the world. We also learn that they paid the supreme price! James the younger took the message of Jesus to Syria and Persia. One tradition says he was pushed from the temple wall in Jerusalem as he preached about Jesus, and the crowd below stoned him to death. Several sources say that Simon the Zealot took the gospel as far north as Britain. Traditional portraits of Simon show him holding a saw because there are some legends that he was executed by being pushed into a hollow log and sawn in half.

Judas Thaddaeus is believed to have taken the gospel to Eastern Turkey, to Persia, perhaps to China. The traditional symbol of this disciple is a club, because some sources say he was clubbed to death by an angry mob.

Which of the twelve followers of Jesus that we have studied do you think you are most like and why?

Which one inspires you to follow Jesus more devotedly and why?

***As you pray, ask God to help you
Hold life's possessions in an open hand,
Ready to release them to the Lord when he asks.***