

October 16, 2016

## *I Want to Know Jesus*

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

Philippians 3:10-11

*"He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."..."Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."*

Luke 5:1-11

*"After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up and left everything and followed him."*

Luke 5:27-28

*"...Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he called Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Phillip, Batholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who became the traitor."*

Luke 6:12-16

*"Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."*

Acts 1:21-22

As Jesus continued his ministry a great number of those he preached to became his disciples. In Matthew 16:24-25 Jesus would define a disciple this way. *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for me will find it."* By definition a disciple is one who follows the teachings of another.

Early in his ministry, after a long night of prayer, Jesus appointed twelve of these disciples to be his apostles. In Acts 1 Peter supplies us with the best definition of apostle. These men were to serve as witnesses, in the culture of the day that meant eye-witnesses, to the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. Eventually these men would become the foundation for the body of believers through all time. (Ephesians 2:20)



The list of men whom Jesus selected to be these eye-witness form an interesting company. The first four we have already met. Peter, his brother Andrew, and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John were fishermen working the Sea of Galilee. Matthew, or Levi, was a tax collector, a man despised by every Jew of the day as a turncoat. Phillip and Bartholomew, who was also called Nathaniel, were also among the first followers.

Simon the Zealot is literally what we would call a terrorist of his day. Having Matthew the tax collector and Simon the Zealot in the same company speaks volumes, I think, for those of us

who would let politics drive wedges between us. And of course, the final apostle was Judas Iscariot, the one who would ultimately betray our Lord to his death.

These men would follow Jesus every day for the next three years. They would share every waking moment with our Master, receive almost constant instruction from him, witness his miracles and ultimately, with the exception of Judas, testify to his resurrection. Except for John these men all died horrible deaths, at least according to tradition and without exception these men never recanted their testimony about who Jesus was and is.