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## Scripture

Mark 3:7-19a

<sup>7</sup> Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; <sup>8</sup> hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. <sup>9</sup> He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him; <sup>10</sup> for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. <sup>11</sup> Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" <sup>12</sup> But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

<sup>13</sup> He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. <sup>14</sup> And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, <sup>15</sup> and to have authority to cast out demons. <sup>16</sup> So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); <sup>17</sup> James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); <sup>18</sup> and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, <sup>19</sup> and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

## Devotional

I'm sure at some point the disciples wondered why they were following Jesus. They encountered uncomfortable situations, such as rubbing shoulders with outsiders, living life on the road away from family and friends, facing opposition from the religious elite, and having their master turned over to the cross. The disciples probably thought to themselves during these times, Why did I agree to this life? I imagine they were sustained during these times by returning to Jesus' call to them as described in Mark 3. Remembering Jesus' call reminded them why they agreed.

Perhaps now in this dreary season you might wonder about your ministry. Perhaps the hard times of ministry have made you question why you agreed to a life of ministry. Or perhaps the mundane seasons of session meetings and capital campaigns have left you wondering whether this is the life for you. It is during these times when we must remember Jesus' call to us. The life of ministry is not always filled with miracles and Easter—sometimes it's filled with February and finals. But in returning to our call, we can gain renewed purpose even in the cold and dreary times.

## Prayer

*Lord and Sustainer, we thank you that you are a God who hears our prayers. We thank you that you are a God who has spoken into our lives with purpose and peace. We ask, Lord, that during the difficult times in ministry you remind us of our call. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.*