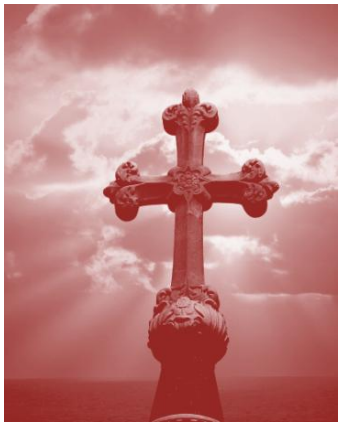


James, the Elder



“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

“Fishing was my livelihood, but I could never have anticipated how one day would change my life forever. My friends in business, Andrew and Peter, had met a man named Jesus. “The more I listened to how convinced Andrew was that this man was really the long awaited Messiah, the more I believed. One day He approached my brother, John, and me as we were fishing and asked us to follow Him and He would make us ‘Fishers of Men.’

I wasn’t sure at that time what that meant, but I knew that I believed He was someone very special. So, John and I left our father, Zebedee, to man the fishing business and we followed Jesus. There had been no argument on our part. And my father and mother also believed this was the true Messiah we had been waiting for. Dad had other people to help with the fishing.

“The first thing I saw was Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law. He spoke with authority and I wanted to be with Him. The number of us that worked closely with Jesus grew to twelve and we were called His disciples. “Our mission was to proclaim the Good News, to heal, and to cast out demons. It was a job of full commitment and faith, but I never doubted after that time when a poor lowly fisherman was called to serve the greatest King there would ever be.

“When Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter when everyone thought she had died, I was there along with John and Peter. I was privileged to be called by Jesus to go up on a mountain and see his transfiguration and heard God speak as if from a cloud. I saw Moses and Elijah, and then we were told by Christ that we weren’t allowed to tell anyone. At the time I didn’t understand why we shouldn’t ‘shout it from the mountaintop.’

“I was one of those given a special nickname. Jesus called me a Son of Thunder! But I was so taken by this man that I totally lost what He was really doing. “Unfortunately I failed on my last mission with Jesus on earth. He asked Peter, John, and me to watch while He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. We all fell asleep. The next few days were hectic and as you know the authorities took Jesus and crucified Him on a cross on the edge of town along with two thieves. “As a Son of Thunder, I believed my mission was to continue to tell others about Jesus and how much He meant to me and how much He had changed my life. My prayer is that you can also be a Son of Thunder. I wasn’t vocal, but I worked diligently. I would ask Jesus for direction, and then seek to do it to the best of my ability.”

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?

There is a song called “Fisher of Men” by Rhonda Vincent. Part of the lyrics are:

“Peter, John, and James
Could never be the same
After they heard him say
I’ll make you fishers of men.

He said, Rise and follow me
I’ll make you worthy
Rise and follow me
I’ll make you fishers of men.

Cast your nets aside
and join the battle tide
He will be your guide
To make you fishers of men.

He said, Rise and follow me
I’ll make you worthy
Rise and follow me
I’ll make you fishers of men.”