

James: Thunderous Passion and Zeal Redeemed and Redirected (Lk. 6:12-16)

(12) In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. (13) And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: (14) Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James... (Luke 6:12-14)

1. God the Father led God the Son to choose James to be one of the leaders of the early church. Jesus then taught, trained, and empowered James to lead His people once He was gone. Jesus took James's thunderous passion and zeal and redeemed and redirected it.
2. The goal of our lives in Christ is not to be without passion, zeal, or the right kind of ambition and emotion. The goal is that these things would be redeemed and redirected for God's glory and the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ.

(13) And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. (14) And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach (15) and have authority to cast out demons. (16) He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); (17) James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder)...(Mark 3:13-17)

1. Jesus changed people by giving them close access to Himself. It was when they saw Jesus, walked with Jesus, were loved by Jesus, emulated Jesus, and loved Jesus in return that their lives were changed. All of this was by grace alone, and by God's initiating love.
2. Jesus gives people the power they need to change and the power they need to accomplish His will. Jesus gives a particular calling to his people, and He prepares them to live out that calling to the fullest. By grace, Jesus changes our attitudes, actions, emotions, and lives.
3. Jesus takes this "son of thunder," this "son of misdirected passion, zeal, ambition, and anger," and makes him into a son of God who begins to grow into the character of Christ day by day. The thunder that once caused harm, hurt, and pain to others and himself will now be directed in love, holy power, leadership, and unstoppable work and perseverance to bring good to others and glory to God.
4. Are you zealous, passionate, and ambitious for Christ? Is your anger righteous or unrighteous? Do you repent of unrighteous anger and let righteous anger direct you into righteous and loving actions toward others?

(16) Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. (17) And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (18) And immediately they left their nets and followed him. (19) And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. (20) And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. (Mark 1:16-20)

1. James was a hard working man who did things well. He worked alongside his younger brother John. He worked for his father Zebedee in the family fishing business. His dad had a very successful and prosperous business with so much work and so much profit that he had numerous servants/employees. Zebedee was well known in both Galilee and even in Jerusalem by the religious leaders (high priests) and probably even the political leaders for his work.
2. James left his successful career, and put Jesus's call above his earthly father and all earthly pursuits. Is Jesus more important to you than your daily work, your family, and your temporal earthly success? Do you prioritize people coming to know Christ and growing in Christ? Do you use your work for God's glory and the good of others both temporally and eternally?

(55) There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, (56) among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. (Matt 27:55-56)

(40) There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. (Mr 15:40)

(25) but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. (Jn 19:25)

1. The mother of James was probably a woman named Salome, who may have even been the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. This would have made her Jesus' aunt, and would have made James and Jesus cousins.
2. James had a mother who loved Jesus too. The love of a mother for her son and the love of a mother for Jesus have a significant impact. Mothers, the most important thing you can do is love Jesus and love your children by pointing them to Him and His teaching with all your heart. Seek to live out the character of Christ before them, and let your own passions, zeal, and ambition be directed to Christ, His Kingdom, and His work for His glory. Do you children see your passions, zeal, and ambition directed toward Christ and for Christ?

(20) Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. (21) And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." (22) Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." (23) He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." (24) And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. (25) But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. (26) It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, (27) and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, (28) even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:20-28)

1. Even Salome, the mother of James, had areas that she needed to grow in. Jesus was so patient with both she and her son James. Her ambition was still misguided, but God would help her see more of His truth and turn her into a woman of great service for Christ. This is a very ambitious family, some for good, and some for selfish and sinful reasons. Jesus can and does change them all. Are you surrendered to Christ so that He might change you from the inside out as well?
2. In this moment her love for her son James supersedes her love for God. In this instance her dreams and plans for her sons have taken the place of the plans and purposes of Christ. Jesus is changing her even as He is changing her son James. Beware of putting anyone or anything above Christ. Know that even the best and greatest gifts that God gives us can sinfully take His place in our hearts at times. Are you guarding your heart?
3. It's the love, patience, and truth of Christ that changes both James and his mother over time. It's grace that changes them and it's grace that changes us.
4. Jesus shows them that following Him and leading for Him entails lovingly laying down all you are for Him and His people. Leadership is costly. Leadership is taking on more responsibility, more sacrifice, more burden, with more joy and blessing. Love is a labor. Love passionately, zealously, fervently, and fully.

(51) When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. (52) And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. (53) But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. (54) And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (55) But he turned and rebuked them. (Lk 9:51-55)

1. James could be hot-headed at times. His passion and zeal could at times be driven by misguided and sinful anger. Is your life ever guided by misguided anger? Passion, zeal, and ambition must be filtered by grace, mercy, compassion, love, patience, and ultimately the gospel. Never forget about the grace that

God has shown you when you are dealing with other people. What if He would have destroyed you when you had no time for Him, when you did not love Him, when you put other people and things before Him?

2. Jesus rebuked James for wanting to destroy these Samaritans for not initially receiving Him. Jesus had come to save and rescue sinners, not destroy them at this time.
3. You see some prejudice in James here, unlike Andrew. Jesus would change this over time in his life. James would learn to love, to preach, to teach, and to lead. Are there still some lingering prejudices in your heart? Are you repenting of those?

(11) ...As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die,...? (Ez 33:11)

1. God desires people to repent and trust in His Son Jesus for eternal life. God's pleasure and delight are not in the death of the wicked, but in their repentance and salvation. What gives you pleasure and delight? Are your pleasures, delights, and joys aligned with those of Christ?

(2) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. (Rom 10:2)

1. James needed more than just zeal, he also needed knowledge. Truth will lead and guide us into right living and right emotions. Are you growing in the knowledge of God?

(17) His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." (Jn 2:17)

1. The goal of the Christian life is not to get rid of all zeal and passion. The goal is for zeal and passion to be used for God's glory, praise, and purposes. The goal is for zeal and passion to be used for the good of others.

(5) Philip went down to the city of Samarita and proclaimed to them the Christ. (6) And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. (7) For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. (8) So there was much joy in that city. ... (Acts 8:5-8)

1. Philip later goes to the same place that had once rejected Jesus and preaches there. Philip had a fruitful ministry in the place that once had rejected Christ, and many of the Samaritans now received Christ and became His followers. God had a plan for some of the very people who once turned Him away, a plan for their joy.
2. The grace and patience of God can be seen in His mercy toward the Samaritans and toward you and me. Will you grow to be more like Him today?

(1) And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. (2) And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. (4) ...behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Matt 17:1-2, 4)

1. Seeing Jesus and hearing God's voice changes people.
2. Seeing Jesus and hearing God's voice removes our fears, redirects our ears, and gives us a new object of our affection... Christ!

(1) And as he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" (2) And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down." (3) And as he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, (4) "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?"... (Mark 13:1-4)

1. Jesus came not to build buildings but to build people. Are you building people?
2. Peter, James, and John were Jesus' inner circle. Jesus was closer with them than with any other people. Are you making disciples relationally?

(32) And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." (33) And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. (34) And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch." (35) And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. (36) And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." (37) And he came and found them sleeping,... (38) Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."... (Mark 14:32-38)

1. Learning to pray changes people.
2. Learning to be spiritually watchful changes people.
3. Learning about the flesh (sinful nature), the Holy Spirit, walking with God as Father, and abiding in Christ changes people.

(35) While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" (36) But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." (37) And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. (38) They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. (39) And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." (40) And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. (41) Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." (42) And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. (Mark 5:35-42)

1. Seeing Jesus' authority over death changed James and prepared him for his ministry in such a way that he did not fear death.
2. Death is not the worst thing that could happen to God's children because they have eternal life.

(1) About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. (2) He killed James the brother of John with the sword, (3) and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also... (21) On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. (22) And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" (23) Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last. (24) But the word of God increased and multiplied. (Acts 12:1-24)

1. The church will experience persecution.
2. James is the first apostle to be martyred in about A.D. 44.
3. Herod kills James instead of Peter, showing how the zeal and passion of James was used by God in leadership with great influence in the early church. When Herod wanted to stop Christianity he went after James. Are you leading for Christ with all your heart? If not, what's holding you back?
4. Nothing can stop God's Word, God's Spirit, the advance of the gospel, and the growth of the church. Nothing!