

## 5. Call Three – Come and Serve

In our last two topics, we have looked at the first two calls Christ gave His disciples. Today, we come to the third call Christ gave them. Christ had first met some of the men who would become His disciples about 21 months earlier. Over those 21 months, those men, and many others, were given help in developing godly character and godly priorities. As we come to the second half of the public ministry of Christ, we are going to see that Christ gives a third call to these men.

In Luke 6:12-13, we read, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself*; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:” This same event is recorded in Mark 3:13-15, where we read, “And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:” In these two passages, we see several very significant things about this third call:

1. Christ did not give this call until He had spent an entire night in prayer.
2. Christ called His disciples to Himself.
3. Christ chose the twelve from a larger number of disciples.
4. Christ called the ones He wanted.
5. Christ called the twelve to be with Him.
6. Christ called the twelve to send them out to preach.
7. Christ delegated His power to them.

This third call is the call to “Come and Serve.” As you remember, in the second call, nine months earlier, Christ had invited the disciples to “Come and Grow”. “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” At that time, they were invited to go along with Christ so they could both observe and participate. In this third call, Christ invited the disciples to spend even more time with Him. He also let them know that He would be sending them out to preach. The disciples were again being invited to a greater level of both participation and commitment.

Not long after Christ called the twelve, His mother and brothers came to visit Him and were standing outside wanting to talk to Him. When the people told Christ they were outside, Christ answered, in Mark 3:33-35, “‘Who is My mother, or My brothers?’ And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.’” In these verses, we see that Christ had entered into a new relationship with the twelve. They had become His spiritual family with the same privileges as His physical family.

Another very important event happened after Christ gave the parable of the sower and the four kinds of soils. In Mark 4:10-11, we read, “But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, ‘To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.’”

This same thought is repeated again, in Mark 4:33-34, “And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it*. But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, He explained all things to His disciples.” In these verses, we see that Christ’s new level of commitment to the disciples also included a focus on understanding, not just hearing. Christ wanted His disciples to understand the things He taught because He knew the time would soon come when they would be doing the teaching. He knew they would only be effective teachers if they understood what they were teaching.

Christ also used this time to teach the disciples that ministry is a process, not just an event that happens one time. In Mark 4:26-29, we read, “And He said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.’” In these verses, we see some key principles:

- The kingdom of God involves people who God uses to scatter the seed
- Those who scatter the seed usually see a period of time pass before anything happens
- Those who faithfully scatter will one day see the seed sprout and grow
- Those who scatter do not understand the process that is happening in each person
- Those who scatter are not the source that produce the crops
- Those who scatter see God produce the initial blade of interest
- Those who scatter see God develop fruit from that interest
- Those who scatter see God bring that interest to maturity
- Those who scatter see God draw people to Himself
- Those who scatter have the joy of seeing God bring the harvest

This third call was a call to “Come and Serve”. This meant the time had come for on-the-job training to see what the disciples had learned. In Mark 6:7-9, we read, “And He called the twelve to *Himself*, and began to send them out two *by two*, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts—but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.” We notice several things about the on-the-job training the disciples received:

They were sent out as teams of two.

They were given power over unclean spirits.

They were told to take nothing – no extra clothes, no food, no money.

The lesson the disciples needed to learn was to depend on the Lord to provide as they served Him.

The disciples were sent out in teams instead of being sent out alone. This is important for several reasons:

- ◆ The team members could encourage each other when things got difficult
- ◆ The team members could each share what they had learned
- ◆ The team members could learn from each other as they traveled
- ◆ The team members prevented gossip and misunderstandings by others
- ◆ The team members were able to encourage each other as they saw God provide

In Mark 6:30-31, we read what happened when the disciples returned, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’” In these verses, we see that Christ asked the disciples to give a report when they returned. That report included two things:

- The disciples told what they had done
- The disciples told what they had taught

Christ later sent out a total of seventy, in two-person teams, for another ministry trip. This gave the twelve, plus fifty-eight others, additional experience and on-the-job training. Luke 10:1-2 tell us, “After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, ‘The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.’” Christ again gave them very specific instructions. He again sent them with nothing, so they would see how He provided for them as they served Him. This is one of the most important lessons a Christian needs to learn in order to effectively serve the Lord.

Luke 10:17-20 tell us about the report time when the seventy returned, “Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’” In this report, we see that Christ was teaching the seventy some very important lessons. Christ wanted them to:

- ◆ Realize that Satan and his demons have no power over believers
- ◆ Realize that they could minister, even to the demon possessed
- ◆ Realize that salvation is more important than power

During this period, the disciples learned many things as they began to serve with Christ under His observation and encouragement. Growing Christians also learn today as we give them opportunities for on-the-job training that includes our observation and encouragement. May the Lord richly bless you as you help guide and encourage growing Christians as they learn to serve the Lord.