

The Rev. Frank F. Wilson  
St. Timothy's Episcopal Church  
Calhoun, GA  
June 14, 2020

**Proper 6-A [RCL]:** Exodus 19:2-8a; Psalm 100; Romans 5: 1-8; Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

Title: We Are A Called People

**Well, today is a significant and very important day – a significant and important day in the life of twelve of Jesus' disciples, for it is on this day that Jesus has declared that these twelve will no longer be known as disciples but rather will bear both the honor as well as the responsibilities that come with receiving the title of apostle. This is a significant and critically important event in the evolution of the Jesus movement.**

**Jesus will build the model. Jesus will teach. Jesus will instruct. Jesus will be the example. And Jesus will eventually give his very life for the sake of the movement he has founded. But it will be on the shoulders of these twelve to move the Jesus Movement into the next phase. It will be up to these twelve to ensure that the Jesus movement does not die with the crucifixion. It will be up to these twelve to nurture this movement like a gardener nurtures a garden - with great care so that the seedlings that have been planted will have the potential to grow into beautiful and thriving living things.**

**But who were these twelve men? Were they exceptionally capable? Did Jesus choose them because they were perfect? Did he choose them because they were the smartest, or the most articulate, or the best behaved, or even the most prepared? In fact, I can only imagine what the outcome might have been had Jesus hired an employment agency or consulting firm to help him identify his leadership team. That probably would not have led to the naming and commissioning of the twelve we just read about .**

**Interestingly enough, I just happen to have a copy of that report. The letterhead reads, Church Movement Consulting headquartered in Jerusalem, Israel. The heading on the report says: Results of Review of Candidates for Builders of the Jesus Movement. I don't want to bore you but I think this report is kind of interesting and somehow relevant. It's pretty short. It dated April 14, the year 31 of the Common Era. It begins....**

Church Movement Consulting  
29 K Street  
Jerusalem, Israel

### Results of Review of Candidates for Builders of the Jesus Movement

April 14, 31 CE

Dear Jesus: It has been our pleasure to screen your list of candidates for positions of advocacy and leadership in your newly developing religious movement. Unfortunately, we find that we can commend but one of the twelve candidates you are considering. In the main, taking into account their psychological profiles, the result of the battery of tests we have administered; and considering their general lack of leadership experience, lack of education and training; and based on personal interviews we find these candidates to be severely lacking in potential and ill equipped for the tasks you have outlined. Therefore, we consider this pool of candidates unworthy of further consideration.

To wit, a brief overview:

**Candidate Number One, Simon-Peter:** Obviously a southern boy with one of those double names, he is much too strong-willed for your purposes. He is argumentative to a fault and he is prone to fits of anger. You certainly would not want to consider establishing a church with him as a founding member and leader. Give us the opportunity and we will find a candidate for you that is as solid as a rock.

As for **Andrew**, who as you know is Simon Peter's brother and like his brother a fisherman, we find him to be quite impetuous and to have no discernable leadership qualities whatsoever.

The other two brothers you sent us, **John and James**, will, we believe have a tendency to place personal ambition above the goals of the movement. We have heard of at least one episode of such inclinations for which you already have had to dress these two down – something to do with their being designated to sit beside you, one on your right, the other on your left when you come into your kingdom.

Candidate **Thomas** demonstrates a questioning attitude that we feel would very likely lead to undermining the commitment and also the morale within your group.

**James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus** both showed to be manic-depressive on our psychological inventory and both held extreme political views as evidenced by their

former affiliation with the Zealots – a radical political movement promoting sedition and violence toward authority.

**Mathew** is known to be a collaborator of Roman occupation in that his employment history includes having been a tax-collector on their behalf. Furthermore, he has an “F” rating with the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau.

Therefore, with but a single exception, we find this group of candidates to be somewhat slow and dimwitted. For example, we told them several parables and they were all very slow on the up-take. In most cases, they would understand a parable only after having it explained to them.

Also, our profiles indicate that, as a group, they will likely abandon you should things get tough. They would, in all likelihood, quite simply deny even knowing you.

And so, regretfully, we can commend only one of the current candidates – that being **Judas Iscariot**. Mr. Iscariot is a man of ability and keen resourcefulness. He meets people well and he has a keen mind for business. He has served as the treasurer of a number of organizations of which he has been affiliated. He is from a good family, has impressive credentials, and his contacts in high places have every potential to prove useful to your cause. We recommend that you consider hiring him as you Chief Financial Officer.

Otherwise, it is our professional and considered opinion that you abandon further consideration of this list of candidates and that you continue your search for disciples and apostles. It would be our pleasure to assist you in identifying more worthy and promising candidates.

Thank you and let us know how and when we might be able to be of further assistance to you and your movement.

Sincerely,

Henry S. Potter  
Chief Consultant  
Church Movement Consulting

Well, it seems obvious that had Jesus sought professional advice he would not have wound up with the group we now refer to as Jesus' apostles; and thus we would know nothing of Simon Peter or any of the others for they would have had nothing to do with taking the Jesus movement into the world. But if not them, then who? If not the usual criteria, what was Jesus looking for in those whom he would entrust to represent him to the world?

Well, I don't know for sure, but I think I have an inkling. I think that Jesus probably chose these twelve because they were open to an encounter with the Great Mystery that we call God. I think that Jesus saw in these twelve an ability to recognize and the desire to lean into a reality that says there is a power, a presence, an intelligence, a wisdom that is far beyond ourselves and that even seeks us out; and seeks to be in communion and relationship with us.

I think that Jesus was looking for folk who were open to and were moved to deny the less admirable of human instincts in favor of embracing the way of love, and the way of compassion, and the way of being in relationship with one another that is as much concerned with the health, welfare, and peace of others as they are for themselves.

And I think that means that Jesus desires that the world reject the ways of violence, and selfishness, and greed; rejects a life that thrives on the unrequited energy and labors of others; and rejects an ethic and a way of life that results in the diminishing of the planet such that future generations will suffer for it.

I think that means that Jesus is looking for folk who seek to forgive as we ourselves seek to be forgiven.

And I think that means that Jesus is looking for those who are drawn to the power of love. Persons whose *raison d'être* is to love God and to love those with whom we share this planet.

As a matter of fact, I happen to have a photo compilation of just such a people. And I've noticed that they look a lot like the folk who, week after week, worship in this very church. And they look a lot like those who are attending this service by way of television and computer screens. And they look a lot like others I've seen across this country and around the world that seek to embrace the Jesus Movement by whatever name.

**I see you and it gives me hope. I hear you and it gives me hope. And I see the difference that it can make in our lives - and it gives me hope.**

**Amen.**