

INTRODUCTION

Happy Father's Day! I thank God for every father who has accepted the role to be the spiritual leader of your family. A father who was walking down the hall outside his young son's bedroom heard him pray, "Dear God, make me the kind of man my Daddy is." That night, the Father prayed, "Dear God, make me the kind of father my son needs me to be." Dads, keep affirming your kids the way God the Father did. He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Tell your kids often, "I love you and I'm proud of you."

When Jesus launched His ministry, He could have been a one-man show, except in His case it would have been a One-God show, because Jesus is God in the flesh. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. But rather than going solo, Jesus chose a team and trained them to help Him.

Can you remember the first team you were ever on? When I grew up in South Alabama in the 1960s, T-ball hadn't been invented, so my first team was in Little League. Our town was so small we only had two Little League teams, the Yankees and the Rebels. Guess which team all the guys wanted to be on? The rebels, of course. When I grew up, the word Yankees was usually preceded by another word.

But my dad coached the Rebels, and there was some rule that you couldn't play on the team if your dad was coach, so my first team was the Florala Yankees, which sounds like an oxymoron. But I can remember the first time I put on my uniform. I was so proud to be on a team. It was my first year, and I wasn't very good, so I got put in right field and just hoped nobody would hit the ball out there. I learned that when the other team was batting you had to give them some chatter. I became pretty good at yelling, "Hey batter, hey batter, swing, swing, swing!" Let's read about how Jesus chose His team.

Mark 3:13-19. "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."

These twelve men are called disciples and apostles. The word disciple means "a follower." The word "Apostle" means "one sent out." In addition to being disciples the New Testament teaches that we should also be apostles (small "a"). God sends all of us out to be missionaries.

During His earthly ministry Jesus had many disciples. Later, He sent out seventy-two disciples. But He appointed only twelve Apostles (capital "A"). In Jewish *gematria*, twelve is the number of administrative perfection, just like there were twelve Jewish tribes. In Revelation 21 we read that the names of the twelve apostles will be engraved on the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. In case you're wondering, of course, Judas' name won't be there. In Acts 1, the disciples drew straws for the twelfth Apostle and a man named Matthias was chosen, but we

never read his name again in the Bible. I think God chose Paul to be the twelfth Apostle. So after we've been in heaven for a few thousand years, why don't you join me and we'll read the twelve names together to see if says Matthias or Paul.

But the point of this message is that there is great power in teamwork. God believes in teamwork. In fact, God exists as a team: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1 God said, "Let US make man in OUR own image."

Teamwork makes the dream work. The great American industrialist, Andrew Carnegie wrote: "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the fuel that allows common people to obtain uncommon results." Even geese have discovered the power of teamwork, that's why they fly in a v-formation. The air vortex created from the goose in front of them provides lift for them. Geese can fly 76% farther when they fly in formation than by flying solo.

As we talk about teamwork today, we'll talk about the team Jesus formed, and I want you to experience the remarkable power of teamwork by challenging you to be a part of several spiritual teams.

I. JESUS CHOSE TWELVE MEN TO BE ON HIS TEAM

Jesus took this job of teambuilding very seriously. In Luke's account we read that Jesus spent an entire night praying over this process. Most experts would say He chose a poor team. The men he chose were called ignorant and unlearned in the Book of Acts.

If Jesus had hired a headhunting firm to choose His team, I doubt any of these men would have been chosen. I came across a humorous letter about this.

May 6, 30 A.D.

Jordan Management Consultants
Jerusalem, Judea 00001

Jesus, Son of Joseph
Carpenter's shop
Nazareth, Judea 00003

Thank you for submitting the résumés of the twelve men you are considering for managers in your organization. After a battery of tests and interviews it is the opinion of our experts that most of your nominees are lacking in education and aptitude for the enterprise you are undertaking.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John put personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would undermine morale.

We must tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. Both James, Son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus have radical leanings and registered a high

score on the manic-depressive scale. Simon the Zealot has carried out subversive acts against the Romans.

One of your candidates, however, shows great potential. He has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated and ambitious. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right hand man.

We wish you success in your new venture.

Sincerely,
Jordan Management Consultants

People always want to know why Jesus chose Judas in the first place. Here's the answer, get ready to write down: I don't know. We'll know when we get to heaven.

In Mark 6, Jesus sends out the twelve and gives them specific instructions, and I'll say more about their ministry in that message. For now I want you see three marks of a disciple:

A. Disciples spend time with Jesus

The Bible says Jesus called His disciples "that they might be with Him." Jesus wanted to hang out with these guys so He could pour His life into them. The primary responsibility of a disciple is NOT to go out and work for Jesus; it is to get alone with Jesus and spend time with Him. The way we do that today is by spending time in personal prayer and Bible study.

I'm sure you're familiar with the story of Mary and Martha. Jesus visited in their home and Martha was sweating away in the kitchen. She was angry because Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus spending time listening to Him. When she complained, Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about MANY things, but only ONE thing is needed." (Luke 10:41-42) That one thing was spending time with Jesus.

The most important thing you can do as a disciple is to get alone and spend time at the feet of Jesus. Listen to Him by reading His Word. Talk to Him through prayer.

B. Disciples share the good news

The Bible says Jesus "sent them out to preach." The job of preaching isn't just for the pastor. It is the job of every disciple. Some people say, "Oh, I don't have to SAY anything, I just have to live the Christian life." Have you ever heard the quote where St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the gospel at all times; use words if necessary?" That sounds nice, but he never said it. That's a mystery quote that someone attributed to him to force the idea that the loudest way to preach the gospel is by your actions. Actually St. Francis was a fiery preacher like Jonathan Edwards.

Of course, we must walk the walk and well as talk the talk, but there is only one meaning of the word "preach" and it means to "announce good news." You can't do that silently, unless you're using sign language to a hearing-impaired person.

Our theme this year is evang-YOU-lism. If you are a believer, you have a faith story to share. Here's the good news in a sentence: I was lost in sin with no hope of heaven, and Jesus Christ came into my life and He forgave my sin and changed my life. You can fill in the details, but that's the good news that every disciple of Jesus should SPEAK.

C. Disciples speak with the authority of Jesus

Jesus also gave His authority "to drive out demons." When I get to Mark 5 in a few weeks, I'll have a lot to say about demonic attacks.

At this point, it's important to understand that we have authority over the enemy when we speak in the name of Jesus. Satan and the members of his organized, demonized army are waging war against all people. I have no advantage over Satan in the name of David Dykes, or in the name of Green Acres Baptist Church. But we have authority over the enemy in Jesus' name.

Consider this illustration. There is a 40-ton 18-wheeler speeding down the highway. Up ahead a 210-pound man steps out into the highway and holds up his hand for the truck to stop. In terms of brute strength, who would win that battle? The truck of course. But this man happens to be wearing the uniform of a Texas State Trooper. He says, "Stop in the name of the law." If the driver of that truck knows what's good for Him he will slam on brakes and stop."

When Satan and his demons attack us, we're no match for him. But when we say, "Stop in the name of Jesus!" demons come to a screeching halt because "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4).

When the disciples returned from rebuking demons, they were amazed that demons submitted to them in Jesus' name. But Jesus said, "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) That's the real disciples of Jesus rejoice, because our names are written in heaven.

The fact that Jesus called twelve disciples is a historical fact, but it goes deeper than that. There is a truth for us today:

II. JESUS IS STILL CALLING PEOPLE TO BE ON HIS TEAM

There was a famous poster that shows Uncle Sam pointing his finger saying, "I want you." Jesus is saying the same thing today. He wants you to be His disciple. In our age of social media, we've lost the meaning of what it means to follow someone. I saw a humorous poster not long ago where Jesus was talking to a young man and He said, "No, I'm not talking about twitter. I literally want you to follow me."

Although I don't tweet every day, I have several hundred people who "follow me." And there's a couple of dozen people that I "follow" on Twitter including Bubba Watson, Joel Rosenberg, Russell Moore, John Piper, and Al Mohler. That just means I want to read what they have to post. To follow Jesus means so much more. It means that He becomes the main priority of your life.

Jesus has several teams that I think every disciple should be on. Let me mention five.

A. Join a local church team

The word "church" or *ekklesia*, means "persons called out of the world" and is expressed in two ways. First, there is the idea of all believers on the planet making up the true Church. For instance, the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church." (Ephesians 5:25). That speaks of the church in general. But the word is most often used in the New Testament referring to a local church, like the church at Philippi or the church at Thessalonica.

Paul used the analogy of a human body to describe the church. Just as a body has many members that play different roles, so the members of the church have different functions, but everyone is important.

We basically have two kinds of people who attend Green Acres. First there are those who are members, baptized believers in Jesus Christ who have chosen to join our team. Then there are attenders, people who come, and give, and worship, but they aren't members yet.

God wants you to join a local church so you can get into a position to serve and to grow in your faith. It's the difference between being a spectator and a participant.

Years ago in Alabama I was visiting a nice young couple in our community that had attended our church. As I visited with them it was obvious that they knew the Lord. I said, "Where is your current church membership?" The guy smiled and said, "Oh, we're not the member of any church, we're just members of (and he held up his hands to make quotation marks) 'the church.'" I knew he was talking about the worldwide body of Christ. As we talked, it was obvious that he didn't see the need to join a local church. We had a nice visit, and after I prayed I was walking out and saw that he had several trophies on his mantle from softball tournaments." I said, "I see you play softball. I love to play, too." He said, "Really, what team do you play for?" I smiled and said, "Oh, I don't play for any team. I'm just a member of (and I made the quotation marks) 'the team.'" I just toss the ball up and hit it and run and get it and hit it again." He smiled and said, "I get it." Several weeks later that couple joined our team.

B. Fellowship with a small group team

Some of you here today are part of a Sunday Morning Bible Study group and some of you aren't. I want to challenge every believer to join a small group team. It's great for you to come to worship and lift up the name of Jesus and hear His Word proclaimed. But if all you ever do is come to worship, you're missing out on the greatest blessings God has for you.

Let me explain the difference. How many of you have ever been on an airline flight? Cindy and I were on a flight back from Baltimore last Thursday. Every passenger had the same experience. We heard the same safety briefing; we experienced the same turbulence, and arrived at the same time. Passengers on an airplane associate together, but they don't really participate together.

They have proximity but they don't have community. Christians who aren't part of a small group are experiencing airline Christianity.

Here you are in worship experiencing the same music and the same preaching. Like an airliner, you have proximity, but this isn't community. That can only happen in a smaller group where people know your name and your needs.

There is a word in the New Testament for fellowship, *koinonia*, which means "sharing life." That happens in small groups. We have dozens of small groups for you to choose from—for single people, married people, young people, old people, people who like to discuss, and people who like to be taught. This past year our adults have been studying an amazing topic called "the Gospel Project." It shows how the Gospel is found on every page of the Bible. We have many choices. I challenge you to get off the airline and join the fun and fellowship of a small group. If you want to check out our small groups we have our own website called www.smbsfinder.org, or you can stop by the Welcome Center or the Bethany Suite and pick up a hard copy that lists all our small groups.

C. Serve on a ministry team

Some churches are made up of committees, but healthy churches are comprised of ministry teams. At Green Acres, we have less than two dozen committees, but we have several hundred ministry teams. Again, there are two kinds of people here, those who are serving in some capacity, and those who are simply sitting and receiving a blessing. We have an old saying here that says, "If all you do is come and sit and soak, you'll soon sour." We're like sponges. God keeps pouring blessings into our lives. But if all you ever do is receive a blessing and never squeeze out God's blessings to others you'll become oversaturated and complacent. If you're sitting here today and you aren't involved in a ministry you may be thinking, "They don't need me." Yes we do! If God brought you to Green Acres He has a job for you. And it's probably a job nobody is doing at this moment. I challenge you to move out from simply receiving a blessing and start being a blessing. Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive, but you'll never experience that until you volunteer to work in one of our ministries. Stop by the Welcome Center or the Bethany Suite and pick up the handout that says, "Find your place in the body."

D. Circle up with a prayer team

Every Christian needs to be a part of a prayer group. We have dozens of prayer groups operating in Green Acres. I've been praying for God to send spiritual awakening to our church for many years. I'm often asked when will we know spiritual awakening has come? When we have more people attending, or more new members, or more money given? None of those are indications of revival. We will know revival is occurring when we have hundreds of spontaneous prayer groups who are meeting weekly to seek God's face. That has been the single mark of every great spiritual awakening. If you want more information about prayer groups stop by the display in the foyer.

E. Be a team captain

When I was a kid and we wanted to play kickball, the teacher would say, "David, you and Mike be team captains and choose your teams." Some of you have walked with God long enough that He is saying to you, "It's time for you to be a team captain and choose your team." Do you want to be in a prayer group, but don't know where to start? Why don't you become a prayer circle team captain and enlist four to six people to meet with you for prayer every week?

Have you ever looked around at Green Acres and thought, "Our church should be doing a particular ministry"? That's how most ministries get started here. Someone comes to me like Rocky Gill and they say, "Pastor we need to start an adoption ministry." I say, "You're exactly right, Rocky, and you're in charge. I'll be your cheerleader." That's how Hope for 100 was born. Grace English came to me several years ago and said, "Pastor, we need a ministry to those who have gone through the heartache of an abortion in their past." I said, "Grace, you're exactly right. Since God has laid that on your heart, you're in charge. Let me know how I can help you." That's how CARE was born.

Is God birthing a ministry in your mind and heart? It's His way of calling you to step out and become a team captain. But you can't do it alone. Like Jesus, we all need a team. Which team do you need to join today?

CONCLUSION

There is remarkable power in teamwork. Years ago, when most roads were dirt roads, a farmer who lived near a road prone to flooding, would bring his old mule, Buddy, down to pull the cars out of the mud. On one occasion he arrived and hooked up Buddy to the car in the mud. The farmer yelled, "Pull Nellie! Pull!" But Buddy didn't move. Then the farmer yelled, "Pull Jenny, pull!" But Buddy didn't move. Then he said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And Buddy easily pulled the car out of the mud. One motorist was asked the farmer, "Why did you call those other names before you called Buddy's name?" The farmer said, "Old Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try. I do that to make him believe he is part of a team. That idea of teamwork gives him the strength to pull out any car."

And I want to remind you that Jesus called a team to help Him. And He is calling you to be a part of His team today. Will you link up with Him?

OUTLINE

I. JESUS CHOSE TWELVE MEN TO BE ON HIS TEAM

- A. Disciples spend time with Jesus
- B. Disciples share the good news
- C. Disciples speak with the authority of Jesus

Jesus said, "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." *Luke 10:20*

II. JESUS IS STILL CALLING PEOPLE TO BE ON HIS TEAM

- A. Join a local church team
- B. Fellowship with a small group team
- C. Serve on a ministry team
- D. Circle up with a prayer team
- E. Be a team captain

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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes



David O. Dykes, Pastor
Green Acres Baptist Church
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