

"James - Secret Service" Pastor Jason West March 3, 2024

Luke 6:13-16 "And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor"

I. An Obscure Background

A. James, the _____

B. The Influence of a _____

1. The Brother of	?
(Mark 2:14)	

2. A Godly _____

a. At the Crucifixion

Mark 15:40-41 "There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem" (cf. Matthew 27:56).

b. Visiting the Empty Tomb to Honor Christ

Mark 16:1 "When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him" (cf. Matthew 28:1).

c. Proclaiming the Resurrection of Jesus

Luke 24:10-12 "Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened."

II. A QUIET Calling and Conversion

•Note: There is no such thing as a boring testimony!

Luke 18:28-30 "And Peter said, 'See, we have left our homes and followed you.' And he said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.'"

III. A Ministry in the _____

Matthew 10:1 "And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction."

2 Corinthians 12:12 "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works."

A. James Didn't Need the _____

B. God Rewards Us According to What He Has Gifted Us to Accomplish

1. God Has Entrusted Us All With Different

Matthew 25:14-15 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away."

a. The First Servant

Matthew 25:16 "He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more."

b. The Second Servant

Matthew 25:17 "So also he who had the two talents made two talents more"

c. The Third Servant

Matthew 25:18 "But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money."

2. God Will Hold Us ______ for How We Use His Blessings (Matthew 25:19-30)

3. God Sees in Secret

a. In Your (Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 21:3-4)

b. In Your ______(Matthew 6:5-6)

- **c. In Your**_____(Matthew 6:16-18)
- 4. God is Working through an Army of Disciples Who Are Working Behind the Scenes and Giving All the Credit to God! (Hebrews 11:33-38; Revelation 21:14)

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1. Familiarize Yourself With the Passage and the Gospel

a. Read Matthew 10:3; Mark 2:14, 3:18, 15:40; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:14

2. Introduction to the Passage (Feel free to use this as a reference guide as you discuss the passage)

Historical/Literary Context: James the Lesser is one of the disciples that is not often mentioned. In fact, he only appears in the passages that list the disciples. There has been much speculation regarding his origins and his connection to the name "Alphaeus." Some think he is a brother to Matthew/Levi the Tax Collector (Mark 2:14). Alphaeus was not a very common name in the first century in comparison to others, which could point to the likelihood of them having the same father.¹ Although, it is odd that they do not appear together in the lists if they were brothers. Others see him as a cousin to Jesus by observing an Aramaic word-root similarity between the names Alphaeus and Clopas (This would also mean that John 19:25 is referring to three women, not four. Scholars debate over this). In any case, James probably had some kind of kin relationship with either Matthew, Jesus, or both. I will leave it up to you! According to one tradition, James died at a very late age of martyrdom by beating and stoning from the Jews. John Foxe further records that he had his brains dashed out with a fullers club.² Others suggest he was first thrown from the pinnacle of a temple, then beaten and stoned. Another tradition claims he was crucified in Ostrakine in lower Eavpt.³ In summary he suffered the same fate as many early Christians, a torturous death for following Jesus.

3. Questions About the Passage

- a. Why do you think James the Lesser (Younger) is barely mentioned in the Bible?
- b. While James is not mentioned individually, he is mentioned in groups. Here are a few passages that include him in the group. What observations can you make about James (Mark 6:37; Mark 6:50; Mark 6:52; Luke 9:46)?
- c. Why do you think the Bible calls James, "the lesser" or "the younger"?

4. From the Passage to Life

- a. James may have been not very important, but why do you think God chose him and others who in the world's eyes are weak, foolish, despised, and not influential to advance His kingdom (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)?
- b. C.S. Lewis claims that true humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. Do you struggle with wanting to be noticed, especially around other people? In the opposite way, do you struggle to notice the humble and poor people around you?
- c. How does following Jesus help you see your life in a more humble light (Luke 9:23)? How does James' life point to Jesus and show how we ought to live our Christian lives?

¹ R.T. France, The Gospel of Mark, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 132. ² John Foxe, Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Hendrickson Christian Classics (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 4.

³ Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary.