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Lessons from The Sabbath

Luke 6:1-11, concerned the Sabbath. It was over this issue that Jesus and His critics fought their most intense battles. The Sabbath was to be set apart as a period when one rests and finds renewal and refreshment, and no one knew it better than Jesus Christ. However, the Sabbath was made for our benefit, we were not made to keep the rules of the Sabbath. It was made for us, we were not made for it. It was to be a reminder of God's grace and love, which He has given to allow man to rest. By the time the Pharisees in Jesus' day inherited this simple commandment, God's merciful principle of rest had grown into a merciless tangle of rules. The legalists had succeeded in squeezing the joy out of God's gift to His people. That is what Christ defies in Luke chapter 6.

What is a disciple?

Are there still disciples today? Did they stop with the dispensation of the hypostatic union? In the Old Testament, the word for disciple is limmuwd meaning those who are instructed: accustomed, learned, and taught, ISA 8:16, ISA 50:4. The word for disciple in the New Testament one that many of you are familiar with which is the Greek noun "mathetes" meaning a learner, a pupil or a disciple, a discipline student of their teacher. In the Bible the word is used most often to refer to a follower of Jesus. The word disciple is sometimes used in a more specific way to indicate the twelve apostles of Jesus, Mat 10:1; 11:1; 20:17. However, in general, apostles refers to a small, inner group of Jesus' followers; disciples refers to a larger group of Jesus' followers, such as the women who stood at Jesus' cross and discovered the empty tomb.

It is not a word used for the followers of Christ only. It implies that the person not only accepts the views of the teacher, but that he is also in practice, an adherent. Now, there is a difference between a disciple in the days of our Lord and a disciple today, but if you believe the Bible then you will believe that disciples are still around today. For example, Mat 28:19-20, includes the great commission to go into all the world and inserted in the great commission are the words "make disciples". Now, this was said after the death, resurrection and the ascension of our Lord. This was after the dispensation of the Hypostatic union and this was counsel to the apostles concerning their mission in the early church.

This whole idea comes from what Jesus did with His twelve. Long before Jesus was engaged in a powerful movement leading him ultimately to crucifixion, long before His name was a household name in all of Jerusalem, He had chosen a hand full of men. He had pulled them up close to Him they were already spending nights together. They were talking early in the morning, sometimes late into the evening. They had fun together, shared life together. He was developing them into the process of becoming apostles. Those who would carry the torch after He was off the earth. Now let's observe Jesus' model and see what is a Disciple.

First of all, notice how He prepared for the choosing of the twelve Luke 6:12. "And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God," Jesus saw that He had come to the place where He needed to prepare His men for the ministry. He prays all night about it. Perhaps He wasn't sure which ones to select, humanly speaking, and perhaps He had several others from whom to choose and He had to select only a small number. By now, there were hundreds of people who would have given anything for time with Him. To walk with Jesus, to ask Him questions, and to spend nights with Him, and to see Him do His work.

In Mark 3:14, Mark makes a statement that Luke does not bother to mention. "And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach,"

Notice, that they might be with Him so that they might become the mathetes, the learners, and the disciples. Then secondly, that He might send them out, to become apostles.

They spend three and a half years learning and then their lifetime as apostles. Isn't it interesting that in training for the ministry many individuals simply go to a school that is teaching the Bible. Some even get the privilege of a graduate school at a seminary that teaches the minor things of theology, and then they're launched into the ministry. However, so few are really being trained as disciples or given hands-on experience as to what it really means to deal with people and a ministry. The disciples will be given both by our Lord.

Jesus saw it as a necessary internship, as a time of being with His men and then sending them forth. We are now noting the characteristics and traits of each one of these disciples and apostles and how they relate to our spiritual walk. In the next Tree of Life, we will have a profile of each one of the disciples, Peter, Andrew his brother; and James and John; Philip, Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James {the son} of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot; Judas {the son} of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor."

The Disciples

This week we took a look at the twelve Apostles. Looked into their personalities, saw some of their strengths and weaknesses. This is an intriguing subject because we need to remember that not only were they human and like us today failed and succeeded but they also were trained by our Lord during His earthly ministry. Luke 6, verse 13-16 "And when day came, He called His disciples to Him; and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles: Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; and Matthew and Thomas; James {the son} of Alphaeus, and Simon [not Peter] who was called the Zealot; Judas {the son} of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor."

Let's spend a little time on these individuals to note the type of people our Lord chose as disciples. We begin with Peter. He seems to have been the leader of the apostles on every occasion. Peter was known for being bold, confident, courageous, frank, impulsive, energetic, vigorous, strong, loving and faithful to his Master in spite of his defection prior to the crucifixion. It is true that he was liable to change and inconsistency prevailed at times. "His virtues and faults had their common root in his enthusiastic disposition." That was his makeup, his nature, his traits, he was no phony. At times, he was the type of individual who didn't think before he acted. He frequently served as a spokesman for the disciples, and he was their recognized leader MAR 1:35-36.

There seemed to be an inner circle of three apostles that existed among the Twelve. Peter was also the leader of this small group. The trio, Peter, James, and John, was present with Jesus on a

number of occasions. They witnessed the raising of a young girl from the dead Mar 5:37; Luk 8:51. They were present at Jesus' transfiguration, Mat 17:1-2. They were present during Jesus' agony in Gethsemane, Mat 26:37; Mar 14:33.

Next in LUK 6:14 "Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother;" Andreas means "manly." The name has also been interpreted as "the mighty one, or conqueror". Andrew was the first called of the Twelve Apostles. There is something significant in Andrew being the first called of the apostles. The choice was an important one, for Andrew's influence on the remaining followers of Christ would be one of searching and desiring after higher things and a deeper knowledge of God. This is what encouraged Andrew to first follow John the Baptist and then the Lamb of God whom John pointed Andrew to. Along with a keenness of perception regarding spiritual truths, Andrew also had a strong sense of personal conviction which enabled him not only to accept Jesus as the Messiah, but to win his brother Peter also as a disciple of Christ.

Andrew was not one of the greatest of the apostles, yet he is typical of those men of open-minded understanding and sound common sense, without whom the success of any great movement cannot be assured. Void of the boldness and ruggedness of Peter's character, which only a few can aspire to, Andrew had that feature which makes him a pattern within the reach of all, a simple, earnest determination in carrying out the dictates of his personal convictions. Another feature in Andrew was, though not so qualified for public usefulness as some, he was as eager as any to win souls in private to Jesus.

He wasn't what we would call a powerful public speaker, he was a low-keyed individual who was very trustworthy. And while we admire Peter as the foremost apostle through whom 3,000 were added to the church on the day of Pentecost, let us not forget that, without Andrew, Simon would never have become Peter. Andrew had his faults too; he shared in the disciples' unbelief when Jesus tested their faith, in Joh 6. The third disciple and apostle, James was the son of Zebedee and the elder brother of John. From the time he was ordained an apostle, he occupied a prominent place among the apostles, and, along with Peter and John, became the special confidant of Jesus.

Shortly after the Transfiguration, when Jesus was totally determined to go to Jerusalem, in Luk 9:51, they were passing through Samaria, the fury of James and John was kindled by the unkind reception given to our Lord by the crowd, Luk 9:53.

Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, killed James some time between A.D. 42-44. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be put to death and the only one whose martyrdom is mentioned in the New Testament, Acts 12:2.

Next in our list, LUK 6:14 "Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John;"

John and James both were men of considerable wealth which may be assumed from the fact that they had "hired servants" with them and also John's wife was one of those women who ministered of their substance to Jesus and His disciples, Mat 27:55-56. One view holds that James and John were cousins of Jesus, and were also related to the family of John the Baptist. Indeed they held an intimate connection with the Lord. John was a young man of fiery zeal, and of a tendency toward intolerance and exclusiveness. This zeal and the intolerance are evident in the desire to call down fire upon the Samaritan village, and the tendency toward exclusiveness is manifested in the request of his mother as to the place her sons were to occupy in the kingdom. John was in the inner circle of the disciples, indeed, nearest of all to Jesus, he was called, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Joh 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20), and, because of that love, became

the apostle of love. John was one of the two who wished to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan village, Luk 9:54. He was also one of those who desired one of the chief places in the kingdom, Mar 10:37. He was the one who wanted to forbid certain men from casting out demons in the name of Jesus because they didn't follow Jesus, Mar 9:38. However, on each of these occasions, he was corrected and rebuked by TLJC, and he was the kind of man who could profit by the rebuke of Jesus. Now, John has a quiet and thoughtful temperament which is by no means inconsistent with a certain fierceness, when, on occasions, the fire flashes forth and you see that this quiet loving type can also be a tiger at times.

Therefore, it is not without significance that, in the three narratives which are cited from the Gospels to prove the overbearing temper of John, we are told that Jesus corrected him all three times. It is likely that these sank deep into his heart, and that the agony of beholding his Master's crucifixion made them impossible to forget and reject? As he grew older and wiser, he began that long development which changed the youthful "son of thunder" into the "aged apostle of love".

There are many reflections in the Gospel of John and in his Epistles, which display this energy of hatred toward the work of the devil, and toward those dispositions, which are under the influence of the father of lies. Next in LUK 6:14 we meet Philip. Philip belonged to Bethsaida of Galilee, Joh 1:44; 12:21. That word Galilee is important as we will see when we get to the last man on the list who was the only one not a Galilean. Along with Andrew and other fellow-townsmen, Philip had journeyed to Bethany to hear the teaching of John the Baptist, and there he received his first call from Christ, "Follow me", Joh 1:43. Like Andrew, Philip's Greek name implies he had Greek connections, and this is strengthened by the fact that he acted as the spokesman of the Greeks at the Passover. Of a weaker mold than Andrew, he was yet the one to whom the Greeks would first appeal to when seeking answers from the Lord.

He was very inquisitive and would ask probing questions and therefore could sympathize and understand with the doubts and difficulties that the Greeks had. He was very cautious and deliberate himself, and desirous of submitting all truth to the test of sensuous experience. JOH 14:8-11. Now, it was the presence of this natural mindedness in Philip that influenced Jesus, in order to awaken in His disciple a larger and more spiritual faith, to put the question in Joh 6:6, seeking "to test him." This natural reservedness, which affected Philip's beliefs, found expression in his outer life and conduct also. It was not merely modesty, but also a certain lack of self-reliance, that made him turn to Andrew for advice when the Greeks wished to see Jesus. The story of his later life is shows that he overcame those initial defects in his character, and fulfilled the great commission in Mat 28:16-20. Philip stands at the head of the second group of the twelve as noted on the charts that I gave you.

Next we have LUK 6:14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; Not much is known about him. Many scholars equate Bartholomew with Nathanael, Joh 1:45-49. In the first three gospels, Mat 10:3; Mar 3:18; Luk 6:14, Philip and Bartholomew are constantly named together, whereas Nathanael is not mentioned.

In the fourth gospel Philip and Nathanael are correspondingly combined, but nothing is said of Bartholomew. Nathanael therefore is considered to also be Bartholomew. He was born in Cana of Galilee, Joh 21:2. He was a very sincere man in whom there was no guile or wickedness. JOH 1:45-46. One of the first characteristics of Nathaniel or Bartholomew was that he seemed to have the narrowness of prejudice in him which is why he says "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" JOH 1:47-51.

Nathanael or Bartholomew seems to have been one of those calm, retiring types whose existence was behind the scenes and who lived a life of which the world sees nothing but God does. According to tradition, he was crucified upside down after being flayed alive. There is no further reference to him in the New Testament.

Next in LUK 6:15 we meet Matthew. The apostle and evangelist is mentioned in the four catalogues of the apostles in Mat 10:3; Mar 3:18; Luk 6:15; Act 1:13. The call of Matthew illustrates a very prominent feature in the public action of Jesus, which was His utter disregard for religious opinion and worldly wisdom. A publican disciple, much more a publican apostle, could not fail to be a stumbling block of Jewish prejudice, and therefore to be, for the time at least, a source of weakness rather than of strength.

Yet, while perfectly aware of this fact, Jesus invited to the intimate fellowship of discipleship and apostleship one who had pursued the occupation of a tax-gatherer. The call of Matthew is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the manner in which our treated others who had a reputation, having outward advantages which would seem to recommend them for a position with Christ.

Called Matthew in the first Gospel while in the second and third Gospels he is called Levi. Then in the book of Acts, he is called Matthew again. Being a tax-collector he was hated by the Jews especially because they considered the tax-collectors to be evil wicked men.

It is true that he belonged to a class of men, many of whom were really guilty of fraud and extortion, but he may have been an exception. We can only say this, if he had been covetous, the spirit of greed was now gone. If he had ever been guilty of oppressing the poor, he now despised such work. He had grown weary of collecting revenue from a reluctant population, and was glad to follow one who had come to take burdens off instead of laying them on, to release from debts instead of collection of them with severity. MAT 9:9 And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He *said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him.

That's all Matthew writes of the event, he doesn't even record that he left everything behind to follow Christ. He had the attitude of the apostle Paul in PHI 3:7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Just at what period of Christ's ministry he was called does not appear with certainty in the Scriptures but we do Peter, James and John were already trustworthy disciples of Jesus. Unlike the first six among the apostles, Matthew did not enter the group from among the pupils of John the Baptist. Following his call by Jesus, Matthew is not mentioned again in the New Testament. According to tradition Matthew preached in Judea and then in foreign nations especially Ethiopia. Next we meet Thomas, who was also called "Didymus" or "the Twin", Joh 11:16; 20:24; 21:2, and is referred to in detail by the Gospel of John alone. In Joh 11:1-54, when Jesus, despite imminent danger at the hands of hostile Jews, declared His intention of going to Bethany to heal Lazarus, Thomas alone opposed the other disciples who sought to Thomas, as many of you know, was known as the doubter in the group. And when he said "Let us also go, that we may die with Him", this was not a statement of courage but one of pessimism. Thomas had a tendency to stress the negative or unfavorable or to take the gloomiest possible view of things. After the crucifixion, Thomas apparently severed his connection with the rest of the apostles for a time, as he was not present when the risen Christ first appeared to them John 20. One sense, seeing, is not enough; not even feeling also will satisfy him unless he feels with both hand and finger the spear mark as well as the nail marks, he says I will not and cannot believe. However, he did rejoin them even though he was not convinced that Christ had risen from the dead. While

not convincing him of the truth of the resurrection which is why he said "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe," at least encouraged him to be among their number eight days later in the upper room. JOH 20:25-29

Having received the proofs for which he sought, he made the confession, "My Lord and my God" in Joh 20:28, and was reproved by Jesus for his previous unbelief. Thomas is probably best known for his inability to believe that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. For that inability to believe, he forever earned the name "doubting Thomas." Although little is recorded of Thomas in the Gospels, he is yet one of the most fascinating of the apostles. He is typical of many individuals who have certain conflicting principles difficult to reconcile. He was the type of individual who seemed to have difficulty to recover quickly from set backs and he was inclined to look upon life with the eyes of gloom or despondency. However, he still was a man of courage and entire unselfishness. With his perplexed faith in the teaching of Jesus there was mingled a sincere love for Jesus the teacher. Even in the incident of Christ's departure for Bethany, his devotion to the Lord proved stronger than his fear of death. Many times his faith and courage triumphed; but when it came into conflict with his standards of belief it was put to a harder test. Thomas desired to test all truth by the evidence of his senses, and in this, coupled with a mind consistent with beliefs and disbeliefs, lay the real source of his religious difficulties. Thomas was also considered by some a native of Galilee, like most of the other apostles. From all of these incidents came the title of "Doubting Thomas," and he has been characterized as "slow to believe, subject to despondency, seeing all the difficulties of a case, viewing things on the darker side."

The unbelief of Thomas drew forth such an infallible proof of the identity between the crucified and the risen Lord that he who any longer disbelieves and is consequently condemned is left without excuse. We now meet the traitor and betrayer Judas Iscariot. Interesting Judas Iscariot, is always identified as such Judas Iscariot, meaning he was from Kerioth which means he was near Hebron at birth and being reared there he is the only non-Galilean that Jesus chose. The only one from Judea and probably the sharpest of the twelve and that's why he held the purse or he was the treasurer. Don't be impressed by the sharpest of the group. Don't always think that the brightest is the best of the bunch.

What you want to pay attention to is character, attitude not intellectual ability only. Now, as terrible as "traitor" is, that title pales into insignificance compared to what the Lord called called Judas in Joh 17:12, Judas was called the son of perdition. By the way notice what He says, not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. It's important because if Judas was a believer, which he was not as we will see, but if he was a believer and he perished than our Lord did not fulfill the Father's will. JOH 6:38-39. To be the "son of perdition" denotes that Judas is a man identified with eternal destruction and whose destiny is the Lake of Fire.

It was not that Judas was foreordained from eternity past to go to hell without an opportunity to be saved. Instead, he chose to reject Jesus Christ and will suffer the consequences of any person who rejects the Savior.

Now notice a few things about his character. JOH 12:6 He did not care about the poor. He was a hard-hearted man, too concerned with feathering his own nest while others, less fortunate, suffered around him. He was a thief, pilfering funds from the Lord's money box, which exposes that Judas was full of avarice or greed. Judas was not in tune with Jesus, rejecting the Lord's message.

Judas could not have been saved JOH 6:70-71.

Jesus He knew Judas would not believe and He knew that he would betray Him.

In Luk 22, verse 3 "And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve."

Now, the gospels do not state why Judas betrayed Jesus. Yet, we may infer at least two reasons. Judas did it after becoming convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King, Mar 14:3-11. In that passage Jesus was rebuking some of His disciples because a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard broke the vial and poured it over His head. So perhaps the first reason is that Judas did it after becoming convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King. Thus, Judas' hopes for political power and influence were dashed. Then secondly, Judas also did it for money, Mat 26:14-16.

his expectation of financial wealth no longer existed, therefore, he bargained for what he could receive from the religious leaders (30 pieces of silver).

So in JOH 13:2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, {the son} of Simon, to betray Him, This Satan apparently did without possessing Judas because it is not until after Jesus gives bread to him that Satan re-enters Judas. Now, as we compare the other Gospel accounts, we see the devil next motivate Judas to tell the religious leaders that he will find a way to betray Jesus. Then the religious leaders promptly paid Judas for his treacherous scheme, Mar 14:10-11. And so Judas figured that the Garden of Gethsemane would be an ideal place to arrest Jesus because it was outside the city's eastern wall and away from the crowds, Mat 26:27-28. Satan, who anticipated the Lord's movements, had put this plan into Judas' head. The traitor notified the religious leaders that he would identify Jesus with a "kiss." MAT 26:48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him."

Why a kiss? Because it would be nighttime and not immediately apparent to the soldiers who Christ was among His disciples! In fact, this treacherous act by Judas became embedded in the minds of the apostles, so much so that Paul, when explaining the communion service says: 1CO 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; Now, do you still think Judas may have been saved? Well, if you still do even after all this, look at what Jesus had said at the Last Supper. MAT 26:23 And He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me."

MAT 26:24 "The Son of Man {is to} go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

Why would it be good for that man if he had not been born?

If he was going to go heaven after his betrayal isn't that better than non-existence? Of course it is! Being in a place where there shall no longer be any death; no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; a place of perfect happiness! In John 6:64, Jesus says that some of His disciples never believed from the beginning and He mentions Judas as one of them. So the character of Judas being such as we have described, reveals the possibility of his LUK 6:15 and Matthew and Thomas; James {the son} of Alphaeus, and Simon [not Peter] who was called the Zealot; Simon is called the Zealot and the Canaanite to distinguish him from Simon Peter. He was an ex-member of a fanatical Jewish sect, called the Zealots. Members of this group were fanatical opponents of Roman rule in Palestine. As a Zealot, Simon hated any foreign domination or interference. he Zealots were also known for their fierce advocacy of the Mosaic rituals. And

that's about all that we know about him. He was strong-willed and once he made up his mind he was the type of individual to go all the way with what he believed. Not a leader but a tremendous strong-willed follower. Simon received his call to the apostleship along with Andrew and Peter, the sons of Zebedee, Thaddaeus and Judas Iscariot at the Sea of Tiberias, Mat 4:18-22. Although Simon, like the majority of the apostles, was probably a Galilean, the designation "Cananaean" is regarded as of political rather than of geographical significance. Then we have LUK 6:16 Judas {the son} of James, Judas, surnamed Thaddeus was also called Judas the Zealot and was a very enthusiastic and intense individual, Mat 10:3.

The only incident recorded of Judas of James is in Joh 14:22, where during Christ's address to the disciples after the last supper he put the question, JOH 14:22 Judas (not Iscariot) *said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?" JOH 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him." JOH 14:24 "He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

JOH 14:25 "These things I have spoken to you, while abiding with you." He seems to have been a follower who needed to fall in love with his Lord. Tradition says he preached in Assyria and Persia and died a martyr in Persia. And of course we've already noted the last mentioned in relationship to the Lord's supper on Sunday morning, LUK 6:16.....and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. I made a list of what the leading characteristic of each one of these individuals seems to be.

Peter - impulsive

Andrew - open-minded

James - fanatical

John - passionate

Philip - inquisitive

Bartholomew - composed

Matthew - humble

Thomas - pessimism

James {the son} of Alphaeus - quietness

Simon the Zealot - strong-willed

Judas (son of James) - intense

Judas - traitor.

So that gives us some idea of the individuals that the Lord chose. Now, what did these men have with the exception of one? I think they had four things. They were available, they were flexible, they were teachable and they were dependable. (period!) Available, flexible, teachable and dependable, give me those four traits and character can be built. There was within them not a great deal of intellectual ability except probably Judas Iscariot, but there were the goods from which character could be built. They were Galileans. Galileans were easily recognized when they spoke. This is why during the trial of Jesus, it was a simple matter for the servant girl to detect Simon Peter as one of Jesus' disciples. The name Galilean was also used as a term of contempt or reproach when applied to the disciples of Jesus, Luk 22:59; Act 2:7.

The people of Galilee were always blamed for neglecting the study of their language, charged with errors in grammar, and especially with absurd mispronunciation, sometimes leading to ridiculous mistakes. Now, they're our kind of guys. I love that because their real people like you and I. They're not saints.

We made them into saints, and of course their life after Pentecost was incredible and certainly deserves our salute, but we've turned these men into celebrities and made them into statues in cathedrals. But that was not the way it was to have been. They're just plain garden-variety men who were available, and teachable, flexible and dependable willing to go with Christ. He chose them.

You see, "Jesus saw His men not as what they were, but as what they were to become". That's a great principle. And so should you and I with our children..., the people we work with..., our friends..., we should see them in the process of what they could become. Now look at what happened, this is great, 6:17 of Luke. Right away, Jesus gave the Twelve their first taste of ministry as He descended to a "level place" on the side of the mountain.

LUK 6:17 "And He descended with them, and stood on a level place;" So He changes His location, comes to a place on the side of the mountain where it kind of levels out. LUK 6:17.....and {there was} a great multitude of His disciples,

Standing by His side, His disciples watched in amazement as He cured diseases and cast out demons. There were a lot of mathetes, a lot of learners, a lot of men and women sitting around ready to learn hanging on His every word, and think of how they felt when they saw the Twelve. One wonders if there wasn't envy wishing he or she had been chosen. Who knows? There was a great multitude of His disciples and then there's the larger group, a larger circle, Now look at this next scene.

Many of His other disciples, as well as people from all over the nation, had flocked to this place and "were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all". LUK 6:19 And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing {them} all. That was the disciples' first view of boot camp training. What a great moment!

And I wonder if Peter didn't look wondering, "How could He be that patient, I'd love to have that quality"? Or, if Andrew didn't look and think, "How great it is that He reaches out, if only I were more assertive, I'm not like that." And the others, John, the passionate one, the devoted one thinking "How practical of Him to be in touch and accessible, I would love to be like that."

And that's part of mentoring. Our Lord didn't just teach them principles and give them facts, He showed them those principles and facts in action. They saw in Him the strengths that He was telling them that they were going to have someday. Their temperaments didn't change, Temperament doesn't change. Their personality didn't change, that doesn't change, and God gives that prior to birth, that's built into our genes. But the way of dealing with life and people and attitudes, those are choices we make and things that can change in our lives.

How wonderful it was for them to see Him with the crowd, pushing, pulling, and reaching and shoving, and yet still being patient and tolerant. The disciples were impressed. They will spend three and a half years impressed. He was the Best. And then He turned and looked at His men. When all was silent, He delivered His greatest sermon, beginning with a series of beatitudes similar to those recorded in Matthew's gospel. His thesis was simple. Those who follow Him must operate under a set of values opposite that of the world. For example, those whom the world calls miserable, Jesus pronounces "blessed," or happy. LUK 6:20 And turning His gaze on His disciples [you see, He's training], He {began} to say, "Blessed {are} you {who are} poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. This had nothing to do with financial ability. Poor here is not "blessed are you who are bankrupt, blessed are you who have \$8.09 in the bank," that's not what He is saying. He is talking about you who are poor in spirit. You who do not conduct yourself with an elevated opinion of yourself. You who are not arrogant, you are who are teachable.

Blessed are you. You have begun to touch the kingdom of God. In verse 21 "Blessed or happy are you who hunger now", doesn't mean that your stomach growls.....and you haven't had food. It's hungering for righteousness. It's hungering for the truth of God. It's being willing to meet whenever, get up whenever, stay at it for however long, to get your souls fed. The "hunger" is your desire, passion, dedication, and devotion for righteousness and truth. And you never really have that sense of fullness. You're always ready for more. Blessed are you who want more of what God can give. LUK 6:21.....Blessed {are} you who weep now, for you shall laugh. You who are touched with the sorrows and horrors of the world. You who are moved with compassion, and brought to tears around the needs of others. Happy are you! While others laugh and shove them away, blessed are you for touching their lives. Blessed are you for caring. LUK 6:22 "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and cast insults at you, and spurn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

LUK 6:23 "Be glad in that day, and leap {for joy,} for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. Can you imagine some corporate business headquarters sending this around as the game plan for their top men and women in the outfit?

Look at the next segment. LUK 6:24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. He is not saying, if you're well off, you're wrong, certainly not! If you earned it, and earned it the right way, it's yours from God. It's the person who trusts in his riches..... whose whole dream in life is to get rich...., and when he gets there, enough is never enough. Woe to you! But the Lord does say in LUK 6:24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. What He is saying is that, you're getting everything now. You wanted to get rich, you're rich, and you've got it. Enjoy it! Because that's all there is to it, that's all there is.

LUK 6:25 "Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe {to you} who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. LUK 6:26 "Woe {to you} when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets. You see, our Lord's sermon leads us to a crossroads. We must decide whether to pursue the wide path or the narrow path, the world's values or Christ's values, immediate gratification or ultimate glorification. It's not an easy decision because it's easy to go in the other direction. It's much easier to go the way of the world. After all, that's what the majority does. But however rocky the narrow road gets, our Lord is there to satisfy our deepest hunger and bestow on us riches this world has never known. Which way will you choose? [Click here to download](#)