

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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Room in God's Kingdom

by Bubba Garner

Jesus called them, one by one. When He named His 12 apostles, He chose “those whom He Himself wanted” (Mark 3:13). The implication is that no one else would have wanted them. They were not the only people He had to choose from. Jesus had throngs and throngs of disciples, so many that the crowds on one occasion were stepping on one another. But out of all His disciples, He chose these twelve for a special purpose.

We sometimes think of the apostles only in the sense of the group. The Scriptures certainly speak of them that way: “the twelve” (Mark 3:16). But they were also twelve individuals. They were not all exactly the same. And each one, in their own way, Jesus wanted. He had room in His kingdom for these twelve.

Jesus has room in His kingdom for

you, too. He wants you. He has use for you. You might be tempted to think, “I’m just one person, what can I do? What difference can I make?” There is room in the kingdom for you.

There is room in the kingdom for common people. Jesus did not choose one Pharisee, Sadducee, Herodian, scribe, or nobleman to fill His posts. He chose fishermen, a tax collector, and a Zealot. He took those who were common and ordinary and empowered them to do extraordinary things. When Peter and John preached, the people marveled because they were “uneducated” and “untrained” men (Acts 4:13). Where did they get this? Who taught them? They had “been with Jesus.”

The church is made up of common people. How many wise and mighty

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and noble are called? “Not many” (1 Cor. 1:26). But “by His doing” (1 Cor. 1:30), those who have nothing to recommend can become wise in the Scriptures, mighty in spiritual warfare, and noble in the calling by which we are called.

There is room in the kingdom for new beginnings. Even the apostles had to overcome their past. James and John, the sons of Zebedee were also called the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). They were the ones who wanted to bring down fire from heaven and destroy the village of the Samaritans. They were the ones who asked for positions of power and authority in the new kingdom. Matthew was a tax collector, a profession so despised that they were often spoken in the same breath with Gentiles, prostitutes, and sinners. That’s who these men were. But that is not who they would continue to be.

The key to a past is to leave it in the past. “For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor. 4:5-6). It was not about them or their name anymore. Their glory was in what God did for them. Once, we were all in darkness, separated from God, and lost in our sins. But we were shown the light through the gospel of Christ and can begin again in God’s kingdom.

There is room in the kingdom for second chances. Peter often needed the grace of His Master. His name was Simon, but Jesus gave Him the name Peter (Mark 3:16). We

see the failures of Simon and the successes of Peter through the gospels. They’re often in consecutive verses. In Luke 22:31-32, Jesus not only said that the devil was after Peter, He spoke of his second chance: “Once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” And he did. He preached the gospel on Pentecost. He became an elder in the Lord’s church. He wrote two epistles that continue to encourage disciples of the Lord to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

Jesus gives a second chance even to “epic” failures. He forgives and restores. He values and uses. Why did Judas commit suicide? He sinned in the likeness of Peter. He did it on the same night. He felt remorse; he tried to return the money. But where Peter went out and wept bitterly, Judas went out and hanged himself. He thought Jesus could not make room for second chances. Oh, that he had just waited three more days. Failure does not mean that God is finished with you.

The names of the 12 apostles are written on the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem. By coming to Jesus, your name can be written in the Lamb’s book of life. And when He calls us, one by one, He will say, “Enter in. There is room in the eternal kingdom for you.”

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - cancelled until further notice.

Services for August - We will meet for **one** service at 10:45 a.m. There will **not** be a Bible class or evening service, and there still will **not** be a Wednesday evening service. We will re-evaluate toward the end of August. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we make these difficult decisions! --DT for the elders

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens
Jack Wilson
Jerry Richardson
Karen Hallmark
Shirley Perkins' brother, Leon
Morgan O'Hair
Dinah Williams
Joy Ulrich
Kevin Barth
Lisa Trammel
Joel and Tori Moore
Tyler Hairston
Bobbie Gibbons
Anna Urquhart
And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

