

I. Wisdom of Jesus Leadership in His Community (Mat. 10:2-4)

- A. Imagine you were going to pick 12 immature young men to develop, in roughly 3 years, into the kind of leaders that you would entrust with the leadership of the worldwide church in just 3 years. This was going to be your community during your ministry, your lifegroup, and intimate circle of friends.
- B. The differences in personality types, political views, values, and theology for these men were vast. It could easily be said of Jesus that He handpicked these men for conflict not for unity.
1. Simon and Jude were both zealots who today would be compared to religious radical terrorists who were bent on overthrowing the roman government. They despised anyone who did not have the zeal for the Torah that they did and would consider them to be backslidden.
 2. James and John were nicknamed the "Sons of Thunder" by Jesus for their explosive tempers and intolerant hearts. They came from a very successful family in the fishing industry and more than likely would have viewed themselves above the other fishermen whom Jesus chose. (Mar. 1:20)
 3. Matthew was a tax collector. Jews were the most vigorous haters of tax gatherers. To the devout Jew the tax collectors were criminals hated not on religious and political grounds only but because most of them were notoriously unjust.
 4. Bartholomew was said to be of noble birth and more than likely wealthy. He would have been raised in comfort and ease compared to the hard-working fisherman from poor families such as Peter.
- C. Jesus in His perfect wisdom and leadership, in total unity with His Father, placed these guys together not just in church life but in church leadership. According to the wisdom of man this is folly, but in the wisdom and will of God this is the perfect scenario for the fullness of love to arise.
- D. He wanted these men with vast differences to run together in community and to wrestle through the areas of their hard hearts until Christ was formed in them. The lack of persevering deep relationships of our church culture today are one of the reasons why immaturity abounds. It's very easy to avoid possible conflict and only expose yourself to those you really like and get along with.

II. Considering Judas

- A. Jesus again in perfect leadership chose a man who would never love Him and who would eventually murderously betray Him for money. Jesus knew this from the beginning and still chose him, empowered him, and included him in his close community.
 - 1. The Father ordained that Jesus would have a person in His close relational sphere who was opposed to Him. Jesus conducted this relationship with perfect righteousness and love and still was unable to win Judas's heart. Peering into the mystery of this God ordained relationship will redefine much of how you view His heart for community.
 - 2. It is a rare thing to find an individual who will endure this kind of relationship. The Judas relationship will keep you leaning on God more than any other. He uses these relationships in our lives to bring us to the pinnacle of love for our neighbor and stretches us to the height of Christlikeness.

III. The Call to Community

- B. There is a multitude of scriptural passages that clearly reveal God commanding those who love Him to invest in relational community. The sphere of relationship is the primary arena that the Lord uses to show us what is in our hearts and transforms us into His image. When there is no true community there is generally little growth in the heart of the believer.
- C. Not only is the relational sphere the place where Godly character is formed in us it is also the one of the primary ways He has chosen to encounter us. All the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit require relationship to be manifest. Many of our most memorable encounters with Him took place in a corporate setting. (Rom. 15:1-7, Heb. 10:23-27, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 25-28)
 - 1. I find that it is in ongoing intentional relationships where I find this reality occurring the most. It is rare that we truly show someone our heart if our relationship is merely casual. It is in relationships that have stood the test of time and the challenge of difference where we can see the most transformations and testing of the heart.