**Twelve – Wk 11 – The Abnormal’s - Mathius & Paul**

**We have been walking in the footsteps of the disciples –**

**learning about being a disciple from the original.**

**THE TWELVE: Varied as nicknames and surnames were used.**

**1. Simon (Peter) - Son of Jonah / 2. Andrew (Simon's brother)**

**3. James - Son of Zebedee / 4. John (James’s brother)**

**5. Philip / 6. Bartholomew (Nathanael)**

**7. Matthew (Levi) / 8. Thomas (Didymus = the twin)**

**9. James / 10. Jude (Judas/Joses/Thaddeus)**

**11. Simon (the Zealot) / 12. Judas Iscariot (the traitor)**

**They were disciples who became Apostles.**

**We finished the twelve last week, but we have two more concerning apostolic authority. 12-1+2**

**After Jesus' resurrection, over the next 40 days, he made 11 appearances - once to 500 disciples. Jesus gave a clear mission to his disciples – go tell…**

**But first, go to Jerusalem and wait for the HS to fill you with power and boldness. So they did, and 10 days later it happened. But during those ten days, they replaced Judas.**

**Acts 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.**

**15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. (Ps 41:9) 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”**

**18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. (Pretty gruesome) 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)**

**Luke tells us like it is - Judas was not a hero or a victim - he was the villain. Luke's gospel calls him a tool of Satan & a traitor**

**John 6 - Jesus says Judas was not a believer, even though he followed.**

**Matthew (Judas hung himself) this is not a contradiction. Judas hung himself - at some point he fell to the ground and burst open. Luke the physician writing to Greeks focused on the medical gore of his death.**

**(Peter says) 20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’ (Quoting Psalm 69 & 109 - Peter is making an argument for the replacement of Judas - Jesus wanted 12 – so, we need to have 12 - they had prerequisites)**

**21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” (From John the Baptist to the Ascension)**

**2 Requirements: 1) They had to know and walk with Jesus from the start – Saw miracles, heard teaching, lived with us for 3 yrs.**

**2) They had to be eyewitnesses to Jesus’ resurrection.**

**23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. (Whoa, first time these guys are ever mentioned – but have been there all along) 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”**

**And so they had a board meeting and voted – they brought him before the church, let him preach, and then voted. No- throw dice**

**26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (no bylaws, denominational guidelines, elder vote, or church ballot – just casting lots, cubes/ bones/ ceremonial stones)**

**Matthias Who? What an interesting origin story for an apostle. But it reveals some foundational principles – in a moment.**

**But we have one more – he wrote 1/3 of the NT – his name is Paul.**

**1 Corinthians 15 – (After discussing the resurrection appearances, he states)**

**8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, (abnormally – freakish, odd, surprising called) he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.**

**What is he talking about? Paul is the shock of all shocks, a murderer/archenemy of Jesus. A terrorist turned evangelist.**

**The most significant NT conversion and possibly the 2nd most important figure in Christendom other than Jesus.**

**This is the first of five times we get Paul’s testimony in the NT**

**Acts 9: Luke to the readers - Acts 22: Paul to persuade the Jews.**

**Acts 26: Paul to persuade Gentiles - Phil 3: Paul for theological understanding.**

**1 Timothy 1: Paul tells the story to give encouragement.**

**Acts 9:1 But Saul, (a Pharisee) still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, (sought to destroy them - hard to find anyone who brought this much pain and hatred at the time) went to the high priest 2 and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, (modern Syria) so that if he found any belonging to The Way, (1st decade name, from John 14:6) men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (You would expect Jesus to wipe him out - but instead he picks him as an apostle) 3 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. (the light of heaven invaded his dark life) 4 And falling to the ground, (Sometimes God needs to get you in the gutter before we can see up) he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” 5 And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. (He did not say, “Why do you persecute my people,” but me? Jesus identifies with the suffering of his people. 6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” 7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. (audible sounds) 8 Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. (God knocked him blind. What was going on in his head? Praying, soul searching, thinking, what just happened?)**

**He was to have his own resurrection on the 3rd day.**

**Paul was going to Damascus to arrest Jesus' followers and put them on trial. Anania, a disciple, was hiding.**

**10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying. (Straight street still exists today) 12 And he (Paul) has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” (Him? Really? God, you might want to Google him - he is not Jesus material.)**

**Ananias did not want to for good reason. Saul was a horrible person who is not to be trusted. Was it a trick?**

**15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.**

**He is to be a messenger to both Jewish and Gentile people – all the way up to kings and powerful people.**

**16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” (His role is so big, it will come with a price. A reference to trials and persecution he will endure as a minister of the gospel) 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. (Cautious but obedient) And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately, something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. (Once hunting them, now relies on them) 20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He (Jesus) is the Son of God.”**

**It was nearly 13 yrs later before he was considered an Apostle.**

**Two More Apostles - Matthias and Paul – Some Highlights (12-1+2)**

**1. The sovereignty of God is a foundational principle.**

**100s of verses- (John 42:2, Prov 19:21, Rpm 8:28, Ps 103:19, Eph 1:11-12, Pr 16:9, 1 Chron 29:11-12, Ps 135:6, Pr 21:1, Dan 4:35, Isa 46:10, Ro 9:18-21, Lam 3:37, Pr 16:33, Mat 19:26, 1 Tim 6:15, Pr 16:4, Deut 32:39, Isa 45:7, 2 Chron 20:6)**

**In Acts alone, it is repeated over and over. It jumps out with every prayer and recorded sermon.**

**Acts 1:16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. (Imagine a friend for three years, turned traitor – turned in Jesus. The anger and resentment. But guess what?)**

**God's design was Judas. God was and is always in control.**

**Acts 1:24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen (the sovereign omniscience of God and God’s divine established will)**

**Acts 1:26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. (The dice land where God determines)**

**Rather than pick the wrong person - God, you do it. You are sovereign and in charge. We might mess it up. Toss the dice!**

**Pro 16:33– “The lot is cast, but its every decision is from the Lord.”**

**As Jesus chose them, they believe he caused the lot to fall.**

**The point is that God, not the apostles, chose Matthias.**

**We see Paul also this in Paul’s conversion: He was not seeking Jesus, wanting Jesus, looking for Jesus. He was not reading books or going to church. But Jesus chose and appointed him as his Apostle.**

**They would not have chosen Paul - I would not have chosen Paul – But God did! God chooses who he chooses. Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to Annania, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine**

**I heard it said, “The HS is a gentleman – he won’t make you do what you don’t want to do?” Really ask Paul about that.**

**(Paul writes) Galatians 1:15 But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb (God had his eye on Paul since before he was born – Paul didn’t know this until he met Christ) and called me by his grace, (God's favor) was pleased 16 to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles… (Phil 3:12 – Christ took hold of me… (took possession)**

**God did not ring his doorbell. Salvation starts with God, not us. Paul was able to look back and see the sovereignty of God.**

**John 1:13 – (we are born again) …not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God…**

**2. Complete abandon to God's will is a core practice.**

**Not to a church, person, or organization – but to Jesus.**

**You've got to love the purity of the early church - the innocent faith in casting lots. This is a great example of a description, not prescription.**

**In fact, they did not do this practice after the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2)**

**When making decisions today, we have: the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, Fellow Christians, and Pastoral counsel.**

* + **But their heart in this matter is still to be applied.**
  + **God, you are sovereign – we depend on you.**

**God, your kingdom come, your will be done! Not my will but yours be done.**

**This was the practice of every apostle and is the practice of every faithful follower of Jesus.**

**Do you want to truly experience the joy of God? Humble dependence on his faithful goodness is freedom! Who gets there faster, the one stressing about flying or the one taking a nap?**

**Knowing God is good and in control, we can have total trust on him in our lives. We can live and sleep in the peace of God.**

**3. God honors the faithful, not necessarily the popular or gifted.**

**What stands out about Matthais- we never heard of them before this day – but they were there all along.**

**Setting up chairs, tearing down gear, passing buckets, cleaning up after events, never missed a moment to be a part and help, possibly among the 70 sent out - and now a chance to be an apostle. WHY them? They were faithful.**

**1 Chron 16:9 - For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.**

**Matthew 23:11, Luke 9:48 - Jesus has said the greatest are the last and those who faithfully serve, not the arrogant and entitled, or those looking for position.**

**God loves to use unexpected people to accomplish his mission.**

**He loves to use foolish things to confound the wise (1 Co 1:27)**

**Luke 16:10 “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much…**

**Matthew 25:21 - His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.**

**Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men…**

**Matt 23:12 - Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**

**And so, this nobody, Matthias, became a somebody, because he was faithful, by the will of God.**

**Are you faithful, are you humbly serving the Lord and others?**

**OR - Do you seek to be served and seek prestige and power?**

**4. Following Jesus means you will be misunderstood**

**Paul’s old friends and associates wanted him dead. Christians did not trust him. Your old friends may disown you; family may not believe it.**

**But know this for sure - Jesus is still changing lives –**

**God is still doing surprise, extreme makeovers of lives.**

**This fundamental truth is at the core of who we are - Your life can be radically changed by Jesus – you will never be the same again.**

**Maybe you can relate… if you knew my life, where I came from, what Jesus did - church is full of us – that is the work of Jesus.**

**5. No one is beyond the reach of God**

**God can touch and change the nobody and anybody.**

**The worst sinners often make the best saints.**

**Paul to - 1 Timothy 1:15 - This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.**

**Galatians 1:11-24 – Saul / Paul gives his testimony – I was a persecutor and destroyer of Christians, Pharisees of Pharisees, advancing and zealous in Judaism and tradition – 1:15 But when God… called me…**

**But - they are really far from God - “But when God…”**

**But - I don’t really want them touched – “But when God…”**

**But - they don’t serve it (you’re right, none of us do) “But when God…”**

**\*\*\* God, help us to be like Ananias – No one is too far off**

**What happened to Matthias? We don’t know much.**

* **As an apostle, he worked as one with full apostolic authority.**
* **Early church traditions say that he traveled to modern Georgia.**
* **It is recorded that he was stoned to death, others say crucified, beheaded, and another legend that he was chopped up.**

**We don’t know. But it is likely he was martyred.**

* **We know in Revelation, he is one of the 12 Apostles seated before the throne of God, judging Israel. (Matt 19:28, Lu 22:29-30, Rev 21:12)**

**What happened to Paul? We know more about him than other Apostles.**

* **Endured beatings, stoning, flogging, prison, and hardship.**

**(writing Romans, 1& 2 Corinthians, and Galatians)**

**Acts 13-28 is his story up to his first Roman imprisonment.**

* **He is locked up (57-63 AD) in Prison, leads many to Christ.**

**(Writes Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians)**

* **Acquitted - travels to Spain, to Crete, to Ephesus, through Greece - back to Rome. (Writes Titus and 1 Tim as pastors)**
* **Arrested again in Rome (66 AD) - Paul is arrested in Rome again.**

**(Writes 2 Tim as a goodbye from a dungeon) Paul iss beheaded under Nero, the same year Peter is crucified upside down... the others...**

**Apostle James beheaded / James (bro of Jesus) - clubbed to death after surviving being thrown from temple (Jerusalem) / Andrew - crucified (Greece) / Matthew - stabbed to death (Ethiopia) / Bartholomew - flogged to death (Turkey) / Matthias - burned to death (Syria) / Simon stoned (Persia) / Philip Executed (Africa) / Thomas speared to death (India) / Jude executed by arrows (Iran) / Mark dragged to death (Egypt) / Luke Hanged (Greece) / Barnabas - beheaded in Thessalonica... / countless Christians martyred (to this day millions are still put to death around the world declaring the resurrection of Jesus!**

**They all faced hardship and tribulation as participants in Christ's suffering. All remained faithful to the very end!**

**Paul, giving his testimony before King Agrippa, says this:**

**Acts 26:15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people (Jews) and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’**

**Jesus tells Paul, I am appointing you and sending (as an Apostle): Notice this is a Trinitarian work:**

1. **So, people may have their spiritual eyes opened by the Holy Spirit.**

**18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God…**

**So, they will turn from darkness to light – repentance.**

**This is understanding through the Holy Spirit.**

1. **So, people may receive forgiveness of sins by the cross of Jesus.**

**18 …that they may receive forgiveness of sins**

**To know the grace and mercy of God to forgive sin and to restore our relationship with him – salvation/redemption.**

1. **So, people may be family set apart as children of the father.**

**18 …and a place among those who are sanctified**

**We are not inviting people to a religion but to a family.**

**The family of God through Jesus Christ – adoption**

**Set apart unto Christ and for Christ - sanctification.**

**Set apart as holy to now pursue holiness.**

**How does this happen? “…by faith in me (Jesus).”**

**Not by works, religion, church, rituals, customs, or being a good person. This is an invitation for all present.**

**Faith in Jesus = salvation, redemption, adoption, and righteousness**

**Jesus brings: a new direction, a new purpose, a new life, and a brand-new start! \*Jesus has the power to change everything! Even you!**

**By faith this can be yours today. Throw the dice.**