**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 10-17-2021
Jesus Praying Before Choosing the Twelve**

Life is filled with decisions, isn’t it? In an article from Psychology Today, it is estimated that we make approximately 35,000 decisions a day. I do not know how they come up with that, but it goes to show that we are constantly evaluating information and making decisions, normally without even realizing it.

Many are not very significant, such as what should I wear today? Or what should I have for lunch?

But all of us are faced with very important decisions in our lives, right?

I will briefly highlight 3 very significant decisions that I was faced with.

**The first decision and certainly the most important decision was my decision of what am I to make of Jesus**?

This is the most important decision that all of us have in life, right?

And after prayerfully considering the evidence of who Jesus was and is, I made my decision to submit to Him as my Lord and trust in Him as my Savior. Only Jesus can rescue us from our sins and only He can give us abundant and eternal life.

I trust that you could share similar stories about that all-important decision in your life as well.

**The second critical decision was asking Kara to be my wife**. I knew that this decision to ask would make a huge difference on setting the course of my life and I remember being in prayer about that very important decision. And I do not regret that decision. Hopefully you (Kara) don’t regret saying yes.

**And lastly, I remember my decision to go back to school several years after graduating from college**. I knew that it wouldn’t be easy, especially with two children and a third one on the way. But I remember spending time in prayer and discernment as I sought God’s will and leading on what He was calling me to do. And again, I am thankful that I said yes to the Lord’s calling.

I trust that all of you could think of and could share about several important decisions that you have been faced with in your lives as well.

And truly our big decisions have enormous consequences. Our decisions open doors and close doors and they determine the path that we take in life.

Today, as we continue our sermon series on the 7 moments in Luke’s Gospel where Jesus is praying, we find Jesus in the midst of a very big and important decision. A decision that will have enormous consequences.

At this point in Jesus’ ministry, there were ever-increasing crowds of people that were clamoring for Jesus’ attention. People were coming to Jesus seeking to learn and to be healed for their infirmities.

But while Jesus continued to teach and preach to large crowds, He wanted to focus more of His time and energy into pouring Himself into a smaller group of disciples.

Jesus knew His mission. He knew that in about 3 short years He would be offering Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the world and that a few weeks after His resurrection He would be returned to heaven.

But who would lead in the new church that Jesus was in the process of establishing? Who would faithfully proclaim Jesus’ words and deeds to people far and wide?

And so Jesus prayed.

Let us hear God’s Word together found in **Luke 6:12-16.**

**12One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. 13When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: 14Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, 15Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, 16Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.**

Tucked within this passage that describes Jesus calling his disciples to Himself and then designating 12 of them to be set apart as apostles is the fact that Jesus spent all night in prayer. I know that I have read it before and have glossed over it without even really thinking about it.

But Jesus spent the night in prayer before choosing the 12 apostles.

This passage reminds me that even though Jesus was God, Jesus lived totally dependent on His Heavenly Father and on the Holy Spirit to lead Him and direct Him through life.

I love how biblical scholar Dr. Michael Heiser puts it. He says that **“in the incarnation, the Son (speaking of Jesus of course, The Son) surrendered the independent use of His divine attributes.”**

In other words, when Jesus became human, while He didn’t stop being God, He chose to willingly live as a man fully dependent on God. So Jesus became hungry. Jesus needed to sleep. Jesus needed to seek His Father in heaven and the Holy Spirit on what He should do, particularly when it came to significant decisions.

And so Jesus wanted to make sure that He heard clearly whom He was to designate as apostles.

***Explanation of what an apostle means:***

The term apostle was not a new one. When Jesus appointed the 12 to be apostles, they didn’t say, **“Great! And what’s an apostle again, Jesus?”**

No, it was a term that they were familiar with.

The Greeks first came up with it and the Romans utilized it as well.

The Roman Empire designated apostles to try to bring the culture of Rome into the towns and cities that they were assigned to go. They were to Romanize those places by bringing artists and philosophers and soldiers, and others to try to Romanize that place.

Jesus uses this term to describe these 12. They were to take the culture of the kingdom of God and to bring to other places and to new people. They were His apostles and were to proclaim Jesus’ kingdom rule and reign over the world as the Messiah.

This was a big assignment for Jesus and our Lord wanted to spend significant time in prayer that He was doing this in the Father’s timing and He was asking the correct people.

We do not know all that Jesus was saying in His praying to His Father, but we do have a sense that the Father did make it clear that now was the time and these are the 12 that you are to designate for this important ministry.

And we read that when morning came, Jesus didn’t waste any time, but was ready to call all His followers to Himself and then to appoint these 12 in particular to being not only disciples of Jesus, but also apostles of Jesus as well.

And this prayerful decision of Jesus had huge consequences, as much of the New Testament was written either directly by these apostles or by someone in very close relationship with one of these apostles.

So friends, as we think about this story of Jesus praying all night before designated the 12 apostles, what would be its significance for our lives today?

***I believe that the biggest takeaway is that we are to pray and pray fervently, when we are facing big decisions and then we are to do what God instructs us to do.***

All of us are probably facing, or will soon face, important decisions in life.

These decisions may be clearly important, such as some of the big decisions that I spoke about in my own life.

Or the decision may be less significant. Should I connect to a small group at church? Should I seek to help with this or that ministry? Or should I take up a new hobby?

The bottom line is prayer is very important for us to gain clarity on God’s will on those decisions. Proverbs 3:5-6 states **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”**

We trust in the Lord by going to Him in prayer about all different decisions. And when He directs your path and gives you direction, you are called to take the steps that He gives you to take. Again, Jesus got clarity on the 12 and then first thing in the morning, He was appointing the 12.

So when God directs those steps for us, it is important to begin taking those steps.

If Jesus needed the Father to help Him on big decisions, than we most certainly do as well.

So let us pray…

Sources:

BibleGateway.com

[How Many Decisions Do We Make Each Day? | Psychology Today](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stretching-theory/201809/how-many-decisions-do-we-make-each-day) <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/stretching-theory/201809/how-many-decisions-do-we-make-each-day>

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