

# Major Themes Revisited

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 29 January 2025

Preacher: Lee Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Tonight's verses start a new section of Mark's Gospel.

! Mark begins that section by summarizing some themes that we already have seen.! Let's go ahead and read Mark chapter 3, verses 7 through 19. Again, Mark chapter 3, verses 7 through 19. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem and Edomia, and from far 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 them those whom he desired, and they came to him.

[ 1 : 12 ] 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 Thaddeus, and Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Here's the main idea for tonight's passage. Surrounded by a multitude seeking physical healing, Jesus withdraws to select the twelve apostles who will be part of his plan to provide spiritual healing.

Surrounded by a multitude seeking physical healing, Jesus withdraws to select the twelve apostles who will be part of his plan to provide spiritual healing. In the very first verse of his gospel, Mark identified Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah and the son of God.

Remember Mark 1.1, it said, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God. Of course, we know that Christ, meaning anointed one, is a title for Israel's promised Messiah. Since that very first verse, Mark has been building his case to prove his initial bold statement. Mark has made several direct and indirect references to the Old Testament messianic prophecies, particularly those from Isaiah.

[ 2 : 48 ] And those references prove that Jesus is the Christ. Mark also has been showing us how Jesus did things that only God himself could do. Throughout the course of his ministry, Jesus demonstrated his deity through various displays of divine power over Satan, demons, disease, sin, and the Sabbath.

Even his disciples immediately left everything to obey his summons. Time after time, as Jesus exercised his divine power, he gave indisputable proof that he is who he claimed to be, the incarnate son of God and the savior of the world.

Despite the undeniable proof that Jesus is God, the religious leaders' hardened hearts have prevented them from seeing Jesus for what Jesus is, Israel's Messiah and God in human form. Instead, as we saw in Mark chapter 3, verse 6, those religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus. In tonight's text, Mark gives us somewhat of a review. He revisits three themes that we already have seen.

Looking at those themes again will provide some new depth and will remind us of how consistent Jesus was throughout his earthly ministry. And here, perhaps, is the best part. We also will see that true believers today are more similar to Jesus' closest followers than we might first think.

[ 4 : 11 ] We'll split tonight's verses into three sections, beginning with Mark chapter 3, verses 7 and 8. And in Mark 3, 7 and 8, Mark reminds us of Jesus' popularity.

So, Jesus' popularity is your first blank. Here are Mark 3, 7 and 8 again. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem and Edomia, 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. We left off last week with the synagogue showdown where Jesus intentionally healed on the Sabbath.

After reemphasizing himself as Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus moved to a different location to begin the next phase of his ministry. Mark tells us that Jesus withdrew to the sea.

That would be the Sea of Galilee. Several weeks ago, we discussed how the Sea of Galilee actually is a beautiful freshwater lake. It's fed by the waters of the Upper Jordan River.

[ 5 : 23 ] It's 700 feet below sea level, 14 miles long, and 6 miles wide. It had several names throughout the Bible times. It was also called the Lake of Gennesaret and the Sea of Tiberias.

And in the Old Testament times, this lake is the same lake that was known as the Sea of Kinnereth. A lot of fishing took place at this lake, and most of Jesus' teaching and miracles were performed in this area.

So here we see Jesus' answer to his rejection in the synagogue. He didn't go away in a rage. He didn't sulk. He didn't argue with the authorities. He simply moved a little way along the lake and made himself available to one and all.

By leaving the city, Jesus escaped his enemies for the time being, but he didn't escape the relentless crowds that were coming to see him. In fact, a great multitude from Galilee followed, and we see they also came from Judea and from Jerusalem, from Edomia, and beyond the Jordan in the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon.

A great number of people heard of all that Jesus was doing, and they came to him. You might have noticed that Mark twice used the phrase a great crowd, and the double use of great likely indicates that tens of thousands of people probably came to see Jesus.

[ 6 : 47 ] The size of the multitude indicated that Jesus' fame had been spreading throughout the small region of Galilee and all the way throughout all of Israel. His popularity made it difficult for Jesus to minister publicly in the urban areas, so he often taught by the Sea of Galilee away from the population centers.

But even then, big crowds followed him and found him. On this occasion, we talked about how Mark says that the crowd who came to see Jesus was more than just the locals.

We're fairly familiar with Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. Judea and Jerusalem were south of Galilee and were major population centers for Israel.

Jerusalem, of course, was the center of Jewish religion. Edomia is the Greek name for Edom. It refers to the area south of Judea which the Edomites occupied after they were forced out of their homeland east of the Dead Sea.

The Herodian family was Edomian and was at most semi-Jewish, and we say that because Edomians were forced by the Maccabees to adopt Judaism or face death.

[ 8 : 01 ] The regions across the Jordan River were known at the time as Perea, and Tyre and Sidon were to the north on the Phoenician coast in what is now modern Lebanon.

They were not in Palestine. All of these areas were largely Gentile and probably symbolized the world beyond the land of the Jews. Mark seems to have been suggesting that all peoples should seek Jesus, and readers and hearers of his gospel naturally think about the later Gentile mission that we get from Mark.

The picture that Mark wants us to get here is that people were coming from everywhere to see Jesus, and this happened at a time when traveling was much more difficult than traveling is today. The ethnic mix that we see is appropriate because the kingdom of God is made up of people from every tribe and nation around the world. Jesus would consistently affirm such diversity and would even command it in his great commission.

The end of verse 8 tells us why such a big crowd came to see Jesus. It says, when the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. And we know that throughout Mark so far, we have seen Jesus emphasize preaching.

[ 9 : 16 ] Jesus wanted people to focus on his message rather than his miracles. However, Mark makes it clear that people were coming to Jesus because of Jesus' actions rather than his words.

The overwhelming desire of the crowds was for Jesus' healing touch. They were seeking to be relieved of their pain and suffering. They were more concerned with their bodies than their souls.

Those people were very much like what we are today. Listen to these quotes from R.C. Sproul. He said, Our prayer requests tend to focus mostly on our physical problems and those of others we love.

Of course, God made us physical beings and we see throughout Scripture that God is deeply concerned with the well-being of our bodies. The body is not a mere prison for the soul. It is not something to be despised. As Christians, we believe that our bodies will be resurrected and reunited to our souls someday. So it is good for us to be concerned about the welfare of our bodies and of other people's bodies.

[10:21] But he continues, However, we are more than merely bodies. God made us body and soul and Jesus made the care of our souls the top priority in his teaching.

He set forth his value system when he said, For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?

Those verses come from later on in Mark. That's Mark chapter 8, verses 36 and 37. Then he closed his quotes by saying, We need to be much in prayer for the well-being of our souls as well as our bodies.

Consider the differences between believers and unbelievers for a minute. Regardless of whether God heals true believers physically in this life, true believers in God have the promise that God eventually will heal us for eternity.

Unbelievers lack that promise. In fact, a much different future awaits them. Unbelievers, those who have refused to put their trust in Christ and in his sacrificial payment for their sins, face eternal punishment in hell.

[11:29] And the difference in eternal destinations should be more than enough to convince us to be at least as concerned about the well-being of people's souls as we are about the well-being of their bodies.

Now that Mark has reminded us of Jesus' popularity, let's move on to the second section of this passage. And in verses 9 through 12, Mark reminds us of Jesus' power.

So Jesus' power is the second thing that we will look at. Despite knowing that people were crowding around him for physical healing rather than spiritual healing, Jesus still addressed their physical needs.

Jesus combined his power with his compassion. Listen to Mark 3, verses 9 through 12 again. Speaking about Jesus, they say, 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.

[12:41] And he strictly ordered them not to make him known. We often picture Jesus sitting under a tree in a beautiful green grass field with fluffy sheep in the background.

and maybe some children in his lap, but that's not the picture that we should have of his ministry. That's a myth. The reality of his public ministry is more often mayhem and bedlam.

And the scene in verse 9 is one of great commotion involving pushing and shoving as people try to get to Jesus. In his compassion, Jesus began to heal the many people coming to him with diseases and other maladies, but that only caused the people to press against him even more eagerly, hoping to touch him and be healed.

In self-defense, Jesus instructed his disciples that they should keep a small boat ready on the shore of the Sea of Galilee so that he would be able to withdraw from the people if necessary.

Verse 10 says that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. And the Greek word translated diseases literally refers to a scourge or a whip.

[13:52] Used figuratively, it was employed by the Jews to speak of a calamity or a misfortune sent by God as a punishment. Remember that in first century Judaism, it was common for the people to interpret disease and disability as the judgment of God, even when that often was not the case.

Many of those suffering from physical ailments interpreted their hardship as God's displeasure toward them, and that notion made some of them particularly receptive to the good news of salvation.

Jesus not only offered them physical healing, but also spiritual healing, forgiveness from sin, reconciliation with God, and the hope of eternal life. We know, though, that physical healing was one of the distinctive aspects of Jesus' ministry.

Most of the miracles Jesus performed were acts of healing. Those creating miracles required the instant reversal of disease and decay and the immediate restoration of the human body.

For Jesus, the creator of the universe, no sickness or disability proved too difficult to heal. He instantly created new limbs and organs, restoring eyes, ears, hands, feet, and bodies to full health and function.

[15:11] Jesus' power was so available and effective that the people had learned that merely putting a hand on him could produce instant and total healing. Let's move on to verses 11 and 12 now.

These verses say, 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.

We know from earlier studies that the term unclean spirits is just another term for demons. And the crowds also are large because Jesus is casting out those demons.

Mark presents those encounters as no contest. Jesus is stronger. There's barely even a struggle.

The demons immediately fall down before him and confess his identity.

Think about the strong irony at work here. Those who are most opposed to his kingdom are the ones who most immediately fall down before him. To know Jesus is to bow before him.

[16:16] And people today have yet to realize that in most cases. The demons explicitly confess that Jesus is the Son of God and that's the ultimate Christological title.

Their confession was not a confession of commitment but a confession of fear and even opposition. Some thought that if you knew and used the name of a divine being, he or she could control that being.

Mark notes once again that Jesus commands the demons to be silent. He does not want the demons to proclaim his name because he does not want to be seen in a league with them in any way.

But we'll see next week that the scribes will make this accusation anyway. Another reason Jesus commands the demons to be silent is that he wants people to confess that he is the Son of God rather than demons.

Mark opens the gospel in that way and that's why we read Mark 1 verse 1 and we'll see later on that he ends it that way with the confession by the Roman centurion. People can only see Jesus' true identity and confess it by the power of the Holy Spirit so Jesus does not want his name confessed by a demon using a body as a human puppet.

[17:33] Another reason why Jesus silenced the demonic confession is that the title they use can be understood properly only in light of his death and resurrection and the time for such an explicit confession had not yet come.

As I just mentioned only at the crucifixion did a human being confess Jesus as the Son of God in the Gospel of Mark. Mark probably intended to contrast what the demons acknowledged as fact with what the religious leaders were not willing to consider as a possibility.

Once again we see that the demons have perfect theology but they refuse to submit to Jesus as Lord and that repeated silencing of the demons foreshadows the silencing of sinners at the final judgment.

Whenever hell collides with heaven the inevitable result is silence. Whenever evil appears before God its mouth is shut. Scripture tells us repeatedly that people appearing before God at the last judgment will place their hands over their mouths in his presence and will keep silent.

No sinner has anything to say in the presence of a holy God. So far we've seen Jesus' popularity and Jesus' power.

[18:55] In the last section of our lesson tonight Mark tells us about Jesus' pupils. Jesus' pupils are what we'll look at next and we're talking about his students not his eyes.

Here are Mark chapter 3 verses 13 through 19 again. Talking about Jesus Mark 3 13 through 19 say 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 Thaddeus and Simon the zealot and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

You can see here that the scene changed. The critics in the synagogue and the crowds along the seashore have vanished. Jesus went away to a nearby mountain where he faced realistically his rejection in the synagogue and what it meant.

He knew that the enmity would increase until it ended in his death and the time had come for him to appoint a special group of men who could become not only disciples but also apostles men who could carry on his mission after he had gone.

[ 20 : 37 ] In the earlier sections of Mark's Gospel we already have met Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew. They show up again here in these verses along with seven other important people.

Those people were important only because Jesus chose them to help him carry out his plan for reaching the world with his good news. Verse 13 gives us the only qualifications of the 12. Those are that Jesus called those whom he desired and they came. If we were picking the team, we probably would have picked the best and the brightest.

Jesus used a different method. And if you doubt that statement, keep reading through Mark's Gospel. You'll see plenty of evidence that these 12 men seldom, if ever, qualified as the best and the brightest, at least initially.

However, the way Jesus picks his team provides us with an important lesson. It is not men who choose or appoint themselves to be servants of Christ. Christ chooses and ordains his own.

[ 21 : 48 ] All of the 12 apostles were what we might call hand picked men. That applies even to Judas. and they were special objects of divine interest.

The Greek term translated as appointed in verse 14 is interesting. It's the form of a verb that also can mean to make something or to create something.

And that's its primary meaning in the Bible. It's the same word that the Septuagint, which is the Greek Old Testament, uses in Genesis 1.1.

And of course, that is where it says, in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. God did not appoint the heavens and the earth.

He did not select them. He created them. And in the same way, Jesus did not simply appoint 12 men to a task or to a body. He made them into something.

[ 22 : 44 ] He made them his intimate group. And in a sense, he made them the church because they later founded the church. Verses 14 and 15 tell us that Jesus called the apostles for three purposes.

He called them so that they would be with him, so that they would be sent out to preach, and so that they would cast out demons. So let's look a little bit at each of those three purposes.

Jesus called the apostles to be with him. First and foremost, these 12 would spend three years learning from the master teacher himself. Jesus' teaching would change them, with the exception of Judas, from a ragtag group with no experience in their assigned mission to a bold group whose message would change the world.

That transformation started during the three years that the apostles were with Jesus. Next, Jesus called the apostles so that they would be sent out to preach.

They were trained to be the first-generation heralds of the good news of salvation, following in the footsteps of their Lord who himself proclaimed the gospel of God.

[ 23 : 58 ] Jesus was a preacher, as was John the Baptist and the Old Testament prophets before him. The disciples were to follow in that legacy of preaching the truth of the gospel.

Jesus' priorities in training the apostles are consistent with what he already has modeled. We know that Jesus always places spiritual needs ahead of physical needs and he places preaching ahead of healing.

Remember, for example, how in Mark 2, verses 1-12, Jesus forgave the lame man's sins before healing the man's legs. Shortly, we will look at the individual members of the twelve, but first consider how unlikely they were to be preachers before the time that they spent with Jesus.

As many as seven of them were fishermen. One was a tax collector. Another was a freedom fighter. None of them had a formal theological education, but when Jesus was done with them, those who

had started out as learners or disciples became sent ones or apostles.

They were his ambassadors, his representatives, and his heralds. He sovereignly selected them, he personally disciplined them, he radically transformed them, and he empowered them with his spirit.

[ 25 : 24 ] As the Son of God, Jesus possessed absolute authority over all things. When he selected his twelve apostles, he delegated his authority to them. In Jewish thinking, an apostle was considered a proxy of the one who sent him, and as the emissaries of Christ, these men were endowed with the delegated authority of the Messiah himself.

They were elevated to act on Jesus' behalf in the exercise of his authority and for the benefit of his kingdom by proclaiming his words. The third task that Jesus called the disciples to do was to cast out demons.

Matthew 10, verse 1, adds that they also were given the power to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. To authenticate their position as his representatives, Jesus gave them authority in both the physical realm over disease and the spiritual realm over demons.

Like Jesus himself, their message was confirmed by the supernatural signs that they performed. Speaking of the message of salvation, the author of Hebrews explains, it was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, and that's talking about the apostles.

Then he goes on to say, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

[ 26 : 54 ] That comes from Hebrews chapter 2 verses 3 and 4. So like their master, the apostles' words were validated by the supernatural works that they performed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit, the twelve became an official designation or title for those appointed by Jesus on this occasion. Though significantly linked with Israel, they are never called a new or spiritual Israel. Instead, they were the nucleus of a coming new community, and that is the church. The number of the apostles is significant, though, because there were twelve tribes in the nation of Israel. Israel. In Genesis, God started with Jacob's twelve sons, and in Exodus, he built them into a mighty nation. Israel was chosen to bring the Messiah into the world so that through him all the nations of the earth could be blessed.

However, that nation of Israel was now spiritually decayed and ready to reject her own Messiah. God had to establish a holy nation. That comes from 1 Peter 2.9.

[ 28 : 04 ] The twelve apostles were the start of that. Luke 6.12 tells us that Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before he chose those apostles.

He purposely chose men from outside the religious establishment, and by doing that, he was making an unmistakable message that was sent to the leaders of Israel.

He was telling them that they were spiritually disqualified and therefore shut out of his kingdom. Him. He confronted the religious leaders directly, publicly, and repeatedly with such denunciations. And as we've been seeing the last several weeks, instead of repenting, those leaders' determination to kill him only increased. In the New Testament, you'll find three other lists of the names of the twelve apostles.

Those lists are in Matthew 10.2-4, Luke 6.14-16, and Acts 1.13.

[ 29 : 06 ] The twelve always are arranged in three groups of four. Some scholars also believe that the twelve were sent out in pairs so that Jesus arranged them as well in six pairs of two.

Let's look briefly now at each of the twelve men that Jesus selected. In all four listings, Peter is named first. We met him back in Mark 1.

We know that his name, Peter, means rock, but he was anything but rock-like in the Gospels. Later, though, he became the rock of the church in Acts because his preaching won a multitude of converts to the new faith.

James and John were two fisherman brothers that we met in Mark 1 also. John is generally considered to have been a teenager when following Jesus.

He was the only apostle who did not die a martyr's death, although he faced great physical abuse. John, James, and Peter formed the inner circle of apostles among the twelve.

[ 30 : 15 ] Andrew, whom we also met in Mark 1, was first a follower of John the Baptist, and he was Simon Peter's brother. Peter, he evangelized Peter, introducing him to Jesus.

Andrew also had contact with the boy who had the five loaves of bread and two fish. Later in John's Gospel, some Greeks came to Andrew asking to see Jesus.

Philip was also an early evangelist, and he immediately told his friend Nathaniel about Jesus. Bartholomew is not listed anywhere outside the Gospels, but because of his association with Philip, most scholars believe that Nathaniel and Bartholomew were the same person.

Matthew is the Levi whose calling was recorded in Mark 2, verse 14. Although he's called son of Alphaeus, he most likely was unrelated to James, the son of Alphaeus.

Thomas is called the twin, or we may know him better as doubting Thomas because of his questioning of the other apostles about the resurrection of Jesus. We need to remember though that Thomas is also the apostle who was willing to die with Jesus.

[ 31 : 33 ] He may have contained a mixture of courage and cowardice, of unquestioning faith and reluctant reason. So in other words, he was like most of us.

James, son of Alphaeus, likely is the one who's also known as James the Younger. In Mark 15:40, we'll see his mother Mary was present at the cross, and she was one of the women who cared for Jesus' needs.

Thaddeus is mentioned in Mark and Matthew, but he's not mentioned in the other list. Instead, the other list have Judas, son of James, or Judas, not Iscariot. And these probably are the same man. In fact, scholars speculate that Mark may have used a different name for him here to avoid him getting confused with the other Judas. Simon the Zealot comes next.

The Zealots were religious extremists who desired the overthrow of Rome. They would use any means available to them to accomplish this purpose. Think about how amazing it was that Simon the Zealot and Levi the tax collector were now part of the same spiritual family.

[ 32 : 47 ] They were miles apart in their political convictions. As a tax collector, Levi was accustomed to Roman rule, and he profited from that Roman rule.

The Zealots wanted nothing to do with the Romans, and so here we see further evidence that when Jesus is the blood that flows through the family, every other barrier can be overcome.

Last, and in this case certainly least, we come to Judas Iscariot. The name Iscariot literally translated means men of Kerioth, which is a town in Judah.

He was the only apostle who was not from Galilee. Judas represents the one barrier that could not be overcome by Jesus, and that barrier is the heart determined to be unregenerate.

Jesus' inclusion of Judas is the reason why the main idea for this passage is worded like it is. Here is that main idea again. Surrounded by a multitude seeking physical healing, Jesus withdraws to select the twelve apostles who will be part of his plan to provide spiritual healing.

[ 33 : 58 ] Think about this. Judas, in all of his ultimate wickedness, was part of Jesus' plan to provide spiritual healing for every believer. Jesus' intention of choosing someone who would betray him is a hard concept for us to grasp.

We would never choose someone for our team if we would know in advance that that person ultimately would betray us. But God's ways are higher than our ways, and Jesus demonstrates that with his selection of Judas.

Mark covered a lot of ground in this passage, and we need to spend a little bit of time thinking about how the passage relates to us. We certainly should be grateful that God appointed the apostles.

They are early members of the line of teachers who eventually brought God's word to us. But they are more important to us than that, and they are more important to us for several reasons.

Those reasons include the fact that they are examples for pastors, teachers, and even all believers today. Apostles in the specific sense of how the word is used in tonight's passage no longer exist.

[ 35 : 14 ] Apostles in that specific sense had to receive a direct commission from Christ. The apostles had to be eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus, and they had to be able to perform miracles validating their authority.

If you hear someone today proclaim himself or even herself to be an apostle using this definition, run away from that person, that's a sure sign that the person is a false teacher.

However, the general sense of the word apostle simply means one who is sent on behalf of another. Pastors and teachers today are apostles in that general sense.

Tonight, we saw Jesus commission the twelve to do three specific tasks. Remember, those were to be with Jesus, to preach, and to cast out demons.

And those tasks are similar to what we expect pastors and teachers to do today. J.C. Ryle made several observations. He said, Like the apostles, the faithful minister ought to keep up close communion with Christ.

[ 36 : 20 ] He should be with him a lot. His fellowship should be with the Son. He should remain in him. He should be separate from the world and sit each day like Mary at Jesus' feet and hear Jesus' word.

He should study Jesus, copy him, drink in his spirit, and walk in his steps. He should strive to be able to say when he enters the pulpit, we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard.

Like the apostles, the faithful minister ought to be a preacher. This must also be his principal work and receive the greatest part of his thought. He must place it above the administration of the sacraments.

He must exalt it above the reading of services. Ryle said, An unpreaching minister is of little use to the church of Christ. He is a lampless lighthouse, a silent trumpeter, a sleeping watchman, a painted fire.

Then Ryle continued with these words, Like the apostles, the faithful minister must labor to do good in every way. Though he cannot heal the sick, he must seek to alleviate sorrow and to increase happiness among everyone he has to do with.

[ 37 : 38 ] He must strive to be known as the comforter, the counselor, the peacemaker, the helper, and the friend of all. People should know him as one not who rules and domineers, but as one who is their servant for Jesus' sake.

Finally, Ryle said, like the apostles, the faithful minister must oppose every work of the devil. Though not called to drive out evil spirits from the body, he must always be ready to resist the devil's devices and to denounce his snares for the soul.

He must expose the tendency of races, theaters, balls, gambling, drunkenness, Sabbath profanation, and sensual gratifications. Every age has its own particular temptations.

Many are the devices of Satan, but wherever the devil is most busy, the minister ought to be there ready to confront and withstand him. You might be thinking, well, that's great for pastors and teachers, but do church members have anything in common with the apostles that we learned about today?

And the answer to that question is a resounding yes. Regardless of the task that Jesus gives each of us to do in his kingdom, God chooses every believer using his own sovereign prerogative.

[ 39 : 04 ] In that sense, every believer is like those apostles that we studied tonight. They had nothing that would distinguish them as special followers of Jesus, but Jesus chose them anyway.

Neither does any believer today, but God chose us anyway. Listen to Ephesians 2, verses 8 and 9. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9 say, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. After Jesus called the twelve in tonight's passage, he enabled them to do good works on his behalf.

The same is true for us. Ephesians 2, verse 10 confirms that. Ephesians 2, verse 10 says, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

even though God calls only certain men to preach, God calls all believers to make disciples.

Remember what Jesus said in the Great Commission, and we see that Great Commission in Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 through 20.

[ 40 : 26 ] Here are Matthew 28, 18 through 20. Do you see another similarity similarity between what Jesus called the apostles to do and what Jesus in the Great Commission calls all believers to do?

Jesus called the apostles to be with him. At the end of Matthew chapter 28, verse 20, Jesus promises to be with us. As we discussed in the comparison between the apostles and pastors and teachers today, nobody today has the ability to cast out demons.

However, like pastors and teachers, ordinary believers can resist the works of the devil, and we can comfort people. Like the apostles, all believers today have the Holy Spirit living inside of us.

Listen to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6, verses 19 and 20. 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20 say, Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. Like he did for the apostles, Jesus paid for every believer's sins through Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.

[ 42 : 12 ] Jesus visibly demonstrated that he accepted that sacrifice, or that God accepted that sacrifice, by raising Jesus from the dead. So once again, God visibly demonstrated that he accepted Jesus' sacrifice by raising Jesus from the dead.

If you have yet to believe in Jesus' finished work for salvation, you can have that same salvation that belonged to the apostles. That same salvation also belongs to every true believer, whoever has lived, or whoever will live.

For proof of that, we can take comfort in Jesus' own words. Listen to John chapter 6, verses 37 through 40. Jesus said in John 6, 37 through 40, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

[ 43 : 32 ] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for what we see tonight. And although tonight's lesson recapped several themes, thank you for the reminder of why Jesus called the apostles and what he expected them to do.

Enable us to continue carrying on those tasks as we seek to be your lights in the world today. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.