

Moravian Women's Association

Devotional Paper

April 2014

With a Little Help from my Friends

Read Mark Ch3 v 13 - 19

The original twelve apostles may be considered, with the exception of Judas, to be some of the most fortunate people that ever lived. Many have commented how wonderful it must have been to have been specially chosen and been among the first Christians who actually saw and heard Jesus in person. It certainly would have been a great honour to have lived and worked with him during his ministry and been among those first pioneers of the Christian Church.

However, with the knowledge and understanding they had came responsibility. Please read Luke Ch 9 v 1 – 6. They were expected to go out into the world and be active witnesses of what they saw and heard. That was their purpose. Jesus certainly needed “more than a little help from his friends” otherwise his life would have been in vane.

What do we know of those twelve men?

We know they were ordinary men and a mixed bunch. There were the fisherman brothers Simon (usually known as Peter) and Andrew. Simon Peter, on whom Jesus built the church, was very impulsive, quick tempered, emotional and easily aroused by an appeal to adventure. He was the leader – the spokesman for the twelve. He had faults but also had the saving grace of a loving heart and no matter how many times he failed he always recovered his courage and integrity. Andrew, on the other hand, was willing to take a back seat himself and bring others to Jesus. He was never jealous or resentful but he was optimistic and content in second place.

James and John were also brothers and fishermen by trade. John was often referred to as the “Beloved Disciple”. He was very ambitious and a man of action although he mellowed in later life. He wrote the Gospel of John, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd books of John along with Revelations. Philip showed a simple faith while Bartholomew (Nathanael) was a great scholar and a most adventurous missionary.

Thomas as we know doubted that Jesus had really appeared to the friends in the upper room. He wanted to actually touch and see Jesus after his resurrection – indisputable proof. We can all relate to those feelings.

Matthew was a tax collector which meant in the minds of many honest Jewish men that he was a criminal. Yet Jesus chose him as one of his men. Matthew could use a pen and was the first man to write down the teachings of Jesus.

Little is known about James and Judas (Thaddaeus) except they were thought to be brothers.

Simon was a zealot, part of a seriously nationalistic sect with very strong political views. His strong views were turned into a strong faith and love of his Lord.

Judas Iscariot the traitor – poor Judas - but it wasn't his betrayal that put Jesus on the cross it was for our sins. He couldn't live with himself afterwards and hung himself.

For Discussion

1. Can you see the characteristics of the disciples above in yourselves and others in your congregation? Discuss now, not your differences, but how you can all work together as the disciples did.
2. Reading this as we approach Easter, do we react like the disciples and abandon Jesus at the vital moment? Are we strong enough to stand up and be counted in 2014?

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