

JESUS CHOSE TWELVE APOSTLES

Luke 6:6-19

Key verse 6:13

“When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles”

I thank God for blessing our New Year Opening Bible Academies..... there at our bible house in Johannesburg and also here at the City Stay Guest House in Maseru! Our prayer for these bible academies was for God to give us clear direction on how to best serve Him in this new year of 2022. So yesterday in our fellowships we studied in detail Luke chapter 6:6-19. Each fellowship then had discussion sessions based the passage..... followed by each of you writing and sharing your personal bible testimony. I am certain, God’s word of direction and encouragement was clearly revealed in each of your hearts. That is why, in today’s message, I will focus mainly on the key verse.....to firstly..... capture the main point of the study.....and secondly.....to encourage you to not hesitate to act upon the word the Lord has revealed in your heart.

So what direction did God give our WITS ministry for this New Year 2022. Would you believe me when I say, God gave us the same direction, as He gave Jesus’ 12 disciples more than 2000 years ago!? Let me explain. At the time of today’s passage, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were the spiritual leaders of God’s people. But sadly, unlike Jesus, the **religious leaders** did not care about suffering people.....AT ALL! Instead, all they cared about was keeping rules and regulations. They had no mercy....no compassion and absolutely no understanding for suffering people.....They were so judgmental that they not only criticize Jesus’ disciples..... but they actually watched Jesus closely, looking for a reason to also accuse Him. In this way, they became enemies of God and a hindrance to the gospel ministry. It is within this context that, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God..... for clear direction on how to carry on God’s work, despite opposition from the legalistic religious leaders.

So as we can see, although the circumstances surrounding Jesus’ prayer were different from ours today, Jesus’ prayer topic for His disciples was exactly the same as ours during our New Year Opening Academy.....**for clear spiritual direction on how best to serve God.** So now, let’s see what direction God gave the disciples through Jesus’ prayer? Look at our key verse, verse 13. Let us read it all together? When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles. We see that when morning came, [Jesus] immediately acted on God’s direction by calling His disciples to him and then chose twelve of them. And the reason why Jesus did so was because God wanted the disciples **to always be with Jesus (Mark 3:14a) so that they could personally learn from Jesus and adopt his shepherd heart.** This was something the legalistic religious leaders never did. That is why..... God could not use them to carry out His work! Therefore, God’s first clear word of direction for the young disciples was to spend more time with Jesus, so that they could **learn from Jesus and.....adopt His shepherd heart towards suffering people.**

Though times have changed, God’s word of direction for young disciples like us, has not changed. This year, God wants each one of us to spend more time with Jesus..... **so that we may come to know His shepherd heart for suffering university students and graduates.** The truth is, without spending time with Jesus, we are naturally like the religious leaders. We are naturally legalistic, judgmental and uncaring. With this attitude, God cannot use us, just like He could not

use the religious leaders. But when we spend time with Jesus.....in His word and prayer.....God will surely help us to learn and adopt Jesus' shepherd heart. Then God will use usthis year just as preciously, as He used **the chosen 12 disciples**.

Look again at our key verse, verse 13. After directing Jesus to let the disciples spend more time with Him, God also directed Jesus to designate them apostles. Now as we know, the word "apostle" means "one who is sent." This was God's ultimate purpose for the **12 chosen disciples**. To be sent out into the world, as Jesus' representatives who could love, care and serve people..... with God's shepherd heart..... Again, though times have changed, God's direction for young disciples like us, has not changed. As we spend more time with Jesus, and come to know and adopt his shepherd heart, God's ultimate plan is to also send you and me out..... to take care of university students and graduates.....with God's shepherd heart.

By faith, I am sure that each one of you, have personally accepted this spiritual directionfor you personally and our ministry collectively.....this year. If so, can I please hear a loud "Amen!" I sincerely thank God for giving us the same direction today, which He gave the 12 chosen disciples over 2000 years ago.

Nevertheless, despite God's clear word of direction, and all the good things that lies ahead of us this year, it is possible that many of you are still unsure whether you can practically obey God's direction? Indeed, to spend more time with Jesus is not easy! Also, to adopt Jesus' shepherd heart towards others is not something we can do by ourselves. Perhaps the most worrisome aspect of God's direction, is the part where He sends us out to care and serve others. It is just totally against our nature, right!? The good news is, however, we need not worry or be afraid of failure! Let's look again at our key verse, verse 13. "When morning came, he called his disciples to him and **chose twelve of them**, whom he also designated apostles."

Here we can see that the 12 disciples did not choose themselves. But Jesus chose them to be His disciples, according to God's one-sided grace and for his own purpose. It is no different with you and me today! We did not choose God, but God chose each one of us to be a disciple of Jesus. This means that God knows us personally. He knows our strong points and weak points. He knows our background and character. He knows our circumstances.....He knows everything about us, and still He chose you and me to be a disciple of Jesus who can actively participate in His salvation work in the WITS ministry.

If God chose us, then surely, He will also help us right? Help us to spend more time with Jesus than last year. He will also help us to learn more about Jesus' shepherd heart. Lastly, God will help us to serve students or graduates with Jesus' shepherd heart. Sure, it will not always be easy! But in difficult times, we need only depend on God and humbly follow His leading. That is exactly what the **twelve chosen disciples did after Jesus chose them**. The rest is history, as we read in scripture just how powerfully the Lord used them to carry out His work after Jesus' ascension.

Look again at verse 13. The twelve disciples also did not designate themselves as apostles. No, Jesus designated them apostles according to God's purpose and plan for their lives. It is no different with you and me. Why are we teaching the bible? Why are we part of the WITS ministry? It is because God not only chosen us to be Jesus' disciple, but also because God firmly decided to send us with Jesus shepherd heart to university students and graduates. Therefore, it is no mistake or accident that each one of us joined this New Year Opening Academy. It is also no accident that

we are part of the WITS UBF ministry. We are here because God chose and called us to be here. Therefore, instead of being anxious or unsure of what lies ahead, we should simply trust God and follow His leading in this New Year, both personally and collectively as a ministry.

In conclusion. Through this New Year Opening Academy, God has clearly answered our prayer topic for spiritual direction this year. Firstly, we need to spend more time with Jesus so that we can grow deeper into His shepherd heart. Secondly, we must be willing to obey God's direction to be send out to take care of university students and graduates.

If we do so, what can we expect? We can expect the same result as when the disciples obeyed God's direction. Firstly, we can expect to grow spiritually as we come to know Jesus' loving shepherd heart..... Secondly, we can expect to experience God's glorious work IN and TRHOUGH us!! Praise God for giving us these great expectations as we look forward to the year that lies ahead!! Praise and thank God for His clear spiritual direction for our ministry this year! Let's hold His word of direction firmly in our hearts throughout the year. Also, let's humbly trust Him to lead and faithfully work in and trough us, as we humbly follow and obey His direction this year. Amen!