

CHAPTER 13

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We have studied the twelve Apostles. We have also studied Matthias, James and Paul. What was it that made these men special? What was it that made these men different? What was it that made these men succeed?

What about you? Is it possible for you to be like these men we have studied? Can you be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Even today the Lord Jesus calls out to men and women, boys and girls with the words, "FOLLOW ME!" (compare Luke 5:27). Have you decided to do this? What does it mean to follow Christ?

Common and Ordinary Men

The men whom we have studied in these pages were ordinary people just like you. They did not possess special and unusual powers. They were not born into noble or wealthy families. They were not highly educated. They were just common people, and yet these men became great in God's sight and great in the sight of men.

Here is an example of the greatness of these men. In Luke 3:1 we are told the name of the Roman emperor who ruled the world during the days when the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth. His name is T _____ Caesar (Luke 3:1). This man ruled the Roman empire for more than 20 years. He was probably the most powerful man on earth for all these years.

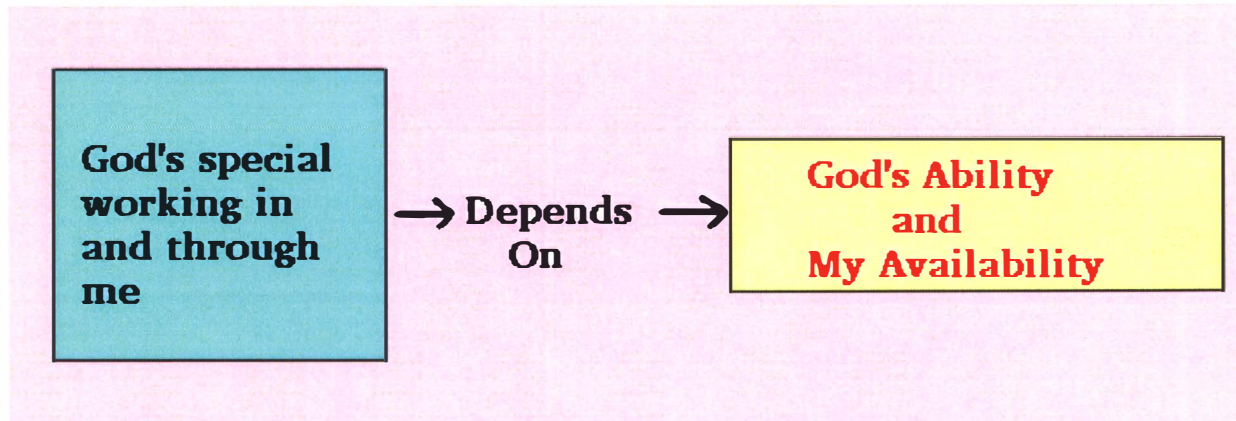
How much do you know about Tiberias? Do you know what he did and what he said? Do you know anything about his life; do you know anything about his death? How much do you know about Peter and Paul? Do you know more about these two men than you know about the emperor Tiberias? Even people who are not Christians usually know certain things about Peter and Paul, but they probably know very little about Tiberias. Do you know boys or men who are named Peter or Paul or John or Thomas or James (Jim)? How many people do you know with the name Tiberias?

There was a special kind of greatness that the disciples had. They were common and ordinary men, but God made them great. What was their secret? What made these men so very special and different?

Read Acts 4:13. Peter and John were in the presence of their enemies. They had been arrested for preaching the gospel (see verses 2-3). The Jewish leaders who had arrested them knew that Peter and John were "unlearned and _____ men" (Acts 4:13). This means that Peter and John were just common, ordinary men. They had never been educated in the great schools of that day, but even their enemies knew that there was something very special about Peter and John. These men had "been with _____" (see the end of Acts 4:13)! Jesus made the difference. Jesus made these two men very special. If you take two **ordinary** men (Peter and John) and put them with Jesus, then you end up with two very **extraordinary** men!

Did you know that the Lord Jesus can make the difference in your life too? You may not be a very special person. You may not have great abilities. You may not be the most intelligent person in your class at school. You may be a very ordinary person, but there is a very special and extraordinary Saviour who wants to make a difference in your life.

Are you letting the Lord do a work in your life? When God looks for people through whom He can do a great work, He is not looking for your **ability**. The **ability** belongs to God, not man. God is looking for your **availability**. God is looking for the person who is **usable**. He wants you to be **accessible** so that He can have **access** to you and do a work in your life and in your heart. The man who is available says, "Lord, here I am. I love You and I want to serve You, and I want to do whatever You want me to do. I cannot do it on my own, but with Your help and power, I can be a Your useful servant."



Think of a surgeon's glove. Does the glove have the **ability** to perform the operation by itself? ____ Is the surgeon able to **use** a glove and work through a glove if the glove is **available** to him? _____ Do you think the surgeon would want to use a glove that is all dirty? ____ Does the Saviour want His disciples to keep themselves **clean** so that He can use them (John 13:8)? ____

When God looks for men, He does not look for those who are wealthy and powerful and special and well educated. These are not the things that God is most concerned about. When God looks for men, He looks for those who are **available**. When the Lord Jesus chose His disciples, He selected several fishermen, one tax collector, and one zealot! These were just common, ordinary men who made themselves **available** to a very wonderful and extraordinary Saviour!

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26. God does not call many _____ men or many _____ men or many _____ men. He calls very **ordinary** men: "But God hath _____ the _____ things of the world [men like Peter and John and Matthew] to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the _____ things of the world to confound the things which are _____ (1 Cor. 1:27). It is not man's wisdom and might that count. God can take foolish and weak men and make them very **wise and powerful**! And, who gets all the glory for doing this (1 Cor. 1:28-31)? _____

The Cost of Being a Disciple

Anything that is worth something usually costs something. That which costs very little is usually worth very little. You can buy a ring for your finger by putting coins in the "gum machines" at a supermarket, or you can buy a ring at a good jewelry store. Which ring is more valuable? Which ring would you rather have? Which ring costs more?

The saying, "You get what you pay for!" is usually true. If you buy a bicycle for only \$25.00, this will probably not be a very good bicycle. It will certainly not be brand new! Being a disciple of the Lord

Jesus costs something, and it is worth a great deal. It is worth paying a price for.

Think of the twelve disciples that we have studied in this set of notes. These men paid a price. They left their families; they left their occupations; they left their possessions; and they followed Christ. Many of these men even paid the price of martyrdom. As Peter once said, "Lo, we have _____ and have _____ thee" (Mark 10:28).

Was following Christ worth leaving all things? Peter and the other disciples paid a price, but did they end up losers or gainers (see Matthew 10:39)? _____ Remember, anything valuable costs something. Those who give nothing usually gain nothing. Those who give a large amount usually gain much.

Consider carefully the words of the Lord Jesus in Mark 10:29-30. Did Jesus promise the disciples that they would receive or gain anything? _____ What would they gain **now**, in this life? What would they gain **in the future**, in the life to come?

Think about being a believer today. Does it cost anything to be a faithful believer today? Are there some things that a believer should "leave" or give up? Is the loss worth the gain? What are some things that a believer gains in this life? Why is it worth being a believer in this life? What do believers have in this life that unsaved people do not have? Why is it worth being a believer in the next life? What will believers have in the next life that unsaved people will not have?

Earthly Possessions

The disciples whom we have studied were not men of great wealth. They did not hang on to earthly possessions. Several of them left their fishing business so that they could follow the Lord. Later Peter did not even have enough money to pay his taxes (Matthew 17:24-27). Paul had to make tents to help support himself (Acts 18:3). According to Acts 3:6, did Peter have much money? _____

Paul once gave this amazing description of the followers of Christ : "as _____, yet making many _____" (2 Cor. 6:10). These men were **poor**, but they were able to make many people **rich**. How can this be? How can a poor person make other people rich? What did these disciples have and what were they able to share with others that was more valuable than anything money could ever buy (Romans 6:23)

Notice the second thing we learn in 2 Corinthians 6:10, Disciples are described as "as having _____, and yet _____ all things." How can this be? How can a person have nothing and yet possess everything? How can a person's hands be empty and yet full? The answer is very simple. As far as material possessions were concerned, the disciples were not rich, but **they had everything that they needed**. God met their **every** need (see Matthew 6:28-33), but as far as their spiritual possessions (eternal possessions) were concerned, they were spiritual billionaires! They possessed " _____ **spiritual blessings**" (Eph. 1:3). What are some of the things which believers have which the unsaved people do not have and which money can never buy? (Some of these things are listed in Ephesians chapter one)

When a person dies, how much money can he take with him? How many possessions? How many houses or boats or cars or swimming pools or television sets? When a believer dies, is there anything that will remain in his possessions even into the next life? Is there a big difference between **temporal possessions** (those things that only last a lifetime) and **eternal possessions** (those things that last

forever)?

A true disciple must forsake and say goodbye to all that he has and all that he possesses (Luke 14:33). His farewell does not mean that he must give away all his possessions and all his money and all his clothes. It does mean though, that the believer should be able to say, "I do not have any possessions. All that I have belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. I belong to Him, and all that I have belongs to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20); therefore, I want to be very careful how I use my possessions and my money because all that I have really belongs to Him!" Can you say this? If Christ does not have your possessions, it is probably because He does not have **you!**

The Lord Must Come First

Suppose someone had come up to Peter or John or Paul and said, "Who is the MOST IMPORTANT PERSON to you?" What answer do you think these men would have given? Would they have said, "My wife" or "My brother" or "My Dad" or "My Mom" or "my best friend"? No, everyone of these men would have answered in the same way: *The most important person to me is the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Carefully read Matthew 10:37. Is the Lord saying that it is wrong to love your father and your mother? _____ He is saying that it is wrong to love anyone _____ than Him! He must come first! He must have our first and greatest devotion. Have you ever heard of a V.I.P.? This means **VERY IMPORTANT PERSON**. The Lord Jesus is not a V.I.P. He is much more than that. He should be called the M.I.P.— **THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON**. Is He *your* most important Person?

If the Lord has **first place** in our hearts, then we will be able to reach out and love other people as we really should. The Lord will help us to be the son or daughter, brother or sister, friend that we should be our loved ones.

Hated by the World

According to John 15:18-20, what did the Lord teach His disciples to expect from the world?

Being a disciple means being God's man in the devil's world. The unsaved world does not appreciate those people who really follow the Lord and serve Him. Think about the disciples whom we studied in these chapters. All of them were persecuted, and most of them were martyred for their faith in Christ. They were not popular with the world. Instead they were hated and persecuted, just as Christ had predicted.

In 1 Corinthians 4:13 Paul described how the world thinks of true believers: "We are made as the _____ of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." His meaning is, "The world considers us as the worst kind of people. They think of us like the scum or garbage or rubbish of humanity. People like to get rid of trash because it is filthy and of no use, and this is how the world thinks of us!"

These brave and courageous disciples were hated by the world but loved by Christ. What about you? What is more important to you--what the world thinks of you or what the Lord thinks of you? Do you want to be a part of Satan's world system, or Christ's glorious kingdom? Do you want the world's

applause, or do you want the Lord's applause? Do you want to follow the Saviour down the straight path of blessedness, or do you want to follow the world down the crooked path which leads to misery and destruction? The choice is yours.

Being A Student

To be a true disciple, a person must "continue in My _____" (John 8:31). So said the Lord Jesus. The word "**disciple**" means "student, pupil." Are you a student of Christ? Is He your Teacher? Is the Bible your textbook? Do you carry your Bible to church with you? Why? Why not? Do you open your Bible during the week? When? Why? What does the Book of Books mean to you? Has the Lord taught you anything from His Word this past week?

Obedience

Jesus once said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do _____ the things which I say" (Luke 6:46). A person who says that he is following the Lord but who does not obey the Lord is only fooling himself. How can a disciple show his love for the Lord (John 14:15,21,23)?

It is one thing to **say** that you believe or that you are a disciple. It is quite another thing to **show** that you believe by your **obedience**. Obedience is faith in action! It is a wonderful thing to **obey** the Lord. Are you enjoying the blessings of obedience? How can you obey the Lord at home? At school? In church? In the neighborhood?

Surrender

If any one desires to come after Christ and follow Him, then he must _____ himself (Luke 9:23). This means he must say "NO" to self, and he must say "YES" to Christ. He must say, "Not what I want but only what my Saviour wants!" The surgeon cannot use the glove that is hanging onto the door knob and refusing to let the surgeon get his hand in. Of course, gloves do not really resist like this, but people do. He can only use the glove that says, "Surgeon, fill me and use me. I'll do whatever you want me to do."

Have you ever seen a wild horse that is bucking wildly and insisting on having its own way? Such a horse must be broken and tamed so that it is controlled by its master. The wild horse is not **usable**; it does not have a working relationship with its master. It must be broken and brought to the place where it yields to its master and begins to enjoy a working relationship with him. The horse can then enjoy all of the benefits that come from such a relationship (such as daily care, food, shelter). In the same way we must yield to the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and be usable to Him. The believer's will must be broken so that he is able to say "**Not I, but Christ**" (see Galatians 2:20). Having this kind of relationship with the Lord, the believer can then enjoy all the blessings and benefits of the love and care of God.

A Message of Good News

All the men whom we studied in this set of notes have one thing in common. They all had a message of good news and went forth preaching the gospel of Christ.

Do you have a message of good news to share with others? What is this message? Why is it good news? Do people whom you know need to hear this message? Why? Can God use an ordinary, common person like you to share this good news with others? How can He use you? When can He use you?

As one person has said, "I'm just a *NOBODY* telling *ANYBODY* about *SOMEBODY* who can save *ANYBODY*!"

The first disciples of the Lord loved this good news, and nothing could stop them from preaching it and sharing it with others. Many of them died because of their love for the gospel message and their refusal to keep silent.

The world has little good news to talk about. The news media report a lot of bad news but little good news. God has wonderful good news for this world (John 3:16). Have you believed this good news? Will you join the others who are proclaiming this good news. Remember, God is not looking for your **ability**. What is He looking for? _____

Which One Breaks Through ?

