

Mark 3:7–19 — Twelve Ordinary Men

January 13, 2018

How many of you have demanding work where people always need you? How many of you feel like your whole day is a constant stream of demands through texts, phone calls, and people constantly interrupting you? If you ever feel exhausted from the demands of people, you are beginning to understand what Jesus felt like every day. This morning, we continue our study of the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark. In our study, we will get a window into how much pressure people put on Jesus and how exhausted he became from his work.

Last week, we resumed our study in the Gospel of Mark after the Christmas season. By way of review, we learned in the first two chapters this Gospel, Mark consistently told us the identity of Jesus. In the introduction of this Gospel, Mark called Jesus the Son of God. He was declared to be the Son of God by God the Father at his baptism. Even the demons called Jesus the holy one of God before Jesus cast them out.

In the opening two chapters of this Gospel, Mark was not just clear about Jesus' identity, but he was also clear about Jesus' authority. Mark showed us Jesus has authority to cast out demons. He has authority to heal every disease. Jesus has authority to forgive sins. Last week, Jesus made the most audacious claim of authority — he claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath. The Pharisees thought they were the guardians of the Sabbath. They made thousands of rules they bolted onto the Bible about the Sabbath. Jesus, using his matter-of-fact style, claimed he was in charge of the Sabbath. They weren't in charge of the Sabbath. Jesus even claimed to be the one who created the Sabbath in Genesis

2. Jesus claimed to be the creator and definer of the Sabbath so he alone determined how the day should be observed.

Jesus' claim to be creator and definer of the Sabbath day was more than the Pharisees of his day could handle. They immediately left Jesus' presence and joined forces with an ultra-liberal political party in the ancient world called the Herodians to develop a plan to kill Jesus. We are only in the third chapter of Mark's Gospel and the Jews have already decided to kill Jesus. That is where we pick up the story.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him, for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Mark 3:7–19 (ESV)

Our text breaks into two parts. The first part gives us a window into the popularity of Jesus and the demands placed upon him by people. The second part shows us how Jesus decided to handle those demands by selecting a group of men who would work in his place while he was alive and carry on his ministry after he was gone. They were called the apostles.

Jesus had remarkable popularity.

Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. Mark 3:7–8 (ESV)

Jesus was incredibly popular. This verse provides an excellent window into the popularity of Jesus. I must confess that I had forgotten the popularity of Jesus and the size of the crowds that followed him until I studied this verse. I suspect most of us have also underestimated Jesus' popularity.

Mark began by telling us Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea. A little geography will help. Last week, when Jesus healed the man with a withered hand, he was at a synagogue in Capernaum, which is located on the Sea of Galilee. We learned earlier that the Sea of Galilee is a large, freshwater lake. It is not a saltwater sea. Jesus knew the Pharisees and Herodians were scheming to take his life, so he left town and went to the lakeshore.



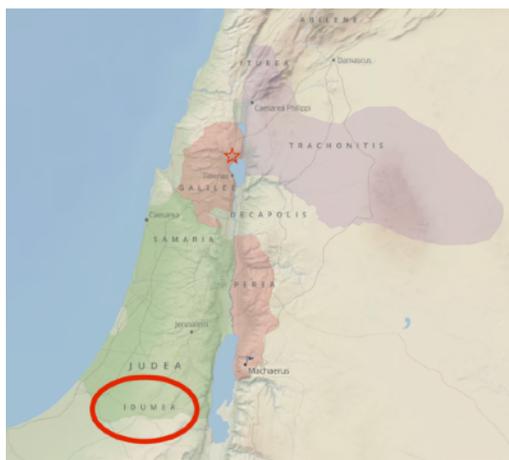
It says a great crowd followed Jesus to the lakeshore. That doesn't sound significant, but it is a big deal. Where was the crowd before this? They were in Capernaum. This was not a small crowd. This was a super large crowd. Capernaum was a town of around 1,500 people. This huge crowd produced a situation in Capernaum that is similar to what is unfolding in Tijuana, Mexico, where the city is overwhelmed by the migrant caravan. Small Capernaum was

overwhelmed by people who came to see Jesus. Scholars estimate there were several thousand or even tens of thousands in the crowd all clamoring to see Jesus in a town that is usually only 1,500 people.

I think Capernaum was happy when Jesus left town for the lakeshore because the town was overrun with people wanting to see Jesus.

Mark told us where this mob of people was coming from. He said they were coming from the region of Galilee. This is simply the area surrounding the Sea of Galilee. This is not too impressive. It is understandable.

Then he said people were also coming from Jerusalem and Judea. In this crowd were also people from Judea and Jerusalem. Jerusalem is about a 70 miles south of Capernaum. The area around Jerusalem is Judea. That would mean some people walked a hundred miles



from Judea in the south to see and hear Jesus in the north. Remember they were not driving a car on a highway. They were walking or riding on animals on a dirty road. That took a long time.

People also came from Idumea, even further south and out of Jewish territory.

This was the territory of the Edomites, who were the descendants of Esau. They also heard about Jesus and were coming to hear him teach and to be healed.

They lived 120-plus miles away from the Sea of Galilee.

Mark said people were coming from east of the Jordan river. These people were coming 50-100 miles to hear Jesus and be healed by him. People also came from Tyre and Sidon. Those were Phoenician sea trading cities also out of



Jewish territory.

There were Jewish people coming to be healed by Jesus from all over Israel. There were Gentile people coming to be healed by Jesus.

There were Edomites and

Phoenicians all converging on little

Capernaum to hear Jesus and be healed by him. This gives us an understanding of the size of the crowds that came to see Jesus. It was thousands or ten thousands of people.

If those numbers are hard for you to believe, remember when Jesus fed the 5,000? That number only included men. It didn't include women or children. The crowds total number was 12,000 or even 15,000 or more on that day. Huge crowds like this were common for Jesus. Just imagine what a crowd like that was like when it descended on a city of 1,500 people.

The crowds came for healing.

The primary reason people came was for healing. Remember this was a time when modern medicine didn't exist. Most people were sick. There was no medical care as we know it. There was no penicillin. There was no surgery. When surgery took place, there was no anesthesia. The instruments were not sterilized. Disease was rampant. Suffering was everywhere. Life expectancies were short. When people heard they could come to Jesus and with just a touch or a word he would instantly heal them, people came running from everywhere.

Jesus' healings were not just urban legends. There were thousands of ex-lepers, former paralytics, former blind people, people formerly missing limbs all walking around the ancient world telling other people Jesus healed them. Can you imagine the talk about Jesus as people gathered for meals?

This is why Jesus usually didn't enter a city. The cities could not contain the crowds that want to be healed by him. Nobody was denying his miracles.

And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they crush him... Mark 3:9 (ESV)

This is a great picture of the way things were transpiring. Jesus was not just healing people, he was trying to teach people. Jesus was teaching the gospel message because he knew the gospel message of repenting from your sin and trusting in Jesus to save you is more important than physical healing. Physical healing straightens your body for the next 20 years. The gospel straightens out your relationship with God for this life and eternity. Healing is not the big reason he has come. Jesus came to teach the good news of the gospel.

While Jesus' teaching was more important than his healing, but most people were more interested in Jesus' healings. They wanted to touch him and be healed. They were literally pressing into him. Jesus was in constant danger of the mobs of people crushing him because they wanted to touch him. This was a popularity level beyond Hollywood stars. The danger of Jesus being crushed by the crowds that wanted to touch him and be healed was so real that Jesus instructed his disciples to have a small boat ready for him at the shore so he could get into the boat and get away from the people if the crush of the crowd became more than he could bear. In Mark 4:1, Jesus used this option to avoid being crushed by the crowd.

Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. Mark 4:1 (ESV)

Some of you thought Jesus taught from a boat because it was quaint or because it provided good acoustics. Jesus taught from a boat for security reasons. It kept the front row of his audience far enough away from him that he could teach. The front row of Jesus' audience could only tread water for so long before they backed up.

Mark continued to talk about the crowds and their desire for healing.

...for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. Mark 3:10 (ESV)

When it says he healed many, that is not insinuating some were not healed. In the Greek, this is written as a superlative. Jesus healed many people. He healed lots of people. All of the people who came to him for healing were healed. Jesus healed everything instantly and completely. If people were simply

able to touch Jesus, they were healed. This is why the crowds were crushing him. We see this throughout his life.

And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well. Mark 6:56 (ESV)

She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, "If I touch even his garments, I will be made well." Mark 5:27–28 (ESV)

The text says people were constantly reaching out to touch him and be healed. The Greek word for “pressing” in these sentences carried the idea of pushing on a barrier to break it. A good mental picture of this is the mobs of migrants we see coming through Mexico. They come to a fence and everyone in the crowd pushes on it and breaks it. This is the idea.

Remember how healings took place. Nobody gradually got better over time. Everyone instantly got better. Every healing was a supernatural work on the order of creation itself. Jesus miraculously, instantly created organs. He created limbs. He created skin. He created eyes. He created arms and ears with just a touch or a word as people watched in disbelief.

I began our study by saying, if you have a job where people always want a piece of you, you can begin to understand Jesus an average day in the life of Jesus. The demands these mobs of people placed on Jesus were far more than any of us can imagine. People were constantly throwing themselves at Jesus to touch him and be healed.

Jesus drove demons out of the possessed.

And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." Mark 3:11 (ESV)

Unclean spirits are demons. At this time, many people were possessed by demons. Today, we don't see as many people possessed by demons. Why is there this discrepancy? While I don't have all the answer, I do have part of the answer.

Not all demon-possessed people are overtly possessed by demons. Sometimes demon-possessed people look like the nice guys, not just the crazy guys that don't shower and have bedheads. Earlier in our study of the Gospel of Mark, in Mark 1:23, we met a demon-possessed man that was in a synagogue. Obviously, people in the synagogue did not know this man was demon-possessed or he wouldn't have been part of the synagogue. That demon was operating undercover. This was a demon-possessed man that looked like a good guy so he could operate undercover so he could sow division in the synagogue and introduce lies about God to others in the synagogue once he earned their trust. I believe this is still true today. Some people are overtly demonically possessed while others are demonically possessed but they are operating undercover looking like good guys to lead people astray.

Undercover or not, all demons immediately freaked out when Jesus showed up and blew their cover. Every demon-possessed person fell down before Jesus and cried out, "You are the Son of God." Every demon is petrified in the presence of Jesus. No demon has an attitude around Jesus. We see this in other passages.

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! James 2:19 (ESV)

All demons shake in fear in front of Jesus.

Jesus didn't allow the demons to be in charge of his publicity.

And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. Mark 3:12 (ESV)

Why would Jesus want the demons to be quiet? When your opponents are in control of sharing your identity, it can be confusing. You don't want your enemies to be in charge of your press releases. That would be like putting Jim Acosta in charge of the White House press corps. Even if he said the right things, he would say them the wrong way. The same is true for Jesus. Jesus didn't want petrified demons to be in charge of telling everyone his true identity. After a while, it would look like Jesus was associated with Satan, and he isn't.

This is very similar to what happened in Acts 16 when Paul and Silas had a demon-possessed slave girl following them around for a few days, telling everyone they were servants of the most high God and telling everyone the way to be saved. The demon was saying the truth. Eventually though, Paul cast the demon out of her because he didn't want a demon in charge of his publicity.

In summary, we see Jesus had incredible popularity. He was healing everybody with a touch. People were desperate to touch him and be healed by him. He was in danger of being crushed by crowds. He retreated to a boat on the lake to keep people away. Demons freaked out when they saw Jesus. This was the life of Jesus every day. Everybody wanted a piece of Jesus. Jesus needed to break his job up to make it more manageable. As we come to the next section, that is exactly what he did when he chose the 12 apostles to help him.

Jesus called 12 apostles.

And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so

that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach... Mark 3:13–14 (ESV)

When we think about the 12 apostles, we typically think of them from a Catholic or Anglican background and the way they are portrayed on stained glass windows in the cathedrals of Europe. Regular people are on the bottom of the window. God is on the top of the window. The apostles are a little lower than God on the window and their faces glow because they are the best, the brightest, the classiest people around. They are almost divine.

That is completely untrue. The apostles were not the best educated, most skilled or gifted people. They were ordinary people like you and me. As many as seven of them might have been fisherman. The rest came from a variety of backgrounds. They had no special education, training, or skills. They were outsiders to the religious establishment of the day. They were prone to mistakes, poor decisions, and bad attitudes. They were argumentative. Jesus even called them slow to learn and spiritually dense. They were blockheads.

They spanned the political spectrum. One was a Zealot. Zealots in the first century were a radical political group determined to overthrow the Romans by guerrilla warfare. Some Zealots were sicarri. The sicarri carried little daggers and in densely packed crowds they came up behind unsuspecting Roman soldiers and slipped a knife into their backs. He would then put the dagger under their cloak, slipped back into the crowd, and let the soldier bleed to death in the street.

Another apostle was a tax collector. That is the opposite end of the political spectrum. Tax collectors worked for the Romans collecting taxes from their own people and pocketing whatever profit they could make off their own

flesh and blood. Tax collectors and zealots would normally kill each other, yet we find one of each as apostles of Jesus.

Virtually all of the apostles came from Galilee with the exception of Judas. While all of them had huge flaws, Jesus used them to help carry out his ministry while he was alive and carry on his ministry once he was gone. God used ordinary people who had large flaws to turn the world upside down. Their ministry is still going on today as evidenced in the church.

Jesus chose his apostles. They didn't choose him.

Something important we should notice about these apostles is they were all chosen by Jesus. Nobody applied for the job of being an apostle. Luke 6 tells us Jesus spent a night in prayer determining whom his father wanted before he chose them.

When Jesus chose them, as God, he knew everything about them. He knew about their flaws, their short tempers, their lack of faith and their weaknesses. He even knew the moment he selected him that Judas would betray him. Jesus chose them anyway.

Nothing has changed. Jesus knows us and our flaws completely. He knows we are not the best. We are not the brightest, yet Jesus chose us to be part of his church anyone. He loves us in spite of our flaws. He also desires to take and use us even with our flaws, just like he did with his disciples.

Jesus chose 12 for a reason.

Why did Jesus choose 12, not 13 or 15? When Judas fell out, why was the first order of business for the remaining apostles to replace the missing apostle with a man named Mathias?

The answer to those questions goes to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. When Jesus began his ministry, one of the first things he did was go into the temple and drive out the money changers and salesman. The religious leaders of Judaism had turned the court of the Gentiles, which was to be a place of prayer for the nations, into a mini-mall where they could rip you off with exorbitant prices on money exchanged and animal sacrifices. Jesus was furious that the religious leaders turned the temple into a business. He rejected them for this.

We have also seen that already in Mark 3, the religious leaders rejected Jesus and were planning his death.

At the end of Jesus' ministry, Jesus cleansed the temple a second time, driving out the money changers and attacking the Sadducees and the priests, saying they had prostituted the worship of God.

In Matthew 23, Jesus gave a long list of condemnation for the religious establishment of his time calling the religious leaders hypocrites, blind guides, fools, white-washed tombs, and men filled with greed and self-indulgence.

In short, Jesus rejected the spiritual leadership of Israel that existed in his day.

How is this related to Jesus choosing 12 apostles? There needed to be new leadership for God's people. The twelve apostles were Jesus' replacement for the corrupt leadership of the 12 tribes of Israel.

"You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28–30 (ESV)

The 12 apostles were also foundational to the new Jerusalem.

It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation 21:12–14 (ESV)

Jesus chose 12 apostles because he replaced the leadership of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jesus chose ordinary men.

The spiritual leadership of Jesus' time was highly educated. They were gifted. They were a cut above the rest. They were the people you admired.

When Jesus chose the 12 apostles, he chose people that were not educated. He chose 12 ordinary men. Jesus chose ordinary men so his power would be seen more clearly through them. Their natural giftedness would not diminish the power of his spirit.

Paul said this is the way God loves to work. He loves to take people who have little ability and use them for his kingdom, that way his strength and power is most clearly displayed.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is

weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (ESV)

This was not just the way God worked in the Corinthian church but was also the way Jesus worked when he chose the apostles.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13 (ESV)

God still works this way. He loves to take people who are ordinary, and because they depend upon Jesus, God uses them in ways beyond what they could ask for or imagine for his kingdom and his church.

Jesus called them apostles, making them his official representatives.

Jesus called them apostles. The word apostle in Aramaic means official representative. A representative came with all the authority, rights and privileges of the person who sent them. Jesus was training up these 12 men so they could also teach, cast out demons and heal the sick just like he did so he could multiply his ministry. They would go through training, and in chapter 6, he sent them out to preach, heal diseases and cast out demons, just like he was doing.

By the way, it is worth noting how Jesus trained these men. After selecting them, they spent time with him. Jesus invested himself into their lives through relationship. They were with Jesus 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Relationships are still the most effective way of learning. Reading is not a bad thing but relationship and doing life together is a better thing.

Who were the apostles?

He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and

Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. Mark 3:16–19 (ESV)

It isn't often we have a chance to look at the 12 apostles and learn about them. The names of the apostles are given four times in the Bible, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and Acts. The same people are mentioned in every list, but sometimes the lists are in a slightly different order, and sometimes the names are a little different. Why is that?

Matthew 10:2–4	Mark 3:16–19	Luke 6:14–16	Acts 1:13
Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter
Andrew	James	Andrew	James
James	John	James	John
John	Andrew	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas	Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew	Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)	James (son of Alphaeus)
Lebbaeus (sum. Thaddeus)	Thaddeus	Simon	Simon
Simon	Simon	Judas (son of James)	Judas (son of James)
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	

As we will see in a moment, one of the reasons the names are different is because nicknames are often used instead of proper names. If we don't realize that, it can be confusing.

Another reason the lists are in a slightly different order is because of the way Jesus divided up his apostles. He apparently divided them into three groups of four people with each one having a leader. Group one always has the same four guys. Group two always has the same four guys and so does group three. The first name in each of the groups is always the same, which indicates that person was the leader of his group.

Peter's name is always first since he was the leader of the apostles and the spokesmen for the apostles. The lists always go in a decreasing order. The further down the list we go, the less we know of each apostle. Judas is always last, for obvious reasons.

We have 12 men who didn't all have the same level of intimacy with Jesus but were all given the same power and authority to share about Jesus. Let's look at them briefly.

Simon — His nickname was Peter, which means rock. Jesus called him “the rock” to bring out of him what Jesus was trying to build into him. By nature, Simon was not a rock. He was indecisive and undependable. He promised he would never deny Jesus then he denied even knowing him three times before morning. He was the closest to Jesus and the most outspoken in the group. He was a fisherman by trade.

James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother — Both of them were mentioned in Mark 1 as fishermen along with Peter and Andrew. We don't know much about their father, Zebedee, but he was mentioned with them approximately six times. Apparently Zebedee must have been very significant in the fishing business. In John 18, at the end of Jesus' ministry during his arrest and trial, it tells us John, the son of Zebedee, was known to the high priest. Why would a fisherman in Galilee be known to the high priest in Jerusalem? My only guess is that Zebedee had such a large fishing business that he and his sons were even known in Jerusalem.

Jesus gave them a nickname. He called them Boanerges, which means sons of thunder. That means they were hot heads. Apparently these guys had quite a temper. We see an example of their tempers in Luke 9:54 when the apostles were not given a friendly welcome in a Samaritan town. Look what James and John said:

And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” Luke 9:54 (ESV)

“Jesus, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn everyone in the town to a crisp?” They were acting more like terrorists than evangelists. They clearly had anger issues.

Andrew — He was Peter’s brother. He is the least known of the four disciples in the first group. Andrew had a reputation for introducing other people to Christ. He introduced Peter to Christ. The Bible doesn’t tell us much about him. He only appears in the Bible nine times and most of those are just passing references. He was overshadowed by his brother Peter.

Philip — He is always mentioned as the leader of the second group in all four references to the apostles. He was a professional fisherman that grew up attending the same synagogue as Peter, Andrew, James and John. From what we can tell, he was a process person. He was usually obsessed with numbers and identifying why things wouldn’t work. For example, when it came to the feeding of the 5,000, Jesus asked Phillip where they could find enough bread to feed the vast crowd. Phillip did the math in his head and said 20 denarii wouldn’t even be enough to give everyone a bite. He was the bean counter in the group whose favorite line was, “We can’t afford that.”

Bartholomew — That was not his real name. His real name was Nathaniel. Bartholomew means son of Tolmai. We have almost no details on him except from the Gospel of John. He was a friend of Phillip, and he loved his Bible.

Matthew — We met him in Mark 2:13. He was a tax collector. Tax collectors were hated and despised by everyone. Luke refers to him as Levi. He was used by God to write the Gospel that bears his name. He was a humble man who kept himself almost completely in the background. He is famous for inviting tax collectors and sinners to his house for a party with Jesus and the rest of the disciples so they could meet Jesus.

Thomas — In John 11:16, he was called *didymus*, which means the twin. Thomas was a twin. How many of you knew one of the 12 apostles was a twin? He was also the pessimist who wouldn't believe the rest of the disciples that Jesus rose from the dead until a week after the resurrection when Jesus appeared to the disciples a second time and Thomas was with them.

James, the son of Alphaeus — We don't know anything about Alphaeus. We also don't know anything about James other than his name always appear first in the final group of four. In Mark 15:40, he is also called James the less or James the younger. This is another nickname which identifies him either as the younger James or the shorter James. This most likely identifies James as a really short guy. James the short guy was his nickname. He looked like Danny DeVito.

Thaddaeus — He is also called Judas, son of James, in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13. Sometimes he was called Thaddaeus, and sometimes he was called Lebbaeus. It doesn't matter which nickname you use. Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus both mean the same thing. They mean mama's boy. This is not a great nickname when you are an adult and an apostle. He was the mama's boy in the group. Don't name your kid Thaddaeus.

Simon the Zealot - He was originally a member of the Zealots which were a revolutionary group and also known for killing Romans in guerrilla warfare style. He was part of the Antifa of his day.

Judas Iscariot - The disciple who betrayed Jesus.

This is an interesting group. According to Ephesians 2:20, Christ turned this motley crew of tax collectors, revolutionaries, fishermen, bean counters, hot heads, and a mama's boy into the foundation of his church. They are now the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel and their names are on the foundation of the New Jerusalem.

If God could use these ordinary, uneducated, flaw-ridden men to be the foundation of his church, he can use ordinary flaw-ridden people like you and mean to continue his church to the next generation. We have a great Jesus who delighted to use 12 ordinary men. He still delights to use ordinary people like you and me.



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