

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 7- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Luke 6:12-16** 79- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 3

July 4, 2010

Luke 6:12-16

¹² **It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.**

¹³ **And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:**

¹⁴ **Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;**

¹⁵ **and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;**

¹⁶ **Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

Now, this is a section in our Journey through **Luke** where Jesus chooses 12 men to carry on the Ministry of the New Covenant after He has ascended back up into Heaven. And verse 13 says that Jesus named these men "apostles". So these men were very important to God and they should be very important to us as well.

Now the word "Apostle" is an important word. In fact, the English word "apostle" comes from the Greek word *apostolos*, and it wasn't translated- it was actually just *transliterated* into English as "Apostle". We just took the Greek word "apostolos", and we gave it an English pronunciation, and we made it Apostle. But if you ever did actually *translate* that Greek word, you would get "sent one".

Now, there is also a verb in the Greek language *apostello*, and it means: *to send*. The Greek *apos* is a preposition, and it means: *from*. So, *apostello* means: *to send from or to send away*. And so an Apostle is a "sent one".

Now this word could actually be traced back to the Aramaic and not the Hebrew. You see, the common language in Israel during the 1st

Century was *not* Hebrew. The language of the common man back then in Israel was actually Aramaic, and there was a Jewish institution at the time of our Lord called *Shahlia* which is an Aramaic word for "apostle".

And the *Shahlia* referred to any official representative of the Sanhedrin. Now as you may know- the Sanhedrin was a group of 70 men- that's what the word "Sanhedrin" basically means- the seventy- so there was group of 70 men who actually ruled Israel during the time that Jesus walked the earth.

And these men had a tremendous amount of power and a tremendous amount of authority. And what they did was, they delegated that power and authority to official representatives, and the Sanhedrin would *apostello* these official representatives- they would "send" these representatives "out" with all of the authority of the Sanhedrin to act on their behalf- usually to settle legal disputes, or disputes about the Law of God, or other religious disputes.

And in addition to the Sanhedrin- famous or prominent rabbis of that time also had *Shahlia*- they also had "sent ones" who would go out and carry their authority and teach their message and represent them.

So the Jewish people of the 1st Century were very used to apostles; they were very familiar with "sent ones" who were sent forth into the world with the authority or the power to do the business of either the Sanhedrin Court itself or to carry on the teaching of very prominent rabbis.

And that's exactly what Jesus is doing here. He's doing something very much in line with what other prominent rabbis did at that time- So by choosing these men, Jesus is telling the world here, *"I am going to have My own Shahlia. I am going to have My Own "sent ones", My Own apostles- just as the Sanhedrin do, and just as the famous rabbis always have- I'm going to have My Own "sent ones" who are going to bear the very same Divine Authority and Power that I have, and they are going to teach the very same doctrine that I teach."*

So what Jesus has here is twelve men to whom He will delegate His Power and His Authority and His Message, and these men will then go out and go forth and represent Jesus as official representatives of the Messiah.

Now the 1st Century Jew understood this concept because over in the *Mishna*- which is a collection of the writings of the rabbis of ancient Israel it says this,

"The one sent by the man is as the man himself."

So they understood this kind of identity- a commissioned representative that they knew acted with the very same authority as the one who had sent him.

So an apostle then was a title of great respect, a title of great honor, a title of privilege, and a title of great authority because the office bore with it the identical power of the one who had sent him.

Now **Mark 3** records this same event where Jesus chooses these men. And I want you to please turn with me to **Mark 3:13** and see what John Mark who wrote his Gospel Account by the authority of the Apostle Peter adds to this:

¹³ And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him.

¹⁴ And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He *could* send them out to preach,

¹⁵ and to have authority to cast out the demons.

I want to stop there for a minute. Mark says:

... that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

So, there's a two-step process here. Before they could be "sent out" to preach, before they could be sent out- they had to first be "pulled in". So, it was absolutely critical here that these men be "with" Jesus before they be sent out. So, this "bringing in" first before they were sent out was critical to their training.

In fact, it isn't until **Luke 9:1** that Jesus actually calls the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And by doing this- Jesus literally delegated to these apostles His Own miracle working Power and His very Own Authority over demons.

And **Luke 9** is paralleled with **Matthew 10**. So we're not there yet. Here in Luke 6- Jesus is simply choosing them; He is identifying them

and pulling them in. The next step is that Jesus will teach them and then after a period of intense teaching- then Jesus will give them miracle power- the ability to cast out demons with their words. And then the final step is that Jesus will then send these same men out into the world to establish Christianity in the earth.

And that is very critical to the ministry of a genuine Apostle. People go around all the time in our day and they lay claim to being an apostle and they add that title to their business cards, as though that means something, and they use that term to give themselves spiritual credibility and bring honor and respect and even fear to themselves.

But a true Apostle does not go forth to establish "a" Church like I did here on John Clark Road and like many others have done all over the world; a true apostle doesn't go forth to establish a denomination or a particular teaching. No, a true apostle of Jesus is sent out to establish "the" Church, the Christian Church, they are sent out so that by and through their teachings- which are always backed up with signs and wonders and miracles of the Holy Ghost- so that the New Covenant itself- that was purchased through the Life and Death, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ may be firmly and eternally established in the earth.

The ministry and the calling and the anointing and the purpose and the power and the authority of a true apostle was very narrow and it was very precise and it was very specific. They were not sent out to simply preach the Gospel- they were sent out to *define* the Gospel, to *articulate* the Gospel, to *develop* what the Gospel is and is not, and to write it down so that all future generations of believers would know what the Gospel is.

They were not sent out to simply talk about Jesus but to actually define what Christianity is, and to teach that Christianity is not a branch or a sect of Judaism, but a completely separate religion from Judaism, and is the continuation of the very same Divine Revelation that God began to show Abraham as recorded by Moses back in **Genesis**.

The Apostles were not just sent forth to pray for sick people but to have the very same Authority over organic diseases as Jesus had, to be able to heal all manner of diseases, and to have the very same absolute and total Power and Authority over fallen angels as Jesus had.

These men were not sent forth to just talk about what might happen at some point down the road- but these men were sent forth by

Jesus Christ Himself to put down into writing the final, full, and completed Revelation of God to Man in 27 additional Books that were just as completely inspired and just as inerrant and just as infallible as the 39 Books of the Old Covenant.

And these men were not sent out to simply believe in Jesus- they were sent out to define what the very Nature and Character of the Lord Jesus Christ was, and they developed the collective teachings that today we call the Gospel.

And as we saw last week- these men were sent forth to be able to correctly and fully interpret what the 39 Books of the Old Covenant Prophets actually meant and how what they all prophesied applied to Jesus and how they were always pointing to the day when Jesus would come.

And so, based on all that- I will say this to you just as strong as I know how - nobody before these men or after them has ever even come close to doing what these men did. And that is why I tell you that as far as the genuine office of Apostle goes- that office ceased to exist at the death of John- not because I say so, and not because of some man-made logic, but the office of Apostle stopped with John's death for the very same reason that Jesus sat down at the Right Hand of the Father- not because He was tired- but because He was finished!

And I say to you that the office of Apostle is no longer in force on the earth- not because Brother Blair doesn't want a move of God in his Church and not because Brother Blair has come against the Holy Ghost and not because Brother Blair doesn't want God to do what God has always done. None of that is true.

I say to you on the authority of God's Word that the ministry of the Apostles is over simply because they did their job; those "sent ones" finished the great Work that Jesus assigned to them, and the New Covenant was articulated and it was written down, and it was forever established on the earth, and the Church of Jesus Christ was raised up, and that one Church over which Jesus is the Head and for which Jesus shed His Blood shall never fall, and even the very gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's Church, and the ministry of the Apostles has ceased to exist because the superior Ministry of the New Covenant that is based on infinitely superior Promises and that was brought forth through the ministry of a sinless High Priest Who offered an infinitely

superior Sacrifice than a bull or a goat was forever established on the earth!

And what these men did can never be undone, and what they did can never be disannulled, and what they wrote will never be changed or added to or taken away from, and it shall remain in force and in fullness on the earth until Jesus bursts through the Eastern Sky on a white horse to rule and reign as King of all kings and Lord of all lords!

You see, once the very unique job that these very unique men did was actually done- it can never and it will never be done again. Let me explain what I mean by that.

Once Christianity was established- it can never be established again. Now Christianity can certainly be preached and it can be taught and it can be believed on by millions and it can and it should be spread all around the world- but once it was developed that one time- by the Apostles- it can never be *developed* again. That part of Christianity- the actual *development* of the Christian Faith was done one time - by the Apostles- and that part is over.

And, if anyone, for any reason, adds anything to Christianity- it is no longer Christianity- because the adding of that additional information has changed it so that it becomes another religion.

What makes Christianity to be Christianity and not Islam or Buddhism is not the personalities of the various believers but in the actual elements of what we believe to be true. So if you change those elements- you no longer have Christianity. And nobody on earth today has been called to develop those elements.

Those very precise elements have already been clearly defined for us and written down in the pages of the New Testament and we are not called to develop new elements- we are not called to receive new information- or new revelation- we have been called to earnestly contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. We are called to preach and teach and proclaim and believe and love and obey the already given revelation that the Apostles received and wrote down for us.

Once the Gospel was defined as containing the various elements that it contains, once that body of teaching called the Apostle's Doctrine was developed and written down, it will never be developed and written down again. Nothing can ever be added to it and nothing can ever be taken away from the true Gospel- It is what it is.

Now we can certainly teach the Gospel and we can believe it and we can proclaim it throughout the entire world, and we should do that- but we can never actually *develop* the Gospel again. It has already been developed by the Apostles so since the Gospel has already been developed for us and it has been articulated and recorded- it can never be altered or changed or redefined. And if anybody says that they are an apostle and they try to alter the Gospel with additional information- then you no longer have the true Biblical Gospel- you have "another gospel".

So I pray that you can understand just how unique and special and narrow the ministry of the Apostles was. They were not just preachers sent out to proclaim the Gospel- they were sent out to define what the Gospel is and write it down.

So the only reason why true genuine Apostles would need to exist today is if the Bible would be incomplete and would need more information to be added to it. And Apostles would be needed if the Gospel was not complete and there were particular elements of how unworthy sinners could be saved that we don't already have or if Christianity itself was not already established on the earth. Other than that- if the Bible is complete and the Church is set up, and if Salvation is already defined and if Christianity is forever established- then there is no need for Apostles today because that was why Jesus sent them out!

Now we need to know that up to this point- Jesus was speaking to a huge crowd all the time. There was a large group of followers- but He hadn't yet identified that intimate twelve. They will not be officially commissioned and granted His full Authority to cast out demons and heal the sick until Luke 9.

But here is their initial calling as Apostles. And you can see the flow all through this. First there was their following of Jesus. So their first call was to be disciples and for many of them that was their conversion. Then there was a secondary time when they were actually called to leave everything. And at first they could follow or not follow; they could come and go, and some of them were still holding on to their former life- like Peter and his fishing.

But back in Chapter 5- Jesus, you remember, said to Peter, James and John, "*No more fishing*," right? And they left everything and at that moment- they followed Him.

So first these men were called to believe in Jesus. And then they were called to drop everything and follow Jesus. And now here in this passage- out of that group of people who have believed and who have dropped everything and followed Him- Jesus chooses some of them and identifies them as apostles.

Now, later on- Jesus will grant them miraculous gifts and supernaturally empower them, and then finally He will send them out.

And they will go out on short-term mission opportunities to preach and heal and do great miracles, and then they'll come back. They'll go out and they'll come back, they'll go out and they'll come back. And finally Jesus leaves and returns to Heaven and these men will go out for good on their own. So these are the apostles.

And Dr. Luke mentions them six times in his Gospel Account and about 30 times in **The Book of the Acts** because their role is so central not only to the ministry of the Gospel to Israel, as Luke records it in his Gospel- but also for the founding of the Church as he records it in **The Book of the Acts**.

So these men are eternally important- as we saw last week the foundation of the gates of the City of New Jerusalem will have the names of the Apostles on them- so I don't want you to wander through the gates of that City and not know whose name is below you, okay? So we need to learn about these men here. So please look again with me to **Luke 6:13**:

And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

Now let me tell you why these men that Jesus called Apostles are so important- there are six reasons- so you might want to write this down:

1. The Apostles were important because they were the real foundation of the Church. As we saw last week- **Ephesians 2:20** says that the foundation of the Christian Church is the Apostles first and then the Prophets - with Jesus Christ as the chief Cornerstone. So the Apostles are the real foundation of the Church and they were also the first spiritual leaders of the new Israel and the Church.

2. The Apostles received Truth by Divine Revelation. Please turn with me to read Ephesians 3:

¹ **For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—**

² **if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;**

³ **that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.**

⁴ **By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ,**

⁵ **which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;**

⁶ ***to be specific*, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,**

⁷ **of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.**

⁸ **To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,**

⁹ **and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;**

¹⁰ **so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*.**

¹¹ ***This was* in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,**

¹² **in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.**

¹³ **Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.**

¹⁴ **For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,**

¹⁵ **from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,**

¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.
²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
²¹ to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

So this is very explicit. Paul taught that the Mystery of Christ has now been revealed through His holy Apostles in the New Testament and the Prophets in the Old Testament by the Spirit. So the Apostles did not preach a human message- they had direct Divine Revelation. And they took that direct Divine Revelation and like the Old Testament Prophets- they wrote that Revelation down and that Revelation became part of the Holy Scriptures.

So if anyone says they are an "apostle" in our day and they are getting direct Divine "revelation" directly from God today- then that "revelation" should be treated the very same way as the Divine Revelation of the Apostles and the prophets was treated, and that new "revelation" should be written down and it should also be added to the Bible as the 67th Book so it can be taught and believed on by the Church.

But if the Bible is finished- if the Canon of Scripture is closed- then it is entirely illogical to then say that the office of Apostle is still open. And so since the Apostolic Ministry has ceased, then there is no more direct Divine Revelation and the Bible is finished because you can't have it both ways.

We need to remember that it was not the physical construction of physical buildings that established Christianity on the earth- but the receiving and the articulation and the development and the formulation and the writing down of the Divine Revelation that was received from God by the Apostles that established Christianity.

3. The Apostles were the source of Doctrine. You see, when we read about the early Church meeting in **The Book of the Acts** for the first time- they all did something that made them the Church. And all the people of all the Churches all over the world all did the very same four things that made them all members of the very same Church. **The Acts 2:42** says:

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

So by the time that Dr. Luke wrote this here in **The Acts 2**- after just a few days after the birth of the Church- there already existed on the earth a definable body of teaching that could be identified as "The Apostles Doctrine" that the people of the Christian Church all taught and believed steadfastly.

So the Apostles were unique in that they were the first line of people in the life of the new Israel and the Church, They were the instruments of the Gospel *foundationally*, They were recipients of direct Divine Revelation which ends up in the Scriptures, and they were the source of Doctrine.

4. The Apostles were given to edify the Church. Please turn with me to **Ephesians 4:**

Ephesians 4:8-16

⁸Therefore it says, **"WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN."**

⁹(Now this *expression*, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?

¹⁰He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)

¹¹And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers,

¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness¹ in deceitful scheming;

¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,

¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

So the Apostles were the early teachers and the first preachers of the Christian Church. And we can still be edified by these men today through the Words that God gave them to write.

5. The Apostles were examples of godly virtue.

I just read you **Ephesians 3:5** where the Apostles are called "holy apostles". So these men set a standard for godliness and virtue and spirituality that none had before them or since. They were the first examples for believers to follow. And I want to give you just three examples of what I am talking about here. Look quickly at **1 Corinthians 11:1**. In that verse- the Apostle Paul says something that nobody in the entire Bible up to that time except Jesus had ever said. Paul said:

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Now we take this statement for granted today and we tend to make statements like, "*Well, Paul as just a man.*" And that is true. Paul was an unworthy sinner who was saved the very same way that we are saved today. But we cannot stop there. Because in addition to Paul being just a sinner saved by Grace- Paul was also an Apostle and that makes a difference because in his capacity as an Apostle- Paul was uniquely chosen to do a very precise and unique thing in the earth- and to live a very unique life of Suffering and Glory that we do not live.

And the result is that that we need to know that no other character in the entire Bible ever said anything like this besides two people: Jesus and Paul.

Moses never said anything like this. Abraham never talked this way. This statements never came out of David's mouth or Isaiah's- but here for the first time since Jesus told Peter and Andrew to "follow

Him" in **Matthew 4:19**- the Apostle Paul is telling the saints at the Church in the city of Corinth to imitate him because in his capacity as an Apostle- Paul was one of only a handful of men who ever walked the face of the earth who were the gold standard of what it meant to actually follow Jesus. Now please turn with me to **1 John 1:3**.

In this verse- the Apostle John makes one of the most startling statements in the entire Bible. In this verse- John says:

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

In other words- John is saying here that if the people of the Church want to have a genuine fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father- then we must have a correct fellowship with the men who are called to be Apostles because these men are doing this right, and what these men are teaching is true, and so if we have any hope at all of being in right standing with God- we must pattern our lives after them and we must believe in accord with what the Apostles teach or else we do not have a right relationship with God or Jesus.

Now there is not one single Pastor or minister on the face of the earth today that can make statement like this, and yet here is John saying this "matter of factly" without any fanfare or trumpets blowing at all.

John is simply, but profoundly, saying that if we who claim to be saved want to have a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ- then we must have that relationship along the lines that the Apostles have put forth in the New Testament or else we really do not have a right relationship with God.

So what this means is that there is no such thing as anyone knowing Jesus and being saved while living or believing in opposition to what the Apostles taught.

One of the main characteristics of a true Apostle that seems lost to those who lay claim to that title today is the unbelievable suffering and persecution that the Apostles endured. When you read about how Paul and Peter and James and John suffered and were persecuted- it almost takes your breath away.

But these men were not only called to bring forth Divine Truth- but they were also called to be a real life example of pure and holy living as they suffered unmercifully at the hands of evil men. To get just a glimpse of what I am talking about- please turn with me to **2Corinthians 11:24-33:**

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.

²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

²⁶ *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

²⁷ *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

²⁸ Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches.

²⁹ Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

³⁰ If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

³² In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me,

³³ and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and *so* escaped his hands.

And in addition to all this- we tend to forget that Luke records in the Acts 14 that Paul was stoned to death and the believers all gathered around his lifeless body and prayed, and God performed a miracle right there in broad daylight and Paul was raised up from the dead, and the very next day- Paul was found preaching the Gospel in the very same city where he had been stoned.

Now compare this level of suffering and persecution of the Biblical Apostles with the modern day prima donnas who are self-proclaimed and unaccountable "apostles" and "prophets" who brag about flying

around the country in their private jets and who live in opulence and who wear only the finest clothing and eat the finest foods and who own condominiums in Manhattan, and teach that they actually *deserve* such blessings by virtue of a Man walking up a lonely dark hill and dying for their sins. Truly the genuine Apostles in the Bible were very unique men indeed.

6. The Apostles were given miracle power to confirm their Message.

Please turn with me to **2 Corinthians 12:11&12**. In this passage the inspired Word of the living God says:

¹¹ I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.

¹² The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

These men were the first preachers of the Gospel- to bring about Salvation to the new Israel of God and to the set number of Gentiles. And so these men were the recipients of direct Revelation- the unfolding of the mystery of Christ- which they preached and which they wrote and which now makes up the New Testament.

But the people didn't know whether they should believe these Apostles or not. Because, after all- what these men were teaching was so radical and so strange, and the people wondered is this God or is this simply the rantings of few very disturbed men.

So, God proved the Word of the Apostles; God gave Divine credibility to the Words of the Apostles by backing them up with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost to prove beyond any doubt that what these men were teaching was absolutely from God, and that it was the fulfillment of all that the Prophets had written earlier, and that it should be accepted and believed.

So these men were the founders of the Doctrine which establishes the Truth of God for the Christian Church. They were the early edifiers, preachers and teachers of believers. They were the first examples of virtue and they were the first, I should say they were the primary and only men, who have been given miracle power by the Lord Jesus to confirm their preaching as true and from God.

And as a result, you might expect that these men were greatly blessed by God and that through their great prosperity and wealth and material possessions they exemplified the Power and the Glory of Jesus Christ. Well, not exactly.

Over in **Luke 18**- the disciples were concerned about the way things were going and what might happen to them, and Peter says in verse 28 of **Luke 18**,

... **“Behold, we have left our own *homes* and followed You.”**

“We have abandoned every earthly comfort and every earthly possession and we have walked away from everything that this world has to offer and we have followed You.”

And, of course, the implication of a statement like that is, *“Okay, Jesus- since we have left all to follow You- now You need to come through for us.”* Right? I mean we have done all this for You- now what are You going to do for us? Isn't that the usual mentality of those who say they are serving God? I did all this for God first and now God owes me big time.

But look at how Jesus responded to that comment down in verse 29,

²⁹ **And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,**
³⁰ **who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life.”**

You haven't left anything that I'm not going to more than make up for you. But most of the time what God blessed these men with had absolutely nothing to do with money or material wealth or material possessions- but a close and a vibrant and a real and a powerful relationship with the Owner and the Creator of the Universe.

And so in that sense- God did bless these Apostles in this life- even though most of them were martyred and even though all of them suffered unbelievable sufferings. And as we'll see when we take the time to look at each one of their lives- God blessed these men in this life in spite of that, and God is going to bless these men in the life to come. Remarkable, remarkable men.

But I have to tell you, folks, this is not easy for Jesus to do because these men were really hard-headed men. There was a reason that these guys were not the academic elite. There's a reason why they weren't at the high levels of Jewish society. These men were all thick headed and hard and brutal and violent men. And Jesus said to them so many times, *"You just don't get it, do you? You just don't get it."* What we've said to our kids all through the years, *"Can't you get this? Am I not clear? Are you not listening?"*

Jesus said to them things like, *"Are you still without understanding?"* Sometimes He said, *"They don't understand any of these things."* And don't forget that Jesus called Peter "satan".

And I think this is so very important for us to know because Jesus never one time covers over their defects. If Jesus wanted to make a case for their sainthood and to get them in a stained-glass window somewhere- He might be better served if He hadn't dragged out all their defects.

But that's not the way it is with God, is it? God can only use people with defects because that's the only kind there are. Anybody who tries to cover over the defects is being ridiculous. Jesus never covered any of these men's defects. In fact, the defects are thrown in our face all through the Gospels. I mean, if you spend just a little while reading the Gospels, you wonder of all people how the Lord could ever use Peter- but, oh, how Jesus used Peter!

So this should give us all great hope because even though these men were special, and even though they were very unique, and even though there has never been anyone like these men before or since- these men were also - just men. The Apostles were all horrible sinners who were been gloriously saved by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they were called and chosen from before the foundation of the world, just like we are, and they were handpicked by Jesus to do what they did- just like we are.

And the people could see that these men were like Jesus. They had His message. They had His Person and they had His Power.

And they all eventually graduated from the little seminary where Jesus Himself was the only Teacher. And then Jesus was gone, and the Holy Spirit came, and the Church was born, and these men went down the steps of that Upper Room and they changed the world.

And they're still changing the world through the Scriptures and the testimony which they left us. And, you know, the Lord is going to use people like that always. And that's why I'm telling you- when we get through these guys- you're not only going to know them- but you're going to know for sure that the Lord can use you because you're going to see yourself here to the eternal Glory of God.

Let's come and pray.

© 2008- 2015 by The Covenant of Peace Church. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1996 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse study of **The Gospel According to Luke**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.