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The Apostle James

The basic principle for excellence is to have the best and do the best, in order to do better than others.

* This applies to everything, be it in athletics, the selling of a product or the quest for a cure in cancer!

The common ground to all of these is that you want qualified individuals to get the job done, which means several things.

1. There must be qualifications, to meet the ability for the task.
2. There must be commitment; a willingness to give one's all.
3. There must be enthusiasm, a spirit of passion.
4. There must be unity, knowing you are one of many.
5. There must be a willingness to sacrifice many things, in view that the task is top priority.

God equally has many of the same qualifications for the men and women he calls, but His approach is a little different, knowing man does not have these qualities in and of himself, God enables a person if they yield to the conditions of God, repentance!

* These are the type of people God works with.

1. Lost people who are willing to be found.
2. Sinners willing to be saints.
3. Imperfect people who can trust the perfect One.
4. Weak people who will depend on God to be strong.

5. Fearful people that obey in faith to be courageous.

These are the type of men Jesus called to be His twelve apostle.

1. He was not so concerned with what they were in and of themselves, but what He could make of them.
2. He was not trusting their ability, as much as their availability to be used by Him.
3. He was not looking for glory hogs, but those He would reveal His glory through their service.
4. He was not over estimating their flesh, as much as He was valuing His own Spirit.

He chose these twelve disciples to be the twelve apostles to proclaim His gospel truth; He made no other plans or replacements except for Judas Iscariot. * We have looked at the first two apostles, Peter and Andrew, using Matthew's order. Matt. 10:2-4

We want to look at the third, the apostle James through three lenses.

- I. The man James.
- II. The call of James.
- III. The apostle James.

I. The man James.

- A. The name of James.
 1. The name James "Iakobos" is the Hellenist form of "Jacob" means surplanter.
 - a. The Latin is "Jacobus" and "Jacomus"

- b.** The name means surplanter.
- 2.** James is not to be confused with the others called James in the New Testament, we are looking at James the third of the four inner circle of apostles, according to Matthew. Matt. 10:2; Mk. 3:17; Lk. 6:14; Acts 1:13
- * In two of the four lists, James is listed next to Peter.
- a.** There is James the son of Alphaeus.
- 1) He is in the third group of apostles.
 - 2) He is the ninth of the twelve.
 - 3) He is the leader of the third group, appearing first in all four of the lists.
- b.** There is James, the less.
- 1) The description “less” most likely due to his small stature, without any derogatory connotation.
 - 2) He had a brother name Joses. Mk. 15:40
 - 3) His mother Mary was one of the ladies at the crucifixion and tomb. Mk. 16:1
- c.** There was James the father of Judas.
- 1) He was “judas” one of the apostles.
 - 2) He is known as Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus. Matt. 10:3; Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13
 - 3) He is not to be confused with Judas Iscariot.
- d.** There is James the Lord’s brother.
- 1) He was a half brother to Jesus, Joseph not being the real father of Jesus.

- 2) He was the oldest of the brothers of Jesus. Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3
 - 3) He was an unbeliever till after the resurrection. Jn. 7:5; Acts 1:14
 - 4) He became the leader and head spokesman of the Jerusalem church. Acts 15:13; 21:28; 1Cor. 15:7; Gal 2:9
- B.** The home of James.
1. James was one of the two sons of Zebedee, the other is John. Matt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19, Lk. 5:10
 2. John is often called the “brother of James”, re-enforcing he was the older, most likely indicating that he was the older of the two. Matt. 10:2; 17:1; Mk. 3:17; 5:37; Lk. 6:14
 3. James on the other hand is called the brother of John in the Acts of the apostles, but most likely due to the fact that John was as a “pillar of the church”. Gal. 2:9
 4. James mother is Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus, making them cousins to Jesus, as John the Baptist.
 5. James was a fisher man John his brother and father in a family business. Matt. 4:21
 - a.** The family business was prosperous with servants and boats. Mk. 1:20
 - b.** The partnership was with Peter and Andrew. Lk. 5:10
 6. James father Zebedee was a man of social position for John was known by the high

priest and allowed to enter the court, at the betrayal of Jesus. Jn. 18:15

C. The brother of James.

1. James had a brother, John the son of Zebedee.
2. James and John like Peter and Andrew are different, but are identified with more similarities.
3. Both had the same upbringing.
5. Both had the same trade.
6. Both were disciples of our Lord.
7. Both were chosen to be apostles.
8. Both are unique in the purposes of God.

Illustration

The very list of the apostles is an incredible record of the diverse men that possibly we ourselves would never put together, such a Matthew the tax collector who was considered a traitor to the Jews and Simon the Zealot who pledged to kill any like Matthew!

Application

1. The fallen human race is a type of James “surplanter”; we are always attempting to do things their own way.
 - a. This is the natural man, the Old Man.
 - b. The Lord calls us to change us into those who are governed by God, “Israel”, the new man.
 - * By yielding to the divine nature. 1Pet. 1:3-4

2. The important thing to remember about individuals from the same family is that they are like the members of our body, they are related, but not the same in function.

- a. Too often the constant comparison by others misses the giftedness of each individual.
- b. At other times if distinctiveness is not recognized by the family members that are called, rivalry and envy can hinder the work of God, which He intended to be a complementing mode.
 - * Many members, but one body. Rom. 12,
1Cor. 12

This was the man James!

II. The call of James.

- A. The call of James came at the Sea of Galilee. Matt. 4:18-22
 1. Jesus had just called two brothers as He was walking by the Sea of Galilee, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother as they were casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Saying to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” vs. 18-19
 2. They immediately left their nets and followed Him. vs. 20
 3. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee

their father mending their nets. He called them and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. vs. 21-22

B. The call of James at the Sea of Galilee is brought to full color by the parallel passages.

1. Mark alone says they had hired servants. Mk. 1:20
2. Luke tells it was when the boats were standing by the lake and they were washing their nets. Lk. 5:2-11
 - a. Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep, let down his nets for a catch. vs. 4
 - b. Peter did it reluctantly, “Lord, we have toiled all night and caught nothing: nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” vs. 5
 - c. And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. vs. 6
 - d. Peter and Andrew signaled to their partners in the other boats to help them. They came and filled the boats and they began to sink. vs. 7
 - e. Peter as you know fell to his knees, confessing he was a sinful man, pleading that the Lord depart from Him. vs. 8
 - f. All were amazed as well as the sons of Zebedee and Jesus told them, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” vs. 9-10

- g. They brought their boats in to land and they forsook all and followed Him. vs. 11
3. John and Andrew were the first two who came to Jesus as John the Baptist pointed them to the Lamb of God. Jn. 1:35-40
4. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, telling him they had found the Messiah. Jn. 1:41-42
5. James apparently was not present, perhaps he was at Galilee working and his call appears now at Galilee, at the second call of the first three.
 - a. Interesting Jesus called one brother of each family first to be the catalyst for the other.
 - b. The four make up the first group of the inner circle.
6. The call of James is like Peter and Andrew, a call to internship or apprenticeship.

Illustration

The call of God on a person’s life, I do not believe can be missed by the person, but I do believe that they can choose not to answer the call of God!

* It is true that there are two sides to the call, just like there are two sides to a sheet of fly paper, the important thing is which side of the fly paper will the fly choose, affecting the future! (Green:100)

Application

1. The inner circle too often is thought of as elite and more spiritual from man’s perspective, but like all

thing that are simply viewed from man's perspective, they are usually backwards.

- a. We say that the sunrises, but in fact the earth is turning.
- b. We say the tide is rising or going out but it is the gravitation pull from the moon.
- c. We say God spent more time with these four because they were more holy and spiritual when in fact they probably had a greater need to be taught and overseen.

* "For **My** thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your **ways My ways**," says the LORD." Is. 55:8

2. The call of James was in the course of his daily profession and so often it will be with us.

- a. Jesus will used the place and level of understanding that we are familiar with, "I will make you fishers of men". Matt. 4:19

* He might say to a building contractor, "I will make you a builder of the kingdom".

- b. Jesus picked the time to call James away from his livelihood, His time. Acts 9

* At times men quit their job before or without God directing them, bringing hardship on their families, lay the burden on the church and others or both to supply their needs.

- c. Jesus some times has a person to have a tent ministry like Paul, where they work and exercise their ministry. 1Thess. 2:9

3. The call will always accompany the instruction and details for ministry and time alone will reveal our obedience or lack thereof.

- a. Sometimes God will direct us to obey something that is too much trouble or incredible, so we only partially obey, Jesus said let your "nets", plural, down for a catch. Lk. 5:4

* "But you see they had just finished washing their nets, it would of been too much trouble to get them dirty all over again. Lk. 5:2

- b. Peter let down the a "net", singular, not complete obedience! Lk. 5:5

- c. Can you imagine if they would of let down the "nets", plural!

* "Now to Him who is able to do **exceedingly** abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Eph. 3:20-21

This was the call of James!

III. The apostle James.

- A. James was a strong aggressive and zealous individual.

- 1. Jesus gave James and John the name Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder". Mk. 3:17

* Mark alone gives us this particular characteristic of the Zebedee boys!

- a. I do not think our Lord gave them that name because they were meek, peace loving young men.
 - b. He gave them that name due to their hot tempered zeal, ready to act and get things done with very few words.
 - c. I think when people saw the brothers coming, they got out of the way.
 - d. I do not think many in the Galilee attempted to cheat James and his brothers in business, do you?
2. Jesus one day was rejected by the Samaritans, due to the fact that He was headed towards Jerusalem. Lk. 9:51-56
- a. “Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem.” vs. 51-53
 - b. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” vs. 54
 - c. But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did

not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. And they went to another village.” vs. 55-56

- 1) James and his brother John thought they were of the spirit of Elijah to barbe-Que the Samaritans who dared to insult and dishonor their Lord.
- 2) They were naturally yielding to their carnal flesh and attempting to pass it off for spiritual zeal.

B. James was a very ambitious individual.

- 1. One day James and his brother John petitioned to reign with Jesus. Mk. 10:35-45
 - a. James being one of the inner circle had been given special privilege that caused him and his brother to think they had an inside track with Jesus, “We want You to do whatever we ask. vs. 35”
 - b. They petitioned to be granted to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left, in His glory. vs. 37
 - * Matthew says their mother interceded for this request also. Matt. 20:20-28
 - 1) James was one of the three who saw the daughter of Jairus raised. Mk. 5:37, Lk. 8:51
 - 2) James was one of the three to see the Lord transfigured in His glory and speak with both Moses and Elijah. Matt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:2-8; Lk. 9:28-36

- 3) Later he would be one of the four on the Mount of Olives who asked the Lord when His coming would be, the sign of His coming, the end of the age. James therefore concluded that whatever he asked Jesus, He would not deny him, but he was wrong. Mk. 13:3-4
- c. Jesus knowing they were asking for their own benefit asked them, if they knew what they were asking and able to drink of the cup that He was going to drink and be baptized with His baptism, to which they responded without hesitation, “We are able”. vs. 38-39a-b
* Cauki sons of thunder!
- d. Jesus then prophesied about how James and his brother would partake of the sufferings of Christ, drinking the cup and the baptism. vs. 39c-d
* James and John thought Jesus was going to Jerusalem to destroy Rome and set up His kingdom, they wanted to rule in power and prestige.
- e. And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased or indignantly angry with James and John. vs. 41
1) Why, you might ask? Simple, they ten had the same thing in mind, but the two beat the ten to it.

- 2) The ten could not believe the presumptuous, self-centered, arrogant ambition of the two, yet they were only living up to their names.
- f. James was a very ambitious person who wanted to be great, having the strong and aggressive personality to go for things.
1) This personality can intimidate people.
2) This type of personality can just run over people without considering the damage they cause.
- C. James being a very strong, aggressive, zealous and ambitious individual became the target of persecution. Acts 12:1-4
1. “Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.” vs. 1
2. “Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.” vs. 2
a. This again could be another evident fact that James was the hotter tempered of the two.
b. It seems Herod was not too worried about Peter, but James was his target of his pursuit.
c. He became the second martyr of the church and first apostle, being an uncompromising, zealous man who could only be stopped by death.

- d. James finally got his petition answered and shared in Jesus glory, yet not as he though sitting on a throne in Jerusalem, but through persecution and death, the cup and the baptism as Jesus prophesied. Mk. 10:39c-d
- e. John would live to an old age after attempting to be boiled in oil and banished to the island of Patmos, where he received the Revelation.
 - * Though both brothers were always together and James never appears apart from his brother in the gospels, James seems to have been the strength of the two.
- 3. “And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.” vs. 3
- 4. “So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.” vs. 4
 - a. Peter was sleeping like a baby between two soldiers and an angel struck Peter on the side to awaken him and deliver him out of the prison. Acts 12:6-7
 - b. Peter could sleep like a baby due to the fact that Jesus had prophesied that he was going to die in old age. Jn. 21:18-19

- c. Who really was delivered, James or Peter, it is all a matter of perspective, isn't it!

Illustration

Rome had a coin, an ox faced an alter and a plow, under it was written, “Ready for either”. This was James!

Application

1. God takes men like James, strong, **aggressive** and zealous individual and enables them in the power of His Holy Spirit for the Kingdom of God for His glory. 2Cor. 4:7
 - a. Zeal without wisdom and patience can cost a person much.
 - b. James type people have to learn to be sensible and quite.
 - c. The opposite is just as bad, being a milk-toast man who goes along with everything and nothing bothers him.
 - d. But the strong, aggressive and zealous person in the hands of God is a benefit to the world.
2. God takes men who are ambitious and makes them ambitious for the Kingdom of God by His love and passion for sinner. Jn. 3:16
 - a. Ambition for self with zeal is both blinding and destructive!
 - b. James seem to have been a very stable individual, counting the cost.

3. James being a very strong, aggressive, zealous and ambitious individual became the target of persecution.

Acts 12:1-4

- a. As in the past, so today and in the future there will be people God will use, yet be insensitive to the needs of their homes and family.
 - * Billy Sunday busied himself for God, yet all of his children are said to of been lost!
- b. James type individuals will be the target of persecution, they are too evident in their cause, like Stephen and Paul.

This was James the apostle!

Conclusion

This is the apostle James through these three lenses.

- I. The man James!
- II. The call of James!
- III. The apostle James!