

MEDITATION 28

Mark 3: 16-19

¹⁶ So Jesus appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), ¹⁷ James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder), ¹⁸ and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot, who handed him over.

The list of the twelve disciples may vary a little in different gospel accounts, but the key is the number twelve which represents all the tribes of the people Israel. Also, there are more men and women who are identified as disciples of Jesus well beyond the twelve, but the twelve are named officially and are important symbolically as the foundation of the renewed Israel under the new Messiah-king. Some of the twelve we will never hear about again whereas others not even officially part of the twelve have important roles to play in following Jesus, especially certain women.

- Peter (whose Hebrew name is Simon. Peter means "rock" and is chosen by Jesus to become the leader of the movement after Jesus is gone in the flesh).
- James and John (are brothers and part of the inner circle with Peter).
- Andrew (is Peter's brother).
- Philip (is called early and brings Nathaniel to Jesus who also becomes a disciple).
- Matthew (also called Levi, is a tax collector when Jesus calls him).
- Thomas (is the one who doubts the disciples' claim that Jesus is resurrected until he has his own personal encounter with the risen Christ).
- Judas (is notorious for turning on Jesus and betraying him to the authorities).
- Bartholomew (also named Nathaniel).
- A second James not the brother of John.
- Thaddaeus (so named in Mark and Matthew, but named Judas son of James in Luke and Acts).
- Simon the Cananaean (in Mark and Matthew but also identified as a Zealot in Luke and Acts. A zealot was typically an anti-Roman revolutionary).

What is interesting in this list is the mixed bag of individuals who become followers of Jesus. All will fail him in some way. But some will return and grow in wisdom, compassion and purpose through and beyond their failures.

There are two things for us to meditate on here.

- 1) What higher and better way of being have you been called by Jesus: your words, your behaviour and most importantly your heart? Or is the higher and better way a call to settle down and find some peace in what is?...

- 2) How have you worked through your failures, mistakes, hurts and losses so that you have grown in your call to authenticity of being rather than staying stuck in patterns of justification and rationalization, or other patterns of guilt/blame/shame or bitterness/despair?

These are core questions for all of us as we are invited, like the disciples, to follow Jesus into the next chapter of our lives...

PRAYER: We seek you, O God, because we want more and better... We want to see, but we also need the courage and clarity to see... We need assurance that you will be there for us to guide us and carry us through the next chapter of our lives... We need to trust in faith and anticipate in hope that you will provide a way for us to discover abundance in what will be given and peace in accepting what will be, so that we grow to become what you have already seen in us to be and become...

We pray this way in faith, O God. Meet us in our moments and times of doubt.
We pray this way in hope, O God. Meet us in our moments and times where we lose hope.
We pray this way in love, O God. Meet us in our moments and times when resentment, bitterness or envy swallow up our love.

In Jesus' name we pray this way; Amen.