



Benefice of Atworth with Shaw and Whitley

The Disciples of Jesus: James

17th May 2015

Acts 12: 1 – 3

Matthew 20: 20 - 24

In essence:

- James, with younger brother John, was part of his father Zebedee's healthy fishing business, operating from Capernaum on the North of the Sea of Galilee; they knew Peter and Andrew who also fished there.
- The Zebedee family appeared to be well to do with good connections. Zebedee employed hired help, Salome their mother provided logistical and financial support to Jesus and team, and the family seemed to have connections with the Jerusalem high priest. Early church records indicate that Zebedee as a Levite, the Hebrew tribal family given religious responsibilities.
- Not much detail regards James other than the Gospels give many references to the Sons of Zebedee. However James and John were clearly part of Jesus' inner circle, along with Peter and Andrew, participating in significant events reflecting Jesus' power, majesty and glory.
- Given their background and ambitious nature it is no surprise that several occasions occur where they upset Jesus and their fellow disciples by seeking high positions or in overstepping the mark regards what powers they had. Jesus chided and rebuked them, humorously putting them down by calling them the 'Sons of Thunder'.
- They wanted to sit on Jesus' right and left in his new kingdom glibly accepting the cup of sacrifice that was Jesus' without understanding the implications. This cup of suffering came true in the Acts reading where James became the first apostolic martyr, beheaded by sword on the orders of Herod.
- It seemed James had learnt to funnel his passions and ambitions into the service of Christ being at the forefront of the young church's development, hence Herod's attention. Peter was also targeted but miraculously gained release from prison avoiding a similar fate.
- James, also known as Iago, Diego, Jakob & Jacques became the patron saint of Spain and Portugal.

For Reflection:

- 1. Can you think of anyone with James' personal passion and ambition who still achieved well on behalf of the church?**
- 2. How did you react to their insensitive drive and ambition?**
- 3. Did it open up opportunities for you as a result to deploy your God-given discipleship gifts for the benefit of Christ's church and mission?**
- 4. Have you observed God at work shaping such leaders to work in ways God needs?**
- 5. How can we as Christ's church engage beneficially with such people?**