

**7-2-23**

**Sermon: Introducing James**

**Scripture: James 1:1, CTW Psalm 47**

**Hymns: 275, 276, 277**

**Theme: James' passion for Christ pours out over the words that he uses. He has the passion of a sincere Jewish Christian and may well be called the Amos (after the prophet) of the new covenant. His letter is thick with pastoral encouragement, and pastoral rebuke. Over the next several weeks, we will discover it!**

Next week, we will begin an extensive excursion into the book of James. I invite you to take some time to study the letter in advance. I believe it is a life-changer!

By way of a summary, this morning we will do an overview of different facets of James: James the cynical and concerned brother; James as a believer... his conversion, his filling with the Holy Spirit and his leadership in the church; and James the bondservant...Bonded to Jesus, in service and in death.

### **I. The Cynical Brother.**

We know that James was the brother of Jesus from **Galatians 1:19** where Paul said: "But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother".

To say that James and Jesus were different would be the ultimate understatement... they were as different as two brothers could be and it wasn't until Jesus' death that they would have a wonderful commonality in directness and purpose.

James and his brothers had a different take of their older brother. As Jesus roamed about the land preaching and doing miraculous signs and wonders, you have to wonder what Jesus' family thought about all this.

### **A. In Various Scriptures, we find some interesting insight on the family and what they thought about Jesus:**

In **John 7:1-5** where Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him and what kind of spirit His brothers were talking in when they gave Jesus the advice to go to Judea. It was well known that the Jews sought to kill Jesus in Judea, **but his brothers told Him to go there!** This reminded me of the kind of relationship you saw with Joseph and his brothers when they threw him in the well and sold him for slavery.

Jesus himself told us it would be this way **Matt 10:34-39**... "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace...I will turn family member against family member.

### **B. Jesus' brothers were obviously skeptics about the claims that their brother and His disciples were making.**

They had a cynicism that seeped in their hearts and spilled out toward their brother but it is clear that they also had great concern...

## **II. The Concerned Brother (That Jesus had lost His mind).**

**A. Look at Mark 3:20-21:** <sup>20</sup>Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. <sup>21</sup>When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." They thought Jesus had lost it. They may have misinterpreted His zeal for mental imbalance.

If you look further in this passage in verse 31, His family sought to speak to Jesus right in the middle of His teaching His disciples.

**Matt 12:46** says "they were wanting to speak with Him" and it wasn't to invite Him to Sunday supper!

They were concerned and verse 21 tells us they had plans to seize Him and drag Him away by force...this was an intervention that James would have been involved with!

**B. Were they trying to protect Jesus from a fate they saw Him steering Himself into or were they just trying to protect themselves and their family name?**

There is no doubt in my mind that some of these brothers and sisters got a little pressure from the Jewish leaders about Jesus and perhaps they were getting tired of it.

Yet, at some point, James would move from skeptical brother to believer...

**III. The Believer Brother.**

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:3-8** that after Jesus saw over 500 people, He rose early to take the time to see His brother James.

In what must have been the greatest moment in his life, James saw his brother risen from the dead. This changed his life, and he went from skeptic to believer.

**A. Of all the people that Jesus saw He made room to see His younger brother, and it is there that we can trace the conversion of James.**

It doesn't seem that James converted up until this point. It was the resurrection of his brother that convinced him.

We see in **James 1:1** that depending on the translation, he calls himself a servant, slave or more accurately a bond-servant of the "Lord Jesus Christ".

**B. In his letter, James makes mention of numerous descriptions of the Savior, and that shows where his heart is:**

- (1) He is Lord who will one day return in glory to this world.
- (2) He is Jesus... God come to earth in human form.
- (3) He is **THE Christ** the anointed one who fulfilled God's purposes by dying for us.

In James' time it was quite a statement to say Jesus is Lord. It was blasphemy to the Jews and to the Romans it was treason against the authority of the emperor.

But in the midst of all this, James was reborn...

#### **IV. The Reborn Brother.**

##### **A. James becomes filled with the Holy Spirit!**

James became a believer...a spirit filled believer who would go and do as the Great Commission requires all of us to do!

Next week we will see in **Acts 1:12-14** where in the upper room with the other believers praying continually we see in **verse 14 that Jesus' brothers are also there...** All of them denied their past lives and became believers as Jesus knew they would.

And with James up there with everyone praying, what are they doing? **Waiting.** Waiting for what? The divine wind...the Holy Spirit.

Remember in **Acts 1:4-5**...waiting for the Holy Spirit as Jesus told them to do...They would all experience the outpouring together along with their mother!

And when the wind came rushing through the place on that famous day, Jesus' brothers were not passed over for their cynical behavior. When the fire poured out from heaven and settled on the heads of those people in that room, His brothers were not forsaken! They were forgiven and James was a part of all that... burning with the fire of the Holy Spirit...

James was now a Spirit filled believer who became a pillar in the church and actually a leader in one of the most important churches...**the church in Jerusalem!**

## **B. James becomes a leader**

As we will see in the coming weeks, **Acts 12:17, 15:13-17, 21:18-25** all elude to James' role in the leadership of the church in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was a place not known for its prominence, but more for its persecution...remember the hatred of Saul...later to become Paul... and the harassment of this new movement by King Herod.

It seemed like the church at that time was not the place to be if you wanted to be somebody and if you wanted to be recognized.

And James was more than a leader of the church...he became a spokesman for the church, as we will see in the council of Jerusalem **Acts 15:13-17**.

But there was another line that James desired to cross... it is found in the definition of this word bondservant.

## **C. James as a Bondservant**

James becomes bonded as a servant to Jesus...not a bondservant of his **brother** Jesus, but a bondservant of **his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**.

James wrote with humility. He wrote as bondservant not using titles to impress. His letter is direct, clear, and to the point!

If you look at this role, you realize that James will give us the impression that it is not **accepting Christ** as Savior that is the climax to our lives as much as **it is what you do with it after you have accepted him!**

James is making the statement that he more than loves his brother, he loves **his Master** and that he has no desire to go free because he is bonded to Jesus.

As was done with slaves back then, His ear has been pierced to the house of God and he is not going anywhere.

James did not start his letter by calling himself "James the saved". He referred to himself as "James the bondservant". He was bonded to Jesus and bonded to serve. He was a servant to his church by serving the believers.

James writes his letter to those who are scattered by the great persecution...Jewish believers in the diaspora as shown in **Acts 8:1-8...AND Saul** was coming after the believers...the church of Jerusalem in which James was a Leader.

#### **D. So, James was to become Protector of the new church.**

It was not the role of being Jesus' brother that gave James authority... it was his humility and servant-hood toward the flock he was given. He was not taking advantage of his position as Jesus' brother, he became the protector of the new church.

There was a quality in James that gave him his position which was not a requirement by his status as brother of Jesus. James made sure that it was well known that he was not to become an authority figure that would replace Jesus now that He was gone.

James acknowledges Jesus' resurrection, and that Jesus is still with us by proclaiming James is a servant of someone who is alive and not of someone who is dead.

James was **bonded to Jesus: bonded to serve and bonded to death...**

#### **V. James was Willing to Die for Jesus as Lord.**

Thousands of believers died a martyr's death, because they would not take back their statement "**Jesus is Lord**". A statement that James makes here in the very first line of his letter!

As we go through the words of James' letter, we need to ponder this question: Is our proclamation, "**Jesus is Lord**", a threat to those who would degrade His ministry, **or can the world tell that we just don't take it all that seriously?**

In the early church people backed up their statement with their lives... today it can be merely a cliché, a slogan or a bumper sticker...even a hobby!

James himself was stoned to death by the scribes and Pharisees for refusing to renounce his commitment to Jesus...

**Josephus**, a historical writer in Jerusalem during this time, wrote: "Festus was now dead, and ruler **Claudius Albinus** went searching for believers out on the road. He assembled the **Sanhedrin of judges**, and brought before them the **brother of Jesus, the Christ, whose name was James**, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned to death."

James was willing to pay the price as a bondservant. Yes, he loved his brother, but more importantly he loved his Master...

Over the coming weeks, we will examine in depth, the letter of James...I will be preaching my way through it. It is my favorite letter in the Bible...

James, the brother **in** Christ and brother **of** Christ has a lot to say to us and to the church.

I pray that in the coming weeks you will make this letter a priority in meditation and reflection, in study and prayer as we move through it together and glean everything that God has for us. Believe me, it is a life-changer!

**Amen, let us pray...**