



How To Be Like The 12 Amongst The 535

Mark 3:13-19

TO: **LEGISLATORS**FROM: **RALPH DROLLINGER**DATE: **MAY 17, 2010**

I am looking forward to our first in-person

**MEMBERS WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY
FAMILY ROOM OF THE CAPITOL
STARTING JUNE 8.**

For thinking and scheduling purposes please have your staff note the following: The dinner buffet will start after the last vote of your first-votes-back (either on Monday or Tuesday nights). The Bible study will begin punctually 15 minutes after the close of the last vote.

Member's spouses always welcome.

Please allow me to spend an extra week on the same passage in our continuing study of the Gospel of Mark (3:13-19). This is such an important passage because it reveals the type of person God uses in a mighty way. The book of Acts states that Jesus' disciples "turned the world upside down" (17:6)! Twelve men had a huge impact that continues to exist even today. What characterizes the type of individuals that God uses? What went on in God's mind when He chose these men? What was He looking for? What did He most desire? Our country desperately needs legislators who will turn America around. What characteristic do you most need to possess for God to use you in this task? Are you one He can use? Here is what God is looking for in those whom He chooses to use.

INTRODUCTION

In this passage Jesus chooses the 12 disciples. They are ordinary men with vastly different personalities and temperaments. To highlight a few in terms of contrast, Peter was bold and brash, aggressive and opinionated. He was an up-front guy who led thousands to Christ through his preaching. Andrew on the other hand liked being behind the scenes. Inconspicuous and thoughtful, he was always winning individuals to Christ versus the masses. Matthew was a politically traitorous tax collector for the Romans, whereas

Simon the political Zealot was a rebel against the same foreign occupying forces. James was very passionate, wherein Phillip possessed a pessimistic bean-counter type of personality. Jesus called them all to His side and in just 18 short months of discipleship He effectively molded them into

world-changing leaders.¹ That is utterly fascinating when one thinks about it. Obviously, on the God-side of the equation they were empowered by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost 40 days after Jesus' ascension. But on the human side, what overarching characteristic did Jesus deem mandatory for usefulness to the Master? Let us examine the passage once again:

THE PASSAGE: MARK 3:13-19

And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. 14 And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have authority to cast out the demons. 16 And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), 17 and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder "); 18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Notice that Peter is first on the list (and the other three similar selection listings in the NT). He is the most naturally-gifted leader of them all. But with that raw talent came much pride that the Savior would need to prune; and prune He did in all twelve. Later, by the time Peter pens his two epistles in the New Testament, he would write from personal experience, and in the context of effective leadership, "...God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5b). He had learned this lesson the hard way. Therein is the common characteristic that God is looking for relative to people He will greatly empower: broken individuals, humble individuals. **Humility** *tapeinos* is a word found 11 times in the NT. It means "low in spirit." In Jesus' beatitudes, found at the front end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3) a similar phrase is found when Jesus states, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Being meek, humble or poor in spirit is opposite of self-sufficiency. It is the realization of one's utter failure and doom apart from God's intervention of grace. A humble person is therefore dead to self and allows Christ to become all (cf. Gal. 2:20). 2 Chronicles 16:9 summarily states that this



How To Be Like The 12 Amongst The 535

Mark 3:13-19

is the kind of person whom God uses. “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.” Another NT passage that is important for especially the governing authority to grapple with is 1 Corinthians 1:26-29:

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, 29 that no man should boast before God.²

This passage underscores the principle that God uses ordinary people to build His Kingdom and to change the world—people like the disciples Jesus chose. Verse 26 states: **not many**. Notice carefully it does not say “*not any*.” That means there are some whom He calls that are **wise, mighty and noble**. Like Paul, some of you legislators who receive these weekly Bible study notes are those few individuals that God has given prominence to in society: wise, mighty and noble. Again, there are **not many**. Nonetheless, for God to use you like He did His disciples, you must—likened to Paul (cf. Phil. 3:4-11)—be characterized by humility.

I believe this missing ingredient of humility is the greatest problem in America’s political leadership. When either party gets in power, they become blinded by might. Like a teeter-totter, God opposes them and the other party comes to power. (More on this concept of God opposing the proud will be covered in the application section). The only way for this to cease is via the growth of humility amongst lawmakers. And the only way for that to occur is via discipleship by the Master. That means devoting time to His Word—as in our Members Bible Study.

The main reason America has declined is because most of its present leaders (especially compared to past leaders) are not regularly devoted and deeply committed to His Word.

ONLY BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT WHICH OCCURS AT CONVERSION AND PROFOUND DEVOTION TO HIS WORD CAN ONE POSSIBLY GROW IN HUMILITY.

The transformation of an individual into the Master’s usefulness is summarily evidenced by Acts 4:13, “Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.” The following passages further underscore this absolutely necessary quality:

THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY

These ensuing passages specifically relate to Jesus’ interactions with His disciples. They provide many insights into the priority and characteristics of humility, and why it is a key ingredient in the life of an individual, a leader and a nation.

A. IN THE SAVIOR

John 13:4-5

He rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. 5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

If Jesus prioritizes humility amongst His disciples, then it follows He would model it. Washing the feet of a guest was one of the most menial tasks reserved for the lowest of servants. States one commentator regarding this and the negative reaction of the disciples that follows, “The reluctance of Jesus’ disciples to volunteer for such a task is, to say the least, culturally understandable; their shock at his volunteering is not merely the result of being shamefaced, it is their response to finding their sense of the fitness of things shattered. But here Jesus reverses normal roles. His act of humility is as unnecessary as it is stunning, and is simultaneously a display of love, a symbol of saving cleansing (vv. 6-9) and a model of Christian conduct (vv. 12-17).³

Young Peter resisted Jesus serving him in this way (vss. 6-13). His pride opposed Jesus’ gesture. But again, contrast young Peter with the greatly-used, Holy Spirit-filled Peter in his epistle where he says to believers, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:6).

Even further in the passage (v. 15) Jesus states ostensibly for all believers, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”⁴ One cannot overlook this insightful example regarding humility which



How To Be Like The 12 Amongst The 535

Mark 3:13-19

Jesus provides, a virtue He modeled not only for His disciples, but for you and me.

B. IN SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Mark 9:33-35

And they came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house, He began to question them, "What were you discussing on the way?" 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. 35 And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."

Skipping ahead in our study of Mark, Jesus, the peripatetic instructor (see endnote #1) has just returned to His home town of Capernaum (on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee) with His twelve guys in tow. His leading disciples, prompted perhaps by their inclusion in the transfiguration (cf. Mark 9:2-9) were entertaining a discussion amongst themselves as to which of them was the greatest. When questioned about it they were embarrassed to the point of silence. This prompted Jesus' response as to what is the greatest characteristic of a leader: Service.

Serving others stems from humility. With the plethora of books on leadership flooding the market, measure their validity by how much they mention humility. Humble servant leadership is foundational to spiritual...and governmental leadership.

C. IN GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Lk 14:8-11

When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. 10 "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. 11 "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

Jesus' teaching at the conclusion of this passage closely parallel's Solomon's teaching of his son Rehoboam in Proverbs 25:6-7:

Do not claim honor in the presence of the King,
And do not stand in the place of great men;
For it is better that it be said of you, "Come up here,"

Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, who your eyes have not seen.

In that Rehoboam was being prepared for the civil leadership of Israel; close attention to this principle is especially warranted by those presently in governmental leadership. Notice what Luke is saying in the primary passage: The elevating of the humble is honorable whereas the humbling of the proud is disgraceful. James 4:10 expands this Solomon wisdom from the horizontal to the vertical, "humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." One form of exalting self is the use of one's mouth. A mantra around our home in the raising of our children has been the memorization, meditation and oft mention of Proverbs 27:2.

"LET ANOTHER PRAISE YOU AND NOT YOUR OWN MOUTH, A STRANGER AND NOT YOUR OWN LIPS."

Such catechizing in this and all other aspects of humility has led to a good family culture; our children turning out godly and becoming quite successful. Humble yourself (versus God having to do that) and you will be exalted in His time. What a great promise from the Word of God!

D. IN A NATION

Zechariah 4:6

This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts.

Granted, this OT passages does not relate to Jesus and the disciples. It relates to God and a rebuilder of a nation. The passage is therefore quite applicable in terms of a search for the qualities and principles one need possess to be used strategically to rebuild America. In the OT books of Zechariah, Haggai and Nehemiah, Scripture records that Israel had been set free from its captivity by the Babylonians. Israel, in resettling their homeland wanted to rebuild the temple, but opposition and internal indifference soon set in, and the work was abandoned. Most everyone was more interested in building their own homes and pursuing their own selfish affairs, versus reconstructing the nation. After sixteen years of apathy, the work was begun and completed in another four. **Zerubbabel** was the civic leader of Jerusalem who led the rebuilding. States one sage commentator on this passage, "Might and power are quite interesting. 'Might' is a general [Hebrew] word for human resources such as physical strength,



How To Be Like The 12 Amongst The 535

Mark 3:13-19

human ability or efficiency or wealth. 'Power' also denotes mere human strength—physical, material and includes mental strength. Therefore let me give you my translation of this verse: 'It is not by brawn nor by brain, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.'...The message is simply this: It will not be by your cleverness, your ability, or your physical strength that the temple will be rebuilt, but by the spirit of God."⁵ This is great insight for anyone desiring a formula for effective national reformation. Echoing passages of this principle are Psalm 33:17-18b "A horse is a false hope for victory; Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him..." And Psalm 147:10-11b "He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD favors those who fear Him..." God's admonition to Zerubbabel shouts out today.

GOD USED A SPIRIT-DEPENDENT, HUMBLE CIVIL LEADER TO REBUILD A NATION. WHAT DOES THAT SUGGEST TO YOU?

He uses such men and women to shame those who think they are wise without Him (again, cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-29).

PERSONAL APPLICATION

We have seen that "God is opposed to the proud." Notice the Greek meaning of these words. **Opposed** *antitasso* means "to range in battle against." This needs emphasizing. God is not neutral against the proud; He battles against the **proud** *huperephanos* i.e. those "showing ones self above others." Be characterized by humility and dependence on the Savior. The biblical way to achieve and maintain humility in the surreal environment of the world's most powerful city is to commit ones self to personal Bible study, prayer and fellowship. Get involved in a good Bible study group in the capitol where you can be privately transparent with other believers, study the Word together and hold one-another accountable. It is absolutely mandatory to stay in close fellowship with other believers given the concentration of corruptive powers on the Hill. Lone rangers are more apt to fall. Be likened to the 12 who hung out together amongst the 535!

CORPORATE APPLICATION

In the last several decades, in the institution of the State there have been back-and-forth sweeping changes in political power. It stems from this principle. When parties get into power and

become proud, God opposes them. I have personally experienced this in my own ministry, where individuals grow in pride and accordingly now no longer hold prominent positions in respective ministries: People begin to do things that are self-preserving, careless and immoral; they end up breaking the law of the land, and sadly it leads to their removal by God. Whatever the institution, gone unchecked, power corrupts. Summarily then,

THE GROWTH OF HUMILITY IN GOVERNING AUTHORITIES IS THE PRIMARY AND ELEMENTAL INGREDIENT FOR CHANGING THE DIRECTION OF OUR COUNTRY

Without heart transformation there can be no state transformation. America most needs godly leaders who are men and women of the Word and the Spirit of God. There needs to be a revival of such in the capitol. Hundreds of legislators, staff members, lobbyists and media members should be involved in Bible studies and prayer groups on the Hill. Frankly, this is America's only hope. May God give us many, many, many humble, God-fearing individuals who seek His face daily! Remember, "He gives grace to the humble." Grace is unmerited favor. Be likened to the mature 12 who together "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

¹ Jesus was a peripatetic instructor. He did not disciple in a classroom. Peripatetic means "movements or journeyings hither and thither" (M&W). As one author puts it, "[Jesus] graciously encouraged them, lovingly corrected them, and patiently instructed them... That is how the best learning always occurs. It isn't information passed on; it's one life invested in another." The success of this 18-month discipleship cram-session bodes well for the effectiveness use of peripatetic instruction.

² Jesus did not choose theologically trained or men of cultural or religious stature. Instead He chose fishermen, a tax-collector, a political zealot and other common individuals. They had little intrinsic ability or innate talents. Galileans were low-class, uneducated rural people, far from the elite of society. Accordingly God gets all the glory: It is not the man, it is God indwelling the man. It is not his words, it is God's Word. It is not his personality, it is God's power. All such can only be gained through the conduit of humility. God's strength can only be manifest in an individual who is yielded to Him.

³ Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) p. 462-3

⁴ Foot washing in itself, without a broken and contrite heart can be a mere parody of Jesus' intention. Since the act is only mentioned here, careful expositors have been reluctant to place it on par with communion or baptism, i.e. a sacrament, ordinance or ecclesiastical rite.

⁵ McGee, J. Vernon *Zechariah* (Pasadena: Thru The Bible Books, 1979) p. 59