

Brandon Phillips / General Adult

The King and His Glory / Jesus; Apostle

In Matthew 10:2-4, Matthew deliberately names the twelve men upon whom Christ chose to build His church and advance His Kingdom:

Pre-sermon Comments

Sermon Text

Matthew 10:2-4 LSB

² Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

Introduction to our Text

Proposition and Outline

In [Matthew 10:2-4](#), Matthew deliberately names the twelve men upon whom Christ chose to build His church and advance His Kingdom:

James, the Son of Alphaeus: A Picture of Faithful Obscurity

Thaddaeus: A Picture of Devoted Curiosity

Simon the Zealot: A Picture of Transformed Zeal

Judas Iscariot: A Picture of the Tragedy of False Faith

Review

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Scripture gives much more information about some apostles (like Peter and John) while saying very little about others?

Pastor Brandon emphasized that history is often shaped by people who live in relative obscurity. Why do you think this idea resonates with how God often works in Scripture?

In what ways does Matthew's list of the apostles demonstrate that Christ uses many different kinds of people to advance His kingdom?

The sermon described four "portraits of discipleship": Why do you think Matthew includes Judas Iscariot in the list, even identifying him as "the one who betrayed Him"?

- faithful obscurity
- devoted curiosity
- transformed zeal
- false faith

What does the inclusion of Judas teach us about the danger of false faith or superficial discipleship?

The sermon noted that most kingdom work happens quietly and without recognition. Why do you think our culture—and sometimes even the church—tends to value visibility and influence more than faithfulness?

Can you think of people in your life who have served Christ faithfully without recognition? What impact did their lives have on you?

The sermon mentioned that many believers will serve Christ in ways that are never recorded or remembered by the world. How should that truth shape the way we think about success in the Christian life?

In what areas of your life might God be calling you to faithfulness rather than recognition?

As we prepare to study the individual apostles, which of the four discipleship portraits do you think will be most challenging or encouraging for you personally?

James, the less, the Son of Alphaeus

Matthew 10:3 LSB

³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

Luke 6:15 LSB

¹⁵ and Matthew and Thomas; James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

Mark 3:18 LSB

¹⁸ and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

Acts 1:13 LSB

¹³ And when they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, 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*.

Mark 15:40 LSB

⁴⁰ And there were also *some* women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome,

[James] may have had outstanding traits such as boldness or courage, but, if so, he would likely have been called “the Bold...” He could have been older...but if that were true, he would probably have been called “the Elder,” since that description would have been less confusing and more respectful of his age. ~ John MacArthur

Mark 2:14 LSB

¹⁴ And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he stood up and followed Him.

John 19:25 LSB

²⁵ Therefore the soldiers did these things. **But** standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Blessed Anonymity

Matthew 19:28 LSB

²⁸ And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

He was an unextraordinary man, used in unextraordinary ways to help fulfill the extraordinary task of taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. ~ John MacArthur

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 LSB

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may abolish the things that are, ²⁹ so that no flesh may boast before God.

Matthew 10:3 LSB

³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

Mark 3:18 LSB

¹⁸ and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot;

Luke 6:16 LSB

¹⁶ Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Acts 1:13 LSB

¹³ And when they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, 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.

Matthew 10:3 NKJV

³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

His Curiosity

John 14:21 LSB

²¹ “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.”

John 14:22 LSB

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”

John 14:23–24 LSB

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him. ²⁴ “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

Proverbs 2:3–5 LSB

³ For if you call out for understanding, Give your voice for discernment; ⁴ If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ Then you will understand the fear of Yahweh And find the knowledge of God.

Only those whose hearts are purified by love and who walk in obedience to God's Word can perceive Christ's truth, beauty, and glory. Thaddaeus was such a person. ~ John MacArthur

Discussion Questions

Looking at the passages where James the son of Alphaeus is listed ([Matt. 10:3](#); [Mark 3:18](#); [Luke 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#)), what stands out about how little information Scripture gives us about him?

[Mark 15:40](#) refers to him as “James the Less.” What possible meanings of this title were discussed in the sermon?

Why do you think the Gospel writers repeatedly identify him as “the son of Alphaeus”?

What connections or possible relationships were suggested between James, Matthew, and Jesus' extended family?

In [John 14:21–24](#), what promise does Jesus give to those who love Him?

What question does Thaddaeus ask Jesus in [John 14:22](#), and what does that question reveal about what the disciples expected the Messiah to do?

Why do you think Scripture includes apostles like James the son of Alphaeus who appear almost completely anonymous?

What does James's example teach us about how God values faithfulness versus prominence?

The sermon suggested that most kingdom work happens quietly. Why is that often difficult for believers to accept in our culture?

According to [1 Corinthians 1:26–29](#), why does God often choose people who are not influential or powerful?

What does Thaddaeus's question reveal about the disciples' expectations of the Messiah's kingdom?

Jesus responds by emphasizing love expressed through obedience. Why is obedience such an important evidence of genuine love for Christ?

In today's culture, influence is often measured by visibility (followers, platforms, recognition). How can that mindset subtly affect Christians and even ministry?

Where are some ordinary places God calls believers to be faithful that often go unnoticed?

How can remembering that God values faithfulness over prominence encourage believers who feel unnoticed in their service?

In what ways can we cultivate the kind of "faithful obscurity" represented by James?

Thaddaeus demonstrates a sincere desire to understand Christ more deeply. What does healthy spiritual curiosity look like in the life of a believer?

How can asking sincere questions about Scripture help deepen our faith rather than weaken it?

[Proverbs 2:3–5](#) describes seeking wisdom like treasure. What practical steps help us pursue deeper knowledge of God?

Which of the two portraits challenges you more right now: James' faithful obscurity or Thaddaeus' devoted curiosity?

Simon the Zealot: A Picture of Transformed Zeal

Matthew 10:4 LSB

⁴ [Simon the Zealot](#), and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

The Zealot

Matthew 10:4 NKJV

⁴ Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Luke 6:15 LSB

¹⁵ and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

Acts 1:13 LSB

¹³ And when they had entered *the city*, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, 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.

His always being listed next to Judas Iscariot may suggest that those men were somewhat two of a kind, whose primary concern about the Messiah was earthly and material rather than spiritual. ~ John MacArthur

Hebrews 11:36–38 LSB

³⁶ and others experienced mockings and floggings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, mistreated ³⁸ (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in desolate places and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

The Rest of the Story - Matthias and Paul

Matthias

Acts 1:21–23 LSB

²¹ “Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— ²² beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these *must*

become a witness with us of His resurrection.” ²³ And they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias.

Acts 1:24–25 LSB

²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen ²⁵ to take the place of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”

Proverbs 16:33 LSB

³³ The lot is cast into the lap, But its every judgment is from Yahweh.

Acts 1:26 LSB

²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

The Apostle Paul

Acts 7:58–59 LSB

⁵⁸ And when they had driven him out of the city, they *began* stoning *him*; and the witnesses laid aside their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ They went on stoning Stephen as he was calling out and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

Acts 8:1 LSB

¹ Now Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.

Acts 8:1–2 LSB

¹ Now Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. **And** on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² And *some* devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him.

Acts 8:3 LSB

³ But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he was delivering them into prison.

Acts 9:1–2 LSB

¹ Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Philippians 3:5–6 LSB

⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

Galatians 1:13–14 LSB

¹³ For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being far more zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Acts 22:3 LSB

³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but having been brought up in this city, having been instructed at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strictness of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today,

The Road to Salvation

Acts 9:3–7 LSB

³ And as he was traveling, it happened that when he was approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; ⁴ and falling to the ground, 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, ⁶ but rise up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” ⁷ And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.

Ephesians 1:4 LSB

⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love,

Acts 9:8–9 LSB

⁸ And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. Leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:10–12 LSB

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord *said* to him, “Rise up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.”

Acts 9:13–16 LSB

¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ “And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; ¹⁶ for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name.”

Acts 9:17–18 LSB

¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And he laid his hands on him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord sent me—*that is* Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming—so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he rose up and was baptized;

Galatians 1:1 LSB

¹ Paul, an apostle—not *sent* from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead—

Galatians 1:11–12 LSB

¹¹ For I make known to you, brothers, that the gospel which I am proclaiming as good news is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:15 LSB

¹⁵ It is a trustworthy saying and deserving full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost.

Philippians 3:7-9 LSB

⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own which is from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *is* from God upon faith,

Conclusion:

Discussion Questions

Simon had likely been part of a radical political movement that sought to overthrow Rome. What does his transformation teach us about how Christ redirects a person's passions and zeal?

Matthew the tax collector had collaborated with Rome, while Simon the Zealot opposed Rome. Why do you think Jesus intentionally chose men with such radically different backgrounds to be His apostles? What does this teach us about unity in the church?

Both Simon the Zealot and Saul of Tarsus were men of intense zeal. How did Christ transform their zeal after they came to faith? How might God redirect strong passions or ambitions in our own lives?

James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Matthias are largely unknown figures in Scripture. Why is it encouraging to know that many faithful servants of Christ labor in obscurity? How does this challenge our culture's desire for recognition?

In [Acts 1](#), the early believers prayed and asked the Lord to reveal the man He had chosen to replace Judas. What principles from this passage should guide the way churches select leaders today?

Paul went from persecuting the church to becoming one of its greatest missionaries. What does Paul's conversion teach us about the power of God's grace and the doctrine of election?

[Hebrews 11](#) describes believers who suffered greatly for their faith. What kinds of suffering did the apostles face, and how does their perseverance challenge the way we think about following Christ today?

The sermon concluded by reminding us that Christ is still transforming men and women today. How have you personally seen Christ transform lives—either in your own life or in the lives of others?

The Gospel

God

Created and owns everything

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalm 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

Is Perfectly Holy

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Requires perfect obedience to His Law

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Man

Has broken God's law

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Cannot save himself by his good works

[Titus 3:5](#)—*He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

Christ

Came to earth both as God and sinless man

[Col 2:9](#)—*For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form*

Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty

[Rom 5:8](#)—*But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Rose from the grave and is alive today

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Sinners

Must repent of all that dishonors God

[Isa 55:7](#)—Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

[Luke 9:23](#)—if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior

[Rom 10:9](#)—that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

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