

Study I

April 6, 1952

Trained Workers—the Primary Need for World Redemption

Matt. 4:18-22; 11:28-30

The Task Ahead

Only Jesus knew what was in store for these men who were to be with Him, see Him as He really was, be prepared to tell what they knew convincingly. Only He knew the dangers that lurked ahead, the oppositions, and what they would be called upon to do. Only He knew the vast implications, the inherent potentials, in this small stream, of which He was the head. In the call of these men, was the infant church in swaddling clothes, weak and unknown. Here we have the petty beginning of the great stream of world redemption. These feeble men represented the origin of a world's empire. They were the tiny seedlings, the yeast cake destined to change the thinking of the world. As trivial and insignificant as the call of these men to service seems, it was a call to partnership in the world's greatest cooperative enterprise—World Redemption. They must need know more about the personality of Jesus, his philosophy of life, his interpretation of the law, the prophets and the will of God.

Trained men were to play an important role in the redemptive plans of the Lord. Men must know the meaning of a life spent so humbly that it made no impression upon the leaders of his day. Jesus had come to save men, and He must have men as his agents to reach other men.

Thus He extends a call to certain men to lay aside their domestic relations, business demands, social stations and come and follow with Him because He had something greater for them to do. "Learn of me," may mean study me, take lessons from me, and you will be better prepared for the task you must do later. The infancy of the gospel would require the skilled hands of attendants who would know what to do and how to present it to the world. The infant church needed a nurse and the training of the nurse would be an important factor. The Twelve were to be the nurse-men of the infant church. The penetrating eye of Jesus saw in these men the latent capacity of faith and devotion needed for the task which they would be called upon to do, if the church was to be organized, and the world redeemed.

The Men Called Were Busy Men

The first disciples were men who had jobs and were skilled in the use of the tools of their job. If you would look into the record of those who have helped with the program of world redemption, you will find that they have been persons of thrift, industry and push. Call them go-getters, hustlers or smart, they have ever been busy people. (Do a research project here, beginning with

Abram. Make a list of all of the leaders and show that they were busy people.) The busier you are the better God can use you in the kingdom.

The program of world redemption can use school teachers, merchants, doctors, carpenters, bricklayers, skilled mechanics, good farmers, the well educated, the fastidious housewife, the alert youth, the competent and the adequate.

These men were men of a varied experience and knew the value of good relationship. All experience is learning and all learning is experience. Is this a true statement? If they were fishermen, they had to know the habits of the fish, the weather signs, the characteristics of the tide, the market value of their catch. They had to know the trade. They had a degree of intelligence. (What do you mean by intelligence?) These are some of the characteristics required of men who would do well in the redemptive program. There was in the making a new movement, filled with new ideas, new views of life, new ways of solving problems and new approaches to human relationships. A new world and a new order of things were in the making. Jesus knew that the men He needed had to be men with push, vim and vigor. Rumbings of unrest was in many breasts. Men who were accustomed to the noise of the sea were better prepared to meet the rumbling noises of social, political and religious unrest which the preaching of the gospel would bring about. Physical storms at sea had hardened them to the storms which were inevitable, if the kingdom of God was to be preached into men. Busy men are more ready to adopt the new than the idle who must ask foolish questions and want assurance before trying.

Our Task in Our World

These men answered the call of the Master. The nets, so well fitted for the sea, were useless on land and had to be forsaken if they are to become heralds of the new order. Nets so aptly fitted for catching fish had served their purpose and had to be cast aside for a different type of tool—the preaching of the Christ story to their world.

The need today is no less for persons who are trained in the techniques of leadership in Christian work, for a full knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus than it was in the days of the early disciples. The twelve met the test of their day but a new set of testings have arisen in our day and world. Our first task is to get a thorough knowledge of the Christ way of life and to learn of Him. Thus the aim of these studies is to enable us to appraise his life and teachings as seen in the training of the twelve for world redemption. Our world is a world of persons. It is more than a political and geographical world, separating mankind into racial units. The man of Macedonia is asking us to give him the Man of Nazareth. The significance of relationships is paramount in our world. Christian attitudes, feelings and dealings must be established by us after the life of Christ. The Baptist Training Union is addressing itself to the task of leading us into a fuller knowledge of the Nazarene that we may the more effectively present Him to men of all races.

For Further Study

1. Look up the meaning of the names of each of the men called in Matt. 4:18.
2. Is more intelligence required to-