

# PORTRAIT OF AN APOSTLE - PART 2

Part ? of LUKE, Luke 6:12-16.

Peter Foxwell. The Cornerstone Church. August 29, 2021.

## INTRODUCTION

Today is part two of a study I've called Portrait of an Apostle.

The twelve apostles are an important group of people, not least because, after they were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, their mission and their message launched Christianity into today's worldwide movement of one billion people.

Last week, we noted three characteristics of the apostles:

- **They were ordinary men.** Dr. Phil Ryken observes that they were probably not well educated, well connected, or well funded (Commentary on Luke). Their spiritual authority came from their calling not the their credentials.
- **They were the new leaders of a restored Israel** under the reign of the Messiah, Jesus. God advanced his plan for the salvation of the world through Jesus and the apostles.
- **They were the official representatives of Jesus.** Apostle means one who is sent with a message or on a mission. Today's role of an ambassador is similar. As such, the apostles along with Jesus became the foundation on which the church and Christians are built. That is why we say that we are an apostolic people. Jesus appointed the twelve to carry on his preaching, teaching, and kingdom ministry after his ascension to the right hand of God the Father.

Before we take note of three more apostolic characteristics, let's read Luke 6:12-16. If you're interested in the context and background of this passage, please take a look at the video of last week's teaching, which is available on our YouTube channel.

As the crowds of disciples grew, and opposition to Jesus increased, and the shadow of the cross loomed large, Jesus knew the time was right to focus his energy on twelve men who would continue his message and ministry after his ascension. So ...

**LUKE 6:12-16**

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

**MARK 3:14-15**

He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.

## PORTRAIT OF AN APOSTLE (continued)

**4. THE APOSTLES WERE EQUIPPED BY JESUS.** He prepared them over a period of 18 months or so. The learning process involved information and experiences. Tuition was high: They left their families and their jobs to be with Jesus as he moved from village to village. In their culture, this would have been shameful conduct. Their equipping experience consisted of four parts:

- **Presence.** They were with Jesus 24/7; literally followed him around, ate with him, and camped out with him as he moved from place to place. They were with him when he was arrested, they saw him risen, and they watched him ascend.
- **Proclamation.** They heard him preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God and they listened to his teaching about kingdom life.
- **Power.** They experienced his kingdom power and authority as he healed the sick and cast out demons, as well as various other signs and wonders.
- **Praxis.** Jesus sent them out to replicate his message and ministry in all the villages around the Sea of Galilee.

(Luke 9:1--2, 6) When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 6 So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

The process of equipping the apostles was, as Dr. Phil Ryken writes, "an unusual internship" (Commentary on Luke). It was deep exposure to the Kingdom message and methods of Jesus and, along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1-41), it prepared them to continue Jesus' mission to the world:

(Matthew 28:16-20) Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**5. THE APOSTLES EQUIPPED THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.** The first converts to Christ were part of a large crowd of people who listened to the apostle Peter preach publicly in Jerusalem. He proclaimed the victory of Jesus over sin and death and the result was astonishing:

(Acts 2:40-41) With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

That was the beginning of their Christian experience, not the end. These baby Christians needed help to follow Jesus and advance his mission in the world. The next paragraph in Acts 2 explains the process.

(Acts 2:42-43) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

Jesus equipped the apostles. Now the apostles equipped the new believers: There was presence (fellowship, community), proclamation (devotion to the apostles' teaching), and power (wonders and signs). These, along with Holy Communion and prayer, provided an immersion in the Christian faith.

Sadly, many professing Christians never progress beyond a "salvation prayer" into a Jesus-centered, kingdom life. Professor Scot McKnight writes, "if the gospel isn't about transformation, it isn't the gospel of the Bible" (The King Jesus Gospel, p. 27). The apostles' ministry was to equip Christians to become mature followers of Jesus and today it's the mission of pastor-teachers in the church.

(Ephesians 4:11-13) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

At the Cornerstone, we are on mission to help everyone BOTH find AND follow Jesus. Everything we do, from the Sunday worship celebration to small groups to MERGE to youth group to the new men's group to mission trips, everything is designed for Jesus-centered, life-transformation.

**6. THE APOSTLES WERE ONE OF A KIND.** Some time ago, a friend of mine told me that he was an apostle. I think I know what he meant: he was a missionary who had started several congregations and trained their pastors. But to be clear, he is not a capital A apostle in the same way as the Twelve. They are unique, one of a kind, once and done. This is the implication of Ephesians 2:20:

(Ephesians 2:19-20) You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

Paul pictured the church as a temple. The person and work of Jesus, along with the doctrines taught by the apostles/prophets, make up the foundation of the temple. We believers are its building blocks joined together in the unity of the Spirit.

The church has one cornerstone: Jesus. In the same way, the church has one foundation: the apostles/prophets (there is, I believe, good reason to decide that the apostles and prophets in this context are the same group). We can't add to their foundational teaching. That's why I say, they were one of a kind. They were never replaced. They have no successors. And there are no legitimate modern day apostles/prophets with new revelation to add to or replace the foundation laid by the Twelve.

There is one exception to this. Some years later (33-36 AD), Jesus appointed Saul/Paul as the apostle to the nations (Gentiles, Galatians 2:8). Paul's claim to apostleship was supported by the unique source of his preaching:

(Galatians 1:11-12) I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

I believe it is both difficult and dangerous to argue that there is any sort of revelation like that happening today. The apostles' doctrine has unique authority because its source is Jesus and its purpose is to be the church's foundation. Bible scholar, John Stott, comments,

"What they (apostles and prophets) taught they expected the church to believe and preserve, what they commanded they expected the church to obey" (The Message of Ephesians, p. 107).

## **CONCLUSION**

### **WE MUST PROCLAIM AND PROTECT APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE.**

As we bring today's teaching to a close, I need to point out that the health of the church and individual Christians rests in keeping the person and work of Jesus Christ along with the apostolic doctrine front and center in the life of the church. I am responsible to preach and teach it. And we are all responsible to hear, learn receive, and live the apostolic message This was the chief concern of the apostle Paul in his letters to Timothy. He comes back to it over and over again.

- Protect it. (1 Timothy 1:3) Stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.
- Protect it. (1 Timothy 4:1) The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.
- Protect it. (1 Timothy 6:20-21) Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, 21 which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.
- Protect it. (2 Timothy 1:13-14) 13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.
- Teach it. (1 Timothy 6:2-4) These are the things you are to teach and insist on. 3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4 they are conceited and understand nothing.
- Teach it. (1 Timothy 3:2) Now the overseer is to be ... able to teach
- Preach it. (2 Timothy 4:1-2) In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word;
- Entrust it. (2 Timothy 2:2) And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

This is why we make time for Bible teaching here every Sunday. We teach and defend the apostolic doctrines or instructions about the Gospel and the Christian life. This results a spiritually healthy congregation.

- Jesus is high and lifted up.
- We discover new life, forgiveness, healing, and restoration in Jesus Christ.
- We not only find Jesus, we also follow him.
- God's plan and purpose for us and the world become clear.
- Our hearts are filled with wonder, love, and praise to God.
- The Holy Spirit is welcome in our lives.
- We experience life-transformation in belief and behavior.
- The necessity of church and community with Christians is made clear.
- We learn how to pray and stay in the presence of Jesus.
- We are filled with hope, confidence, and courage.
- We know how the church should organize, minister, and worship together.
- We look forward to the return of Christ.
- We know how to stand firm in God's power against the devil and demons.
- We partner with God to bring his life and love to our neighborhoods.

And I could go on an on, but you get the picture.

If your faith feels stale, I know how you can freshen it up. Devote yourself to the apostles' teaching. Read it, hear it, learn it, receive it, live it, in the power of the Spirit.

A great place to start is by reading the Gospel of Luke. Luke worked alongside the apostles and his writings reflect the apostolic message. We have copies on the book table for a donation of any size, or free if that's all you can afford. Take one and prayerfully read a chapter a day. It will revive your faith transform your life.

## WORSHIP CELEBRATION

Sunday, August 29, 2021

**1:30 Welcome & Invocation - Peter**

**0:00 Prayer - Alex**

**0:00 *From The Day-Alex***

**4:45 *This Is Amazing Grace-Joey***

**0:45 Pray & Dismiss Kids - Joey**

**3:00 Bible Reading - Romans 15:1-13 - Janie**

**4:55 *Great Are You Lord-Alex***

**3:00 A.C.T.S. Prayer - Tami**

**25:00 Teaching - Peter: Portrait of an Apostle -**

**0:00 *O Come To The Altar-Joey***

**1:30 Updates - Peter & Joey**

**0:30 Blessing - Joey**