

Jesus Goes out to the Mountain to Pray

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 May 2025

Preacher: Pastor Dave Thompson

[0 : 0 0] God-man. Remember we've talked about Jesus. He's not just a man like us. He is like us. But he's different in the sense that he is God having taking on flesh. He is the God-man. We call it the hypostatic union. Two natures, one God, one being, one Messiah. And so here is the God-man. We think of him as superhuman. He is indeed truly human. He is also God.

But why would the God-man need to pray? I'm just letting you think about that just a second. Even though Jesus was or is, he still is the God-man, he did not come into this world to live in his strength as God.

He came to be our representative. He came to live as man, just as we live, and depend on the Spirit of God for his strength, depend on the Father for leading him to do the things that God would have him to do.

He had every ability as the Son of God to just go and direct himself and do things in his own power. But he set aside the exercise of that to become a true human that he might be the appropriate, the proper, the sufficient sacrifice for us.

And so as Jesus comes to this spot in his life, he comes as a man living depending on the Spirit. He came in total dependence on the Father as we need to.

[1 : 4 3] So we're going to get to what he's doing, but for whatever reason he's praying, he's praying because he needs the Spirit's help. He needs the Father's direction as he's about to do what he's doing.

This is not pretend. This is not Jesus going, keep one eye open so they see that I'm praying, just so they know what they should be doing. This is the Son of God living as a man, having taken on flesh, praying like you and I need to do.

When we make decisions, when we need strength, when we need guidance, we pray or we are to pray. And that's what Jesus did. He came in total dependence on the Father.

John 6.38, for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Matthew 26.39, and going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, this is in the garden before the cross, and prayed saying, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as you will.

And then Philippians 2.5-8. Paul's speaking to the Philippians as he's encouraging them, as he says, have this mind among yourselves, which is also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, the God-man, did not, well, he became the God-man, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of the servant.

[3 : 2 0] There's the God-man. Being born the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

He is operating, he is the God-man, operating as you and I would have to operate. And so he prayed, because he had some important work coming up.

He prayed because he had the important work of making choices. He prayed because he also had the important work of ministering to many people. This day that starts in verse 12 continues, and we don't know time-wise, but it continues through the rest of this chapter.

The things that he teaches, this is, we're getting to what's called the Sermon on the Plain. You've heard of the Sermon on the Mount? This is a lot like that, only it takes place in a different area of Israel.

And a lot of what Jesus said in one place, he'd say in another. And he's about to lay down some instructions that were difficult. And so he prayed because he would be making decisions.

[4 : 31] He prayed because he was going to be ministering in a very, I wouldn't say a desperate way, but it was going to be a difficult day. Okay, the next question that you or I might ask ourselves is, what did he pray about?

The answer is, we don't know. Because Christianity doesn't say, Jesus prayed all night for this. It seems that it was a night of prayer that covered his work and teaching in the rest of the chapter.

But as it comes to the end, he says, when day came, he called. So it's the idea of, Jesus prays all night. When day comes up, when it's time to start work, he heads out and he acts based on what he has just done.

So I think he is here to pray about what we are just about to see. So the last question I'll ask myself, and maybe you would ask the same thing, is, should we spend all night in prayer?

Is this an example that we should emulate? And let me just, two quick things I'll mention about that. There's no place in scripture that dictates that we pray all night, or even how long we should pray.

[5 : 56] You'll not find a scripture verse that says you need to spend 15 minutes a day in prayer. You'll not find a scripture verse that says you need to spend an hour a day in prayer, or two hours, or the whole night in prayer.

You won't find those things. And so there's nothing that should dictate to you from the outside, whether it be some sort of statement that someone makes, or some obligation that someone lays on you.

There's no scriptural indication. I think this is all dictated by the burden. The burden that Jesus had, his need to be with the Father, his need for direction from the Father, his need for wisdom, his need for help as he's going to preach in just a minute, to him dictated that he needed to spend a lot of time in prayer.

And so he is praying all night because he needs to. Should you pray all night? If you need to. If you need to. As I said at the beginning, it's pretty difficult to do.

Most of us would have a hard time to spend a solid hour. Now, maybe many of us have done that. But to spend a solid hour in prayer, not counting the times that our mind wanders off.

[7 : 15] So, I don't think Jesus is, what he's doing here is laid down a requirement. It lays down the principle. You pray to have your needs met.

You pray to fellowship with God. You pray to get wisdom and instruction. Don't hurry. Spend as much time as you can.

Or what you feel, but don't let anybody obligate you to anything here. So, he spends the night in prayer. He's been on the mountain, and he comes sort of down from the mountain, or comes down from the mountain when it's day.

He gathers together his disciples. All his disciples. Now, it's going to help us to understand the idea of disciple here. You're going to find that throughout the Gospels, the word apostle and disciple at times are used interchangeably.

One is a subset of the other. The other is not a subset of the other. What's a disciple? A disciple is a person who follows a teacher to learn from them.

- [8 : 32] It's not just a student. If you go to high school or elementary school or to college, and you sit in a class, and you learn from the teacher, you are not a disciple.
- It's more involved than that. A disciple is one who's committed to following his teacher. Committed to learning what the teacher wants to teach.
- Committed to taking up what the teacher is telling them. You may be in a class and go, I ain't got to take this class, but this guy's a nut. And just writes stuff down to pass the test.
- But that's not a disciple. A disciple is one who follows. And at this point, Jesus has many disciples. We don't know how many. Some have tried to venture to guess, but we have no idea how many.
- Some of those disciples, we have heard Jesus ask them to follow him. Do you remember Peter? Fishing? Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.
- [9 : 39] That is not a call to apostleship. That's a call to discipleship. To be a follower, who wants to learn, and take on the things that the teacher is teaching.
- So some were asked to follow. Many were not asked to follow. Many followed out of curiosity. Were those true disciples?
- Many of them were. Some of them weren't. But he had many disciples. As he went from place to place, he now had a group of people who would either leave their homes every morning and come to where he was and continue his ministry, or would be wherever he was and stayed with him.
- And so those are disciples. He had many. Some were asked. Some chose to follow. So Jesus gathers together all of these disciples, however many there were.
- You can picture a number. It may be right. It may be wrong. But however many there were, and he chose from those disciples twelve men.
- [10 : 49] And he named them apostles. Apostles. What's an apostle then? How is that different? How is it different from a disciple?
- Well, an apostle is a follower like the disciple. But doesn't just follow. He has a greater calling on his life.
- Now, these men probably understood the term apostle to a point, but I don't think they had any full clue as to what Jesus was asking them to do at that point.
- So, an apostle is a disciple, but he doesn't just follow. He's a man commissioned by Christ as his representative.
- That will come with authority. It will come with enabling. We'll talk more about that later. But an apostle doesn't just follow around and want to learn.
- [11 : 56] He is taught so that he can go out and say, thus says the Lord as he represents what Christ has done. And he can do the things that God empowers him to do.
- I'll just mention they are enabled to preach, they're enabled to heal, and they're enabled to cast out demons. And they will also be witnesses later for the Lord.
- So that's what an apostle is. So, Jesus is taking all of these disciples, he's picking 12 of them, and saying, I am asking, I'm calling you.
- I don't want to make it sound like, oh yeah, if you want to. They all are certainly willing, but he's calling them to be apostles. So, what will happen to these 12?
- They'll be prepared. They will get to know Jesus more personally. We'll begin to see now in the Gospel of Luke, or any of the other Gospels, you have to pay more attention to who is being talked to.

[12 : 59] As I mentioned, all of the Gospels, Luke does it the least. All of the Gospels interchange apostle and disciple. Luke is the most consistent, both in the book of Luke and in the book of Acts, he's the most consistent person to use the term apostle.

But even he slips back to the other. So we have to be careful, who's Jesus talking to? Is he talking to the 12? Or is he talking to a whole group of people who are following him? So they will get to know Jesus more personally, and there will be times now where not only will Jesus go into the mountain to pray, but Jesus will bring his disciples, these apostles, not the whole group, but these apostles, off to pray with him or off to spend time teaching them personally.

And so they will receive private training from Jesus. And then as I mentioned, they'll be given abilities, and twice, one time it's just the 12 apostles, another time it is a group of disciples, because the one group is 12 and the other group is 70.

And so there's this distinction. But the first time it's the 12 and they are sent out and they're given the ability to preach, they're given the ability to heal, and to cast out demons.

And so they go out with the authority of Christ. But all of that going out, even at this point, is under his tutelage, because when they come back, they talk with him about what they see.

[14 : 37] And one of the things they mention, we just are amazed to see the kingdom of evil under responsibility to submit to the things of God.

We saw the demons cast out and different things, and they're just amazed. And Jesus goes on to teach based on their experience. So these are 12 men right now in a special school with a special commission to carry out Christ's work.

Eventually, they will be commissioned after Christ has died and was buried and rose again. These 12 men will be commissioned to go to the world with a message and the testimony of the gospel.

The message of the gospel, the testimony of a risen Christ. I have seen the risen Christ, and they will go to the world as apostles. Those with Christ's authority and those with enabling to be able to demonstrate their authority, and with a witness, I have indeed seen the risen Christ.

And so Luke has said that he calls them as apostles. We have explained more of what I've explained based on their understanding of the word, but I've also explained with a view to where we're going in Luke.

[15 : 59] You'll see these things as we go. He doesn't explain all of that here, but there is that element in here. And so, in verses 14 to 16, he gives the list of names.

Now, we could spend a lot of time going over who each of these were, how they were, you know, what did they do, how did they die. I'm not going to do that right now. I'll make a couple of comments.

Their names were Simon, whose name, whom he called Peter. And so he was, he is always the first in the list. He is basically the leader of the apostles.

Andrew, his brother, I said I wasn't going to say much about this, so I won't. Andrew is listed in different places in other gospels. James and John, they're brothers, and then Bartholomew, or Philip, and then Bartholomew.

Matthew, this Matthew is the Levi that's talked about in 527 to 28. He's the tax collector. Thomas, he's a twin. James, the son of Alphaeus.

[17 : 08] And you notice some of them have two names. Why do some of them have two names and others only have one? Well, it's because there's two Simons. So there's a second name.

It's because Matthew's, Levi's name was changed to Matthew by Jesus, and in Luke's gospel, that sticks.

He's not called Levi ever again in Luke's gospel. Going on, we have James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot. What's a zealot? What's a group of people who were very much against the Roman rule of Israel, and they were willing to do all kinds of things, including murder and what's the thing that the guy who was traded for Jesus?

Insurrection. They were willing to commit insurrection to be able to overthrow the Romans. And then we have Judas, the son of James. There are two Judases, and there's another name, so as we know which one it is.

And then there's Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. We'll talk more about him in just a minute. But it's interesting, we know who he is because of that.

[18 : 34] Yes, going on. Some observations. These were just normal men. They weren't exceptional men. I would call them blue-collar workers.

They were the guys that got up at the beginning of the day, punched the clock, did their work, went home, were more dedicated than just punching out and thinking of Peter and some of those.

But none of them were educated by the religious leaders. They were all just normal people. 1 Corinthians 1, 26 to 31, talks about how not many wise, not many noble, not many powerful, but God uses the foolish things of this earth.

And it is remarked in another place in the gospel that who are these people? They're just ignorant fishermen. And that's a good observation.

They're not ignorant fishermen. In the world standard, they would not have been seen as anything out of the ordinary or interesting. They were just normal men.

[19 : 36] Alright, so we've covered the five verses. Why is this so important? Why is it so important for Jesus to spend the night in prayer and then pick 12 of his disciples to be apostles?

We're going to soon come to Luke chapter 9 verses 18 and 19. Let me read that to you. Now it happened that as he was praying alone, his disciples were with him and he asked them, who do the crowds say that I am?

And they answered John the Baptist, but others say Elijah, and others that one of the prophets of old has risen.

Risen. The crowds in Jesus' day were unsure who Jesus was. They're saying all kinds of names.

People today, 2,000 years removed from Jesus walked on this earth, many people today have even less of an idea who Jesus is.

[20 : 56] But to provide for that, in this night, in this night of prayer, Jesus establishes that there would be 12 men who would be witnesses to who Jesus is and what he's done.

And as I mentioned, after Jesus' death and resurrection, they, those 12 men, were commissioned to go. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Now, I'm not saying that we aren't commissioned to go. But this commission was directly spoken to these 12 men. And it was their responsibility to go and make disciples, baptizing them, and there to teach people what Jesus has taught them.

There to give witness to the fact that Christ has risen from the dead. And they are empowered to go and to do this job.

These 12 men were chosen by Christ and their message was to go and let people know who is this Jesus. And their message was a message of hope to the world.

[22 : 28] I say to the world, and I didn't spend time, and I won't because, just to mention it, because it's complicated, a lot of it's just tradition, but this apostle went to that country, and this apostle went to that country.

And of these apostles, in the end, very few of them stayed in Jerusalem all their life. Most, all of them went out.

They remained in Jerusalem for a while, and then they went to Samaria, and then they went to the uttermost parts of the world. Their message was the hope of the world.

Their work was the foundation of the church, including Gentiles. They went out with the message, this is who Jesus is.

This is what Jesus said. He is alive. And the church spread throughout the world because of the work of these twelve men.

[23 : 44] And this night in prayer is where the provision was made for the spread of the gospel around the world. This night in prayer is where Jesus asked the father, who would you have me choose?

This night in prayer is where he would ask for wisdom and direction in order to have these twelve men. Now, were they super special and they were equipped in this way or that way, not in themselves, but still, Jesus sought the men that God would have.

And then if you take, and I won't, I had it in here, but I won't, a list of scriptures that talks about the way Jesus, just think of the way that Jesus prayed for Peter. Remember he denied the Lord?

And he says Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you that when you repent, you would strengthen the brethren. Here, in this night in prayer, again, we don't know what he prayed, but this is what Jesus was doing, he was asking for wisdom, he was asking for guidance, he was asking that God would empower these people to be his disciples, that God would work through these, his apostles rather, would work through these people to spread the message around the world.

This is not just an incidental night in prayer that nothing happened. One of these men is not like the rest, though.

[25 : 28] We read the last one, if there's a list of men, often the last one is important. If you read David's mighty men, the last one is important. It's always. It's Bathsheba's husband.

But the last one is important. The last one is Judas Iscariot. And this man was chosen to set in motion the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus.

Jesus, can you imagine spending the night in prayer, asking the father to lead you? And he is leading you. And you're discerning who you should call.

And one of those, you know, will be the one who will kiss you on the cheek as he's brought Roman soldiers to you to arrest you and take you to Pilate.

and that that act would lead to you being beaten and crucified for the sins of these people.

[26 : 40] It must have been difficult to pray for that. Jesus knew from the beginning. Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot would be one of the twelve.

Now he will be replaced. But choosing him was never a mistake. Acts 2.23 This is in the middle of Peter's first sermon.

And Peter says, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

men. As a part of his salvation, Jesus chose this man as part of the plan of salvation. Jesus chose this man in order that the arrest and crucifixion of our Savior would take place.

It's not just an inconsequential night. God So as we think through these, what is this passage calling you to do?

[27 : 51] It just talks about, it doesn't tell me to do anything, but there's a right reaction to this. This passage is calling you to revel in our Savior and his care for us.

There is a very real sense that as Jesus was praying, you can look ahead to John 17 in his high priestly prayer, and we praise for those who would come to know him.

Jesus knew who would come to know him. And as he prayed in relation to his apostles that night, I'm sure there's already in his mind that thought of going forward to where those men would go and how their lives would be consequential where they are, and how the consequences of where they are would spread to other places, and those consequences would spread to other places.

And because of what Jesus was praying about that night, the gospel went around the world. You and I are direct beneficiaries of the prayer of that night.

It should make us praise him that he was willing to do this and that he did this. his willingness to obey the father in calling these people.

[29 : 13] Now that doesn't seem hard, but when you add Judas Iscariot, then you realize this was not as easy in one sense as it may seem.

So we should revel in our savior and his care for us. Secondly, it should cause us to love and serve our savior for what he has done, how he has made provision for us to hear the gospel.

Where you were saved, whether it was here in America or in some country, someplace else, you, if you had what God could show us, can trace the coming of the gospel back, back, back, through all kinds of situations until you hit an apostle who had been with Jesus.

And so, out of a love for him, we ought to serve him for what he's done in making provision for you to hear the gospel. gospel. And since this passage speaks of how Christ commissioned twelve men, this passage is also pointing to our responsibility to submit to the teaching of these twelve men who were commissioned by Christ.

Let me close with this. What we have looked at here today is still many months before Jesus would die on the cross, but he is already at that point making sure that there is a way that you might hear the truth today.

[30 : 49] And if you're Christian, that should make you rejoice. If you have learned that your sin brings you condemnation before God, that should also make you rejoice if you're willing to go to this Savior who has died for us.

so I encourage you today, if you're here and you know you're a sinner and you've never trusted Christ as Savior, that is your only hope.

But think about the fact that he spent a night in prayer, and actually there's more than this. There's his plan from the foundations of the world, but in thinking of his prayer, there's been a prayer where Jesus has prayed and sought his father, prayer in relation to you being able to hear the gospel today.

I would encourage you to seek the Lord, and to not miss this opportunity. Let's pray. Father, I thank you for the work of Christ.

Thank you that he spent this night in prayer, called 12 men to be apostles, and has provided that the gospel go over the whole world.

[32 : 04] And we're all sitting here today, all who know you as Savior have benefited from the outcome of that prayer. I pray that you would work in us to love you, to serve you.

I pray that you would be with those who don't know you, that today they would see the kindness and graciousness of our Lord to provide salvation. I pray that you would draw them to yourself today.

In Jesus' name, amen.