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8 Following the Messiah: Calling the Apostles Part 2

1. You have viewed the video “Following the Messiah Episode 4 (the second half) at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide (Lesson Eight) available at www.appianmedia.org/free-download.
2. Our focus in this study is on the training of the apostles.

Into the Text:

1. Reading of the 3 accounts: Lk. 6:12-16; Matt. 10:1-4; Mk. 6:7-13.
2. What is described in Jesus’ relationship with His apostles (who are disciples) actually reflects a model of the teaching aspect of His mission reflected in the great commission (Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:44-49) and the work of the church (exemplified in Acts and the Epistles) to this day.
3. While our study has reflected on the relative “unknown, uneducated” circumstances of the apostles and perhaps by Jerusalem standards they were “unknown and uneducated.” However, consideration of their background may take us in a little different direction. Probably their education should not be discredited. Even though it was different it might have actually been better than that in Jerusalem. It might not have been as prejudiced with traditional interpretations and approaches. They may have had very good teachers in their parents and the rabbis in Galilee.
4. Jesus’ teaching was pretty effective and He came from the little village of Nazareth and He is going to help train the twelve. Yes, they are going to speak an inspired message, but their experiences with their parents at home, with the rabbis at the synagogues, with John and Jesus are going to figure into the equation in a powerful way. God worked through all these means to accomplish His purpose. Yes, God takes imperfect candidates and makes them usable (1 Cor. 1:26-31). BUT being with Jesus has a powerful impact (Acts 4:13). Sometimes we may expect God to act in a “miraculous” way to accomplish His objectives in teaching people and sometimes He does, but not always and in every instance.

How has He worked in your life to educate and train you for service in His kingdom? Are you waiting for some “miraculous” intervention or are you using the training that He has blessed you with and the resources that are available to you?

5. Jesus Mentored the Apostles (from Appian worksheet).

Following their selection, Jesus gave the twelve miraculous signs to perform and sent them out to nearby towns two by two to proclaim the arrival of the kingdom

(Mark 6:7-13). Afterward they would return and report how things had gone, and how sometimes they had struggled (Matthew 17:14-21). All the while Jesus was challenging their preconceived ideas, increasing their spiritual endurance and trying to deepen their faith in him. When the time was right, he also began preparing them for the cross he knew was waiting for him (Matthew 16:21-23; 26:20-25; 26:30-35).

The apostles stumbled during Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion. At his arrest in the garden the disciples fled (Matthew 26:56). Peter followed and tried to get close and see what was happening during the trial, until he was identified as a follower and, out of fear for his own safety, he abandoned his friend and Lord (Luke 22:54-62). After his resurrection Jesus appeared to them, forgiving, restoring and commissioning them (John 20:19-29; 21:1-19; Matthew 28:16-20).

Throughout the gospel accounts the apostles are revealed to be relatable people. They were blue collar men. They had families. They had jobs. They had imperfections. Their faith wavered. But they loved God and placed their faith in Jesus, and that made all the difference. Because of their humble faith, God used these men to provide testimony for his son, and to bring glory to his name.

6. The synagogue occupied a critical place in the Jewish world of the first century. Jesus taught in the synagogues (Matt. 4:23; Mk. 1:21; Lk. 6:6; Matt. 13:53-54). The synagogue provided an avenue for teaching the kingdom in the limited commission, when the seventy were sent out and later for the great commission.

According to the World Heritage Convention United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization the remains of as many as 50 different synagogues have been identified in Galilee (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1407/> "Early Synagogues in Galilee").

"The synagogue was a revolutionary institution. Its Greek name means 'place of assembly.' It functioned as a community center, housing the activities of school, court, hostel, charity fund, and meeting place for the local Jewish community. The bulk of synagogue remains comes from the Galilee. Galilee was one of the most concentrated sites for synagogues in the world. In the Second Temple and later resources, the word synagogue often refers to a congregation and not a building."

7. There were many small towns in Galilee. Scripture indicates that Jesus taught in such synagogues (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Lk. 4:16, 33).

In *The Times of Israel* dated 19 August 2016 there is an article entitled, "Archaeologists in Galilee unearth synagogue from Jesus' time." What is remarkable is that it was in a rural area, so synagogues were not limited to cities and towns. This synagogue was located 10 miles from Nazareth and is estimated to have been built between 20-40 A.D. Mordechai Aviam, the archaeologist who led the dig said, "This is the first 1st. century synagogue in rural Galilee of the first century."

8. The synagogue in Magdala is currently the oldest excavated in Galilee and is from the first century. A coin minted in Tiberias in 29 A.D. was found inside the synagogue (<https://www.magdala.org/visit/archaeological-park/synagogue/>).

There are photos here.

9. The synagogue in Capernaum was well known to Jesus. You have seen it in the Appian Media video.

He taught there (Mk. 1:21-28). It was near to the house of Peter (Mk. 1:29-39).

He healed a centurion's slave there. This centurion "built us our synagogue" (Lk. 7:1-10).

Application:

1. What role did your parents play in teaching you? Generally? In the things of God? Did you have others mentoring you in a local congregation? Preachers? Bible class teachers? What effect did they have?

2. As you look at what goes on in a local congregation do you think the purpose of the training process is clear? How could it be made clearer? Jesus sent the apostles out. Do you feel sent out? Sometimes I hear people complain, "I would talk to others about the Lord, but I don't feel qualified. I can't remember passages." What do we need to do to change this self-defeating perception? What do we need to do to increase people's confidence so they engage the work?

3. What is the role of parents? Bible class teachers? Elders/shepherds/overseers in this task?

4. What are you going to do as a result of this study? Gather more tools for your study of Scripture? Go out and try to engage other people? Devote more time to preparation? Commit to teaching and communicating the message? Look at Bible study, classes, ZOOM studies, with a preparatory perspective?

5. Without training we are unprepared to do the work. God has given us tools (Eph. 4:11-16). AND we become His tools to work in His kingdom. How is He modifying, training, molding, sharpening you to be a more useful tool?