

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

February 2026

*There were twelve disciples Jesus called to help him:
Simon Peter, Andrew, James, his brother John,
Philip, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus,
Thaddeus, Simon, Judas, and Bartholomew.
He has called us, too. He has called us, too.
We are His disciples, I am one and you!*

This little Sunday school song has been a go-to song for many of us for many years. A very cute little picture, or at least list, of the Men that Jesus called to be “fishers of men”.

I used to say “if you ever find the perfect church, don’t join it because you’ll wreck it.” I have changed that to “God Did create a Perfect Church, it’s made up of imperfect people.” Have you ever wondered why Jesus called those twelve? A true “motley crew” if there ever was one, made up of a strange, varied group of characters.

People that keep getting their foot in their mouth – like Peter, who was impulsive, but also quick to follow.

People like Matthew who was probably the wealthiest of the twelve, but also a “sell out”, a Tax collector, looked down on by basically all “good Jewish boys”, yet so loving of the mercy that Jesus showed him.

On the other end of the spectrum someone like Simon Zealotes – the zealot. (The *zealots* much like today were a group of militant Israelites dedicated to a returned Jewish nation). An example to us to be zealous toward the Gospel, and quick to stand up for the faith given to us by God – Faith in Jesus.

Some of my personal favorites are James the son of Alpheus - the Less, Thaddeus/ Nathaneal, and Bartholomew (who got listed even after Judas in our Sunday school song, poor guy). These men are basically only mentioned in the attendance roll so to speak, but an extremely important fact that they are listed.

We have in this same group: prejudice, pride, doubt, negativity, and disagreements galore, yet we also have men who are quick to stand up for the faith. Men who are quick to invite people to follow. Men whose greatest desire is only to know the great truths that God gives. And yes, some who just show up and don’t say a thing.

What on earth could hold such a “motley crew” together? Only one thing and that is Jesus Christ, and Him alone. So, when we look around us on Sunday morning, Wednesday evening, or any other time we get together, do not look for those things that will separate us, because we will definitely find them. Rather, let us keep our eyes fixed on the one who chose this group, suffered, bled, died, and rose again for this group of misfits, and beggars. The One who has washed us whiter than snow.

Yours in Christ,
Bob Tumberg