



I am not God. All I do, think and say is biased towards my finite self, for my comfort and ease. You do the same. God's mission is not comfort or ease. It is about His glory. Sometimes God's wisdom seems nonsensical when compared with what we think is right. If, like Jesus, we chose some people to go about our mission to extend our comfort and ease God would not get on that team. This

Because God's mission is not our mission. It is about the redemption of a people for his glory. Jesus' choice of a rag-tag bunch of fishermen, potters, revolutionaries and a traitor makes no sense. We must learn to trust God's ways even when our circumstances say otherwise. If we are to participate in his mission of joy and glory we must learn to trust God's wisdom even when circumstances are against us.

1. The way Jesus prays Have you ever spent an entire night devoted to prayer? Not a night drifting in and out of prayer and sleep, but a whole preplanned night of prayer. It's not common. Verse 12 is surprising. "Jesus ...spent the night praying." After healing a man on the sabbath, "The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus." (v11) Plans were being made to deal with Jesus. Human wisdom says it's time to saddle up and get out until things calm down. But Jesus doesn't run away. He goes to the Father and prays all night. But why? If anyone could rely on their own wisdom, surely it would be Jesus. Yet in his humanity, out of joyful dependence, Jesus spends the whole night in prayer. Everything Jesus does, is done in perfect alignment with the Father's will as he delights to submit himself to the wisdom of the Father. We would say, "'Do you not know how good sleep is, Jesus?" Jesus would say, "But do you not know how good God is?" So often when we talk about prayer, we feel guilty because our prayer life isn't how we'd like it to be. Why is prayer a burdensome thing when it is a real privilege; a privilege made possible by Jesus's atoning work on the cross! We bring our cares, concerns, needs, joys and grievances! Our prayer meetings are so poorly attended and we describe those who come as 'the faithful few,' who are slogging it out in the miserable business of prayer!! We have got prayer so wrong. Yes, there is a cost to prayer. It takes time and it eats into sleep. This highlights our struggle to trust God's wisdom. After being awake all night Jesus will preach to a massive crowd, heal the sick, minister to the broken and oppressed. It will be an exhausting day of ministry. We would say to Jesus, "You need to rest." But Jesus sees that preparation for ministry and choosing apostles, is not just a good night's sleep; it is communion with the father. Strength does not come from sleep alone, it comes from dependence on God. God created us to need sleep. But He has also created us to need him. The finite needs the infinite. Let's slay the idol of sleep. Luke does not record the content of Jesus' prayer. That silence is significant. Because, we want certainty we've made prayer into a kind of crystal ball so we can know the future; to know where all the different options lead so we can pick the one that is most comfortable. But that is not what prayer is. If it were, then Jesus would not have picked Judas. **Prayer is not about knowing the future. It is about knowing the one who holds the future.** Prayer is communion, the slow shaping of our hearts to align with God's will. Jesus spends the night with the Father, and in the morning he walks forward in confidence because he trusts the Father's wisdom. And that is where this passage presses in on us and God's providence feels difficult. We trust God's wisdom and lean into prayer so we depend upon the one who holds the reality.

2. The people Jesus chooses Jesus selects twelve men who will become his apostles from a large group of disciples. We have all been sent by Him to "go and make disciples of all nations...", but the apostles had to have been with Jesus for all of his ministry and witness of the resurrection. Jesus set apart 12 who would be the foundation of the church because it anchors them in Israel's salvation history. Where there were 12 tribes, there are now 12 apostles of his church. Considering their responsibility, Jesus makes some surprising choices: Simon Peter, a passionate, impulsive fisherman who will deny Jesus three times, the "sons of thunder," James and John known for their fiery tempers, Matthew, a despised tax collector, working for the Roman government, Simon the Zealot, a radical nationalist who hated

the Romans and Judas Iscariot "who became a traitor", This is not the kind of group you would assemble if you were building a world-changing movement. In any other context, Simon would have tried to kill Matthew. But Jesus puts them on the same team. **The mission of God is not built on human compatibility. It is built on divine grace.** God chooses Abraham, a childless old man, Moses, a reluctant speaker and David, the youngest shepherd boy. God chooses the weak to display His power. These apostles will not succeed because of their natural abilities. They will succeed because God works through them. That should be very encouraging for us. Many of us feel ordinary, unimpressive, unqualified, frail, insecure and timid. But the gospel reminds us that God's mission has never depended on human greatness. It depends on God's grace. Jesus chose Judas after a night of prayer. This was not a failure of discernment. Jesus knew Judas would play a role in the path to the cross. Jesus was obedient and Jesus was betrayed. Prayer doesn't mean the road will be easy. Betrayal is under the sovereign hand of God. From God's perspective, Judas' betrayal was part of the plan of redemption. The cross was not an accident. It was the center of the mission. This speaks directly to our struggle to trust God's wisdom. When relationships break down and someone wounds us deeply our instinct is to say that God has abandoned us. Yes, you may have made a great mistake. What you're suffering might be an earthly consequence of yours or another person's sin. We're living in a fallen world so that means it's not going to be sunshine and rainbows. But when life is hard, we are not out of the hand of God. We are not abandoned by God. God is still in control. In fact he is working this out for his glory and "for the good of those who love Him." That does not make evil good. Judas is still responsible for his betrayal. It does mean that God can accomplish his purposes even through human failure. That means we can trust him even when we do not understand what He is doing.

3) The mission Jesus walks. Jesus does not choose these men for their comfort, but for his mission. These twelve men will become the foundation of the church. Paul writes in Ephesians, "you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles." Through them the gospel will be preached, churches will be planted, and the New Testament Scriptures will be written. The mission of Jesus is bigger than political identity, personal background, or human divisions. Jesus forms a new family, that exists for his mission. God makes the team for the sake of his mission. The apostles are chosen so that they will walk where Jesus walks. They will watch him preach, heal, front religious hypocrisy, show compassion to sinners, suffer and ultimately go the cross to bear the sin of all those who believe in him. He will take the wrath of the Father against that sin and take all that guilt and shame upon his shoulders into the grave. They will see Jesus rise again; walking in new life, conquering death, the firstborn among many. Jesus is not simply teaching them information. He is forming them into participants in His mission. Sometimes we misunderstand what it means to follow Jesus. We often think discipleship means learning religious truths or adopting Christian habits. Discipleship always includes participation in his mission. This is the calling for us today. Jesus may have set apart his 12 apostles, but all his disciples were brought into his mission. If you're a follower of Jesus, you are following his mission and not yours. We die to self and live for Christ. This is a daily thing. Just ask any of the mothers here today. As a mother, seeking to raise your child and point them to Jesus, you die daily in so many different ways by putting aside your comfort and your ease for the good of your child. On a greater level, as followers of Jesus, we're all called to do that! Young and old, male and female, single or married. As followers of Jesus we're to die to ourself daily for the sake of God's mission. We may have to live off less money so you can give more, or welcome different people into your life and not pretend to be squeaky clean. It will look like slaying sin so you walk in holiness or bumble your way through a gospel conversation with a neighbour. You will bear the pain as a parent as your kids don't fit in because you're not allowing them to engage with everything their peers do. Your life will not look as you planned it. In other words, the mission Jesus walks, leads through suffering to salvation. God's wisdom often looks very different from ours but it will be everything God planned. It will be glorious. It will bear eternal fruit. You will proclaim to the world that you are caught up in a far greater mission. The same God who wisely chose these apostles is the God who wisely governs our lives. He invites us to be part of the team.