

JESUS WAS ALREADY PREACHING, **REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL**, AS HE GATHERED HIS DISCIPLES. **ZEBEDEE'S SONS JUMPED AT THE OPPORTUNITY. JAMES AND JOHN LEFT THEIR FATHER AND FOLLOWED JESUS.**

JAMES WOULD BE THE FIRST APOSTLE MARTYRED. JOHN WROTE A GOSPEL, THREE LETTERS AND AN APOCALYPTIC BOOK. WE LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

JAMES AND JOHN HOOLED IT ALL OVER GALILEE AND JUDEA WITH JESUS. WE LOVE THAT THEY ASKED TO CALL DOWN FIRE ON SOME INHOSPITABLE SAMARITANS AND EARNED THE NICK NAME 'SONS OF THUNDER' FROM JESUS.

ZEBEDEE'S BOYS WERE AT THE TRANSFIGURATION AND THE FIRST COMMUNION. THEY SLEPT DURING CHRIST'S PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE AND WE KNOW JOHN WAS AT OUR LORD'S TRIAL AND AT THE CROSS.

THE BOYS WERE AT THE SHORE OF GALILEE WHEN THE RESURRECTED CHRIST ASKED IF THEY HAD SOME FISH FOR THE BREAKFAST HE WAS COOKING UP. THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE FOLLOWED JESUS UNTIL HE ASCENDED INTO THE CLOUDS AFTER COMMISSIONING THEM TO TEACH AND BAPTIZE ALL NATIONS.

ZEBEDEE'S WIFE ALSO FOLLOWED JESUS AROUND. SHE WANTED HER SONS TO SIT ON THE LEFT AND RIGHT OF CHRIST'S THRONE – WOW! SHE WAS, HOWEVER, A FINANCIAL SUPPORTER AND SHE WAS AT GOLGOTHA WHEN JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED AND SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO CELEBRATE EASTER.

BUT, WHERE'S ZEBEDEE? HIS SONS LEFT HIM IN THE BOAT MENDING NETS. MAYBE JESUS TOLD HIM TO STAY BEHIND. PERHAPS HE WASN'T HEALTHY ENOUGH TO TRAVEL. OR, HE MAY HAVE BEEN TOO AFRAID TO LEAVE HIS BUSINESS TO THE SERVANTS. ALL WE KNOW IS THAT HE STAYED IN THE BOAT.

ZEBEDEE HAD TO BE A GOOD DAD; HIS BOYS HAD STRONG FAITH. HE DIDN'T FORBID THEM OR HIS WIFE FROM FOLLOWING JESUS. ZEBEDEE HIMSELF, SEEMS A WEE BIT PASSIVE ABOUT THE JESUS THING.

IT ISN'T SINFUL TO MEND NETS. NETS HAVE TO BE MENDED IF YOU'RE GOING TO CATCH FISH. IT ISN'T UNETHICAL TO FISH FOR A LIVING. PEOPLE NEED FISH TO EAT. IT ISN'T WRONG TO HAVE A BOAT – FOR ANY REASON. THE ONLY ISSUE IS THAT ZEBEDEE STAYED BEHIND... THINK HOW MUCH HE LOST.

HE MISSED THE COMPANIONSHIP OF JESUS, ACTUALLY WALKING AND TALKING WITH GOD'S SON. THAT SEEMS A REALLY QUESTIONABLE DECISION. HE DIDN'T GET TO HEAR CHRIST'S SERMONS AND STORIES FROM HIS OWN LIPS.

HE MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT THEM, BUT HE COULD HAVE JOINED HIS SONS AND WIFE. HE COULD HAVE HEARD THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT 'LIVE AND IN PERSON'. HE COULD HAVE LISTENED TO THE PARABLES AND WATCHED THE DIFFERENT REACTIONS OF PEOPLE. HE WAS TOO BUSY MENDING NETS.

2 ZEBEDEE NEVER SAW JESUS DO A MIRACLE. IMAGINE FOLLOWING CHRIST AS HE WALKED ALONG A DESERT PATH RIGHT INTO A LEPER. THE LEPER WOULD CRY: **UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!** HE'D COVER HIS FACE WITH HIS HANDS EXPECTING FEAR AND REVULSION. INSTEAD, JESUS WENT RIGHT UP TO HIM AND TOUCHED HIM. THE DRY WHITE SKIN WOULD TURN BACK TO FLESH. ZEBEDEE MISSED IT.

WE EXPERIENCE IT BY FAITH; BUT WE LEAVE OUR TORN NETS BEHIND AND GO TO CHURCH TO SEE JESUS. HE TOUCHES OUR SPIRIT WITH HIS PIERCED HAND AND OUR SINFUL HEART IS RENEWED...AS THE FLESH OF AN EX-LEPER. ZEBEDEE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO SEE IT BY FAITH, BECAUSE HE STAYED IN THE BOAT.

HOW ABOUT BEING WITH MARY AND MARTHA FOUR DAYS AFTER THEIR BROTHER DIED! IMAGINE HEARING JESUS: **LAZARUS, COME FORTH...** AND SEEING THE GUY STUMBLE OUT OF THE TOMB! ...ZEBEDEE, WHERE ARE YOU?

WE LIKE TO SEE THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD; BUT OUR GREATEST NEED IS TO SEE CALVARY'S CROSS AND CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON THAT TREE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD. ZEBEDEE, *WERE YOU THERE WHEN THEY NAILED HIM TO THE TREE?* JOHN IS THERE. YOUR WIFE IS THERE. ARE YOU OFF FISHING?

ZEBEDEE WAS PROBABLY THERE ON THE CROSS WITH JESUS...THROUGH BAPTISM; BUT THAT DAY HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ON THE LAKE, FEARFUL AS THE WATERS OF GALILEE RAGED FROM AN EARTHQUAKE AND THE SKY WENT BLACK!

HE WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT THE SEA AND SKY WERE CREATION'S REACTION TO THE DEATH OF GOD'S SON. WHAT A TRAGEDY TO BE SO CLOSE AND YET, TO MISS THE MOMENT OF HIS OWN SALVATION.

ZEBEDEE FAILED TO SEE THE EMPTY TOMB. WHAT A GLORIOUS DAY THAT RESURRECTION MORN! WE WOULD SACRIFICE A LOT TO GO BACK IN TIME TO SEE CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD. WE PITY ZEBEDEE FOR MISSING THAT OPPORTUNITY. THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN MENDING NETS, EH!

THERE ARE MANY ZEBEDEES AROUND US. *MODERN ZEBEDEE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOUR WIFE AND KIDS ARE SAFE WITH CHRIST; WHERE ARE YOU?* SOME ARE FAITHLESS, BUT MANY ARE JUST BUSY AT WORK OR GONE FISHING.

TODAY'S ZEBEDEES CHEAT THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILY AND US! YET, OUR GRACIOUS SAVIOR STILL CALLS OUT: **FOLLOW ME.** WE GET TO HELP ZEBEDEES REALIZE WHAT THEY'RE MISSING.

IT'S NOT EASY CONFRONTING LAZY CHRISTIANS OR WORKAHOLICS OR THOSE WHO 'FIND GOD ON THE LAKE' RATHER THAN IN HIS HOUSE. JESUS GIVES PARDON AND COURAGE WHEN WE GATHER IN HIS NAME, EAT HIS MEAL AND LEAVE IN PEACE. ZEBEDEES DON'T, OR WON'T, GET IT.

BUT, WE CAN'T GIVE UP. IT'S BETTER TO BE A RELUCTANT JONAH AND SHARE GOD'S WORD THAN TO BE NO HELP AT ALL TO ZEBEDEES. NINEVAH REPENTED! PEOPLE CHANGE WITH THE SPIRIT'S HELP EVERY DAY.

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WE NEED TO BE LED BY JESUS SO WE ARE NOT CAUGHT UP IN THE WORLD'S NET. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND; REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.** AMEN

TABLE E
8-PRAYER
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