

THAT THEY MIGHT BE WITH HIM

In chapter three of his gospel, Mark records Jesus appointing the twelve who were chosen to become His apostles. In this passage that is often overlooked, Mark states the purposes for which Jesus chose them: *“that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons”* (Mark 3:14-15). While three of the four purposes given are easy to understand, *“that they might be with Him”* is a phrase fraught with much deeper meaning.

The apostles were those who would become the witnesses of Jesus to the whole world. Therefore, it was required of an apostle to be one who was with Jesus throughout His ministry. When the apostles had to replace Judas Iscariot after Jesus’ ascension, they understood this clearly: *“Therefore of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection”* (Acts 1:21-22). Both Peter and John later reference the importance of being an eyewitness of the events about which they wrote in their epistles (2Pet. 1:16-18; 1John 1:1-3).

“That they might be with Him” also indicates the intensity of the amount of time Jesus’ apostles would spend with Him. Being the ones who would carry forth His message to the world, they would need to sit at His feet to learn from Him and learn of His character. They were with Him when great multitudes gathered around Him (Mark 4:1-2) and they were with Him when He retreated from the crowds (Mark 4:10). Jesus shared with them and taught them many things He did not share and teach with the multitudes (Mark 4:13ff). What is indicated in the gospels is a teacher and His disciples who were together day and night.

Perhaps most importantly and incredibly, *“that they might be with Him”* indicates a seismic shift in the relationship between God and His people. Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1), God with us (Matt. 1:23), and God become flesh (John 1:1, 14). Jesus chose His disciples *“that they might be with Him.”* Jesus said, *“For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother”* (Mark 3:35). When Jesus died, *“the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom”* (Mark 15:38) indicating God’s work in breaking down the barrier that separated His people from Him. Jesus’ relationship with His future apostles was a precursor to the type of relationship God desires to have with His people, the type of relationship made possible through Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection: *“that they might be with Him.”*

It is amazing that even in the simple task of Jesus choosing His twelve disciples we receive deep insight into the nature and character of God and into the nature of our relationship with our Creator and Father. Just like His disciples, Jesus chooses us that we might be with Him for eternity (John 17:24).

by: Tim Butler