

# First Round Draft Picks

## John 1:32-42

### INTRODUCTION

This past Monday night the eyes of every college football fan in the world were tuned in to ESPN to watch the college football championship game between the reigning champs – the Georgia Bulldogs – and TCU Horned Frogs. Those fans stayed tuned in for about 30 minutes, because it was a horrible game. Georgia eventually won 65-7, and truthfully the game wasn't that close.

The game kicked off at 7:45 p.m. According to *Sports TV Ratings*, viewership for the game peaked at 22.37 million from 8:30-8:45 p.m. By 9:15 p.m., viewership dropped below 20 million and by the start of the fourth quarter it dwindled to just 10.3 million, making it the lowest watched championship game ever.

That game brought to a conclusion the 2022-23 college football season. But it marked the opening of an even bigger event: All of the predictions about players will be drafted by NFL teams at the end of April. All across the nation, college football juniors and seniors are testing the waters to see if they might be considered highly enough to be chosen as a first-round draft pick.

Some will declare for the draft; others will find out they are not as highly regarded as they had hoped, and will therefore return to their college teams for another year.

Today's gospel passage describes draft day for Jesus. On this day He made the first two selections for his band of disciples: Andrew, and Andrew's brother Simon. We know Simon better by a name Jesus gave him later in this same passage: Peter.

Eventually Jesus will choose 12 men as His disciples. And what a messed-up group of men they were! One Christian writer created a mock write up that has always been one of my favorite sermon illustrations. It goes like this:

*To: Jesus, Son of Joseph, c/o Woodcrafter's Shop, Nazareth*  
*From: The Jordan Management Company*

*Dear Sir:*

*Thank you for submitting the resumes of the 12 men you have selected for leadership positions in your new organization. Each of them has now taken our battery of tests. We have not only run the results through our computer, but also conducted personal interviews with each. These interviews were conducted by our psychologist and vocational aptitude consults.*

*As a part of our services we offer these general comments for your guidance based on our assessments. It is the opinion of our staff that most of your nominees are lack in the necessary background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise*

*you are undertaking. We would recommend you continue your search for persons with more experience and proven capability.*

*Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that will undermine morale. We feel it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau; James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus definitely have radical leanings.*

*One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has connections in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We therefore recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man.*

*We wish you every success in your new venture.*

The twelve were not perfect people. Despite their flaws – and there were many of them – Jesus chose them. He wanted them to follow Him. He wanted them on His team.

And there's the truth for us today:

Despite the flaws found within each of us Jesus still invites us to follow Him and become His disciples.

Why?

## **#1: GOD SEES WHAT OTHER CANNOT SEE**

I point you to verse 42:

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter). (John 1:42)

You are Simon. You will be Peter.

The word we translate as "Peter" means "rock." A granite-type of rock.

Peter was anything but a rock when he first met Jesus. He did not come to Jesus as a rock. But Christ could see the rock within him. No one else could.

The new nickname probably stung a little. Everyone who knew him knew he wasn't a rock.

- When Jesus was arrested and on trial, Peter hid around the campfires and recoiled when a little girl thought he might be a follower of Jesus.
  - He cursed at her and denied it – three times.
  - That's not rock.

- On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood in front of thousands of people and declared that Jesus is Lord! And told those Jewish listeners that they were responsible for his death.
  - That is rock!

The man who met Jesus that day was Simon, not Peter. You are Simon!

The great sculptor Michelangelo was chiseling away at a big piece of granite one day. A visitor to his studio asked him "What is it that you doing?"

Michelangelo replied: "There's an angel inside this rock, and I want to set him free."

Jesus saw the Peter inside Simon.

- Jesus was probably the only one who saw that.
- I doubt Peter himself saw it, though I am sure he wanted desperately to be it. But until he met Jesus, every rock producing moment had ended in embarrassment for him.
- But at the moment he met Jesus, he was Simon. Simply Simon.

There is an important truth here for you and me. Two of them actually.

1. Jesus Christ always sees something inside of us that no one else can see.
  - That makes sense, because He created us. He knows us inside and out – better than anyone else can.
  - His call to us is a call to become what He created us to be.
  - You are Tom. You will be \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We need to allow ourselves to see what Christ sees in us.
  - We are quick to say "I can't do that" when Christ says "You can do all things because Christ gives you the strength."
3. We need to see others as Christ sees them.
  - What if we treated people according to their potential rather than their failures?

The reason that is possible is because:

## #2: GOD'S POWER IS TRANSFORMING

One of the church hymns from my childhood went like this:

His power can make you what you ought to be  
 His blood can cleanse your heart and make you free  
 His love can fill your soul and you will see  
 'Twas best for Him to have His way with thee.

Simon cannot transform himself into a Peter. Only Jesus can do that.

- And Jesus does it on timetable. Not Simon's.

- It took three years of constant teaching and the Day of Pentecost to transform Simon into Peter.
- It took 40 years of tending his father-in-law's sheep on the backside of a mountain to transform Moses from a man who was running away from Pharaoh to a man who would stand in front of him and proclaim "Let my people go!"
- It took only three days of total blindness to transform Saul of Tarsus into the Apostle Paul.

And you know what? He's still working on me. That's why I love Philippians 1:6:

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

You no doubt have heard me sing the little chorus based on that, but it fits so well in this sermon that I need to sing again:

He's still workin' on me to make me what I ought to be.  
 It took Him just a week to make the moon and stars  
 The sun and the earth and Jupiter and Mars  
 How loving and patient He must be  
 'Cause He's still workin' on me.

Most of us are still a work in progress. There are times when we feel more like Simon than we do Peter. But He's still working. His transforming power has not weakened; it's just not finished.

## APPLICATION

Today is Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. This Thursday – January 19 – is known as "Quitters' Day" because researchers have discovered that most people have given up on their New Year's resolutions by that day.

I don't know what resolutions you have made or which ones have already fallen away.

But I would encourage you to stick with this one:

God has called you to follow Him, and He will make you into all that He has in store for you.

Stick with Him.

Amen.