

JAMES, the ELDER

“The Disciples”



James is represented by three scallop shells which are symbolic of his pilgrimage and mission zeal.

James, the Elder is the son of Zebedee, brother of John, not to be confused with James the Younger who was the brother of Christ. I thought his personality was very interesting. For Christ to name them “sons of thunder,” they must have deserved it!

According to Matthew 4:21-22, James and his brother were fishing with their father when Christ called them to be His disciples.

We also know that he was one of the three disciples who witnessed the transfiguration.

*“And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder.”
Mark 3:17 KJV*

He seemed to be with Christ on many occasions, but he was not usually very outspoken, or at least there is not much record of his speaking.

On one occasion, he did show his temper! Christ had been talking with the disciples as they were traveling to Jerusalem. As the disciples were making plans along the way they came to a town with many Samaritans and they refused hospitality to Christ. When James and John heard about their unwillingness to have Christ in their town, they wanted Christ to rain fire down on the town and destroy it. But Christ told them “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” Luke 9:56. Then they went on to another village. We don't hear much about him although he was one of the three that seemed to be with Christ the most.

**If you believe in God, He will open
the windows of heaven and pour
blessings upon you.**

Mahalia Jackson

He and his brother apparently had a good fishing business because they had other people working for them. But they also evidently thought they were working hard for Christ. So much that they felt the need to ask for a special favor. Christ said he would listen to them. Then they asked if they could be awarded the highest places of honor in His kingdom. One wanted to sit at His left hand and the other at His right hand. Christ told them they had no idea what they were asking for. They thought they could do almost anything!

*“The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say ‘O God, forgive me,’ or ‘Help me.’”
Billy Graham*

Christ said “Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They thought they could, but they had no comprehension of what was going to happen in the very near future.” I don't think they were doing it in a negative way. They had spent a lot of time with Christ and they wanted to be with Him as much as possible. They were eager to help spread the gospel. They had tremendous faith and admiration for Christ. They were just guilty of being overzealous.

The other disciples were displeased with James and John, but Christ calmed them down and answered their questions with another statement they probably couldn't understand any more than we could today. Christ told them *"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."* Mark 10:35-45

I do not think that Christ's calling them "sons of thunder" was a negative nickname. Are we ever sons of thunder? James was so much a son of thunder that he became the first of the twelve to be a Christian martyr because he spoke up for Christ against pagans. Sometimes we are offended by the people who speak up because we want them to be more silent. We don't want to "stir up the waters." Didn't Christ turn the tables in the temple? Should we do something when we think things are wrong? Do we? Do you?

I'm not saying that we should go around with a temper all the time, but after prayer when we see something that we think needs to be said or done for the glory of God, should we be willing to do it? Are we willing to stick out our neck for Christ and His word? Are we willing to stand up to others who put down our Lord and Savior? The church needs to have people like him as well as people who are the silent workers.

"It is only our bad temper that we put down to being tired or worried or hungry; we put out good temper down to ourselves."
C. S. Lewis

Only when we all work together to spread the word of God to others in our community and serve missions will our church grow. But remember, the church building is just a building. We are the church.

Dare to be Brave

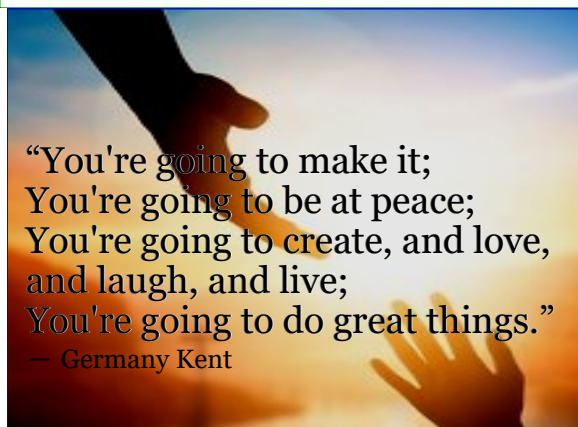
"Dare to be brave, dare to be true; Strive for the right, for the Lord is with you; Fight with sin bravely, fight and be strong; Christ is your captain; fear only what's wrong. Dare to be brave, dare to be true; Keep the straight way of duty ever in view; Do all your work as well as you can, Work for the Lord, not only for man.

Dare to be brave, dare to be true; God grant you courage to carry you through; Try to help others, ever be kind; Let the oppressed a strong friend in you find.

Chorus:

Fight then, good soldiers, fight and be brave; Christ is your Captain, mighty to save."

by Rooper and Hume



Prayer: Heavenly Father, Please help us to realize the great gift of Your Son that You have given to us, and then help us to spread the good news to others so that they too are willing to speak out and work silently to tell others so they too can spend eternity with You, and that gift can begin today. Amen.

1. What do you think it means to be a "son of thunder?" Are you willing to be a "son of thunder?"
2. Are we ever called to speak up for Christ?
3. Why were these brothers with a good fishing business willing to leave a job and family behind to follow an "itinerant speaker?"
4. Where do you fit into the church with these people who dare to be seen and heard?
5. Do we dare to follow sometimes instead of leading?

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Dear God, I know that I am not perfect. I know sometimes I forget to pray. I know I have questioned my faith. I know sometimes I loose my temper.

*But . . . Thank you for loving me, unconditionally and giving me another day to start over again.
Amen*

