

Pt.3 - The Disciples - James

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Speaker: **James Bronner**

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James Bronner: As parents, we have to be careful of what we're demonstrating before our children.

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Automated Voice: And now for 8239, "The Disciples" Part 3 - James.

James Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because brother you need the word.

And we are continuing today in the series started by Pastor Nathaniel entitled "The Disciples" and pastor said that let me know this week that he wanted me to do Part 3 on The Disciple James for obvious reasons. And I guess he figured in his mind who better to teach on James than Pastor James to talk about another James.

So, I speak to you today from the subject of The Disciples Part 3, James. And we'll start with the foundational scriptures that God gave him for the series from Matthew Chapter 10, the New King James version, Verses 1 through 12 and reads, "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him."

"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag

for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.”

“Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. And when you go into a household, greet it.

First, let me make very clear that the disciple James that we’ll be talking about today is not the same James that wrote the book in the new testament entitled, “James.” The author of the Book of James was Jesus, his half brother who became a church leader after Jesus was crucified. The disciple James, we will be talking about today is the brother of the disciple John and it is sometimes referred to as James the greater to distinguish him from James, the son of Alphaeus who is referred to as James the lesser.

Now, the terms greater and lesser wasn’t talked about how greater or lesser of a man they were. This was referring to age order, so the greater being the older James and the lesser being the younger James. James and his brother John, they were the second set of brothers that Jesus called as disciples. And they made up two of three at the inner circle of Jesus close disciples with Peter, James and John.

So, I guess they would qualify that we kind of took from them as the original Brothers of the Word, if we could say. They were little before our time. And when studying James, the thing that stood out to me the most was two things: his zeal for following and living for God and also his zeal for dying for Christ. Just listen to the call of James in Matthew Chapter 4, Verse 21 and it says, “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.” 22 again says, “And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”

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James left his father’s business to follow Jesus without hesitation. He said immediately he followed him. He was called off of his father’s fishing boat and he left without hesitation. And this wasn’t a light thing to do and we can relate to this as

children of a father who started a business. We have a family business called Bronner Brothers and it's like if our father had trained us up in the business from five years old all the way up through school, and we were working alongside our father in the business in every area of the business. And he was expecting us to take over the business one day and following his footsteps saying, "Son, I build all of this for you to carry the business on through the generations." And imagine if we got right to the point of readiness and was working with our father, he put all of these years under training, as all of the inheritance of his blood, sweat and tears into this business.

And one day, man comes along and just calls us to follow him and we'd leave him on the spot. "Leave father who's put all of this time and energy. All of the sacrifice into us. All of this hope, leave to follow a man named Jesus that know little about." This was not a light thing for him to do and his brother. Just imagine in your life if tonight Jesus came to you in a vision and said that, "Tomorrow I want you to go in and quit your job." Think about it, if you're going to school and study for this job. You thrived through the years to get promotions for this job. You've done some brown nose and even some things you might not even proud of.

When you finally getting some plateaus where they ping you what you worth and what you wanted. And he come to you tonight on a vision and say, "I want you to leave the job and go in the full-time ministry." That's what these disciples will face with. Keep in mind that they didn't know how they were going to pay the bills. You might be saying, "I would need my bills paid. They didn't know how they were going to pay their bills. Jesus at the time, he didn't even have a house that was recorded." So, they were following the man that didn't have a house himself. What did they say about their security on the things that we are comfortable and providing our security for our day to day needs they had to walk away from? Follow a man that didn't have place to call his own.

James was willing to follow Jesus in life and death, and his zeal for Christ calls him to be the first of the 12 disciples to be martyred(ph). The only one who was deaf was actually recorded in the new testament and that's in Acts Chapter 12, starting at Verse 1 it says, "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed

James the brother of John with the sword.” This is the only one even though other historical books talk about how other disciples were killed. This is the only account that it actually gives of any of the 12 of their actual death and martyred to is James here in Acts 12.

The historians Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius report that after seeing the courage and unrelenting spirit of James, the executioner was so convinced of Christ resurrection that he was executed right along with James. Imagine the amount of zeal and conviction that had to be exuding through James’ eyes for the fella that was about to kill him with the sword for him to look at him and see, and say this thing that you about to die for. It must be real if you’re still holding up with this type of conviction even at the point of death that I’ve never met anybody that is this willing to leave their family, leave their mother, their father, their brothers because of something unseen.

And he convicted him. So, he said, “I’m going to believe.” And he turned and got killed right along with James. I’ll tell you, if I’ve ever seen it before, that was some evangelism at his highest. Jesus’ nickname James and John, the sons of thunder. So, I guess they were bold(ph). And you can see that in the account I just gave and you can also see it in Luke 9. I’ll read Verse 51 through 56 from the NIV version.

It says, “As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, ‘Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?’ But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village.”

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So you can see from this account why he called them the sons of thunder talked about having some faith and somebody having your back. These brothers exhibited both of those. When the people didn’t receive Jesus, they turn to him and said, “Lord, let us handle your light, wait here. We can handle here, you just

wait right here. They don't accept you. We'll show and let us just call down some fire and just devour." And he had to stop and said, "No, no, boys, I got it. Let's go on, let's keep moving. Leave them alone." That was some bonus.

They also came from a bold mother. The mother of James and John had the boldness to ask Jesus if her sons could sit next to him in heaven on his right hand and on his left hand in his kingdom and Jesus asked if they could bite the bitter cup that he was having to drink from and they say, "Yes Lord, we can handle it."

Sure enough, James was the first disciple to drink from that cup by being that first one killed as a martyr and that's why Jesus told him, "You know not what you ask." And that's a lesson for us. Sometimes we ask God for big things but we don't know all of the ramifications and the responsibilities that come with that thing. Sometimes when we single for so long, our hearts pray that "Lord send us a spouse. Lord, send me somebody to marry." Then we get with a knucklehead and after a while we go back and say, "What in the world was I praying for?"

So you have to be careful what you ask for. And it may have seemed very audacious for the mother of James and John to ask such a thing of Jesus but I learned something in my research for this message of something that helps explain her audacity that I didn't know already and I probably should have known it as a minister but I'll just be honest, I didn't know it.

So as you can say, I learned something today so I knew Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins but I didn't know that Jesus and his disciples James and John were cousins on their mother's side and this is what I found, two scriptures tied together here to paint the story. Matthew 27 Verses 55 and 56 and it says, "And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children."

Keep in mind now, James and John were Zebedee's children, Zebedee is the father so this is their mother that's there with the other Mary's at the foot of the cross. That's Matthew 27 Verses 55 and 56. So it's given you three women now, Mary the mother

of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses and also James and John's mother, Zebedee's children.

Cross reference that of with John Chapter 19 Verses 25 and it says, "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, (that was the mother of James and Joses also mentioned) and Mary Magdalene.

So John told you that his mother whose name was Salome was a sister of Mary. So James and John were cousins of Jesus and I didn't realize that. And most commentaries I looked it up and all the books I had and the majority of the commentaries and the majority of the biblical historians and scholars consider Jesus and his disciples James and John to be cousins and this explains why their mother had the audacity to ask them to sit on the left and right.

She was basically saying that you got to look out for family here. These are your cousins, they close with you on earth in the inner circle now but you know when you get be yonder, look out for family here now. I know these other disciples are cool, but these are your blood. Let us sit on your left and the right. So this is family. So this is why she did that and it explains that a little more.

It also explains why Jesus and John was so close and he calls John the disciple that he loved. This was his cousin so he knew him even before he called him to be a disciple. This was somebody that he grew up with. Some of the other disciples, he didn't know them for a long time before he called him but this was his cousin. So that made a big difference.

Imagine if you started a new job and you got to the job and found out your cousin worked in the same office. You're going to be closer with them normally than the other workers because this is somebody you already know and somebody you already got a rapport with. You've gone to the reunions together, we're family here. So there's going to be a connection that others don't have.

So when I found that out, it painted a different picture, it explained a lot of the things that I saw with James and John and his mother and why they were as they were.

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The other thing that it explained a little bit more is why when Jesus was on the cross, he turned to John and said, “Behold your mother” and his mother said, “Behold thy son.” And he was basically asking him to take care of his aunt, and to treat his aunt like his mother and not only was he the disciple that Jesus loved but it was almost like he was close to being the next of kin.

So a lot of these things connect together and they start making sense once you put it together that they were cousins and when I looked at James and John’s mother whose name again was Salome, I saw where they not only got their boldness from but I also saw where they got their diligent discipleship from and that’s why as parents, we have to be careful of what we’re demonstrating before our children. When you look at these disciples and then you look at momma, you see where it came from.

She was present at the foot of the cross doing the crucifixion even when the other disciples that called themselves as buddies were scared. Later, she went to Jesus’ tomb to anoint his body and she was with the first group of women that witnessed the resurrection even without his other disciples. Momma was there as a devout follower of Jesus. If Jesus had female disciples, James and John’s momma would have definitely been in the top three. It’s no accident that her two sons were in the top three inner circle as well momma was in the top three female disciples.

As Christians we’ll say that we’ll die for Jesus just like James did. But I ask you today Christians, will you live for him like James did? Will you live for him like James did? Would we truly sacrifice our lives for him if we won’t sacrifice rejection to go out and tell people about him? Would we truly sacrifice our life for him if we won’t sacrifice our time to commune with him? Would we truly sacrifice our life for him if we won’t sacrifice our money and tithes and offerings to support his ministry?

Being honest with ourselves, would we truly die and sacrifice ourselves if we won’t live for and sacrifice our talents and times and gifts unto him. And Christian persecution is not just an early church problem, it’s a big problem today in many areas of the world.

Actually, the last hundred years have seen the greatest number of Christians persecuted than any of the 100-year period in history. We've just been so insulated here in the west that we don't even know what's going on in Christianity and we can't feel the effects here that the Catholic church reports that over 100,000 Christians are violently killed every year because of some relation to their faith mostly in Muslim-dominated nations.

In Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 40s, there were 5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses that were taken into concentration camps and they called these 5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses voluntary prisoners and they called them that because when they brought them in, the Nazis told them that we're going to put you in these cages and we're not going to give you much to eat and we're going to work you day and night but they say that any point in this process if you would deny your faith, you're free to leave and go on with your life.

And there was very few of them that denied their faith. They stayed there and I looked at some of the pictures of their bones, their ribs emaciating on them and then having to go out and work on a fence without just getting the bare minimal of food and drink but yet they held fast onto their faith and midst of all of that persecution, and we don't have this level of persecution in the west today but other Christians have gone through it.

Even last year, the Washington Times, they reported on a group of Islamic gunmen that were in a Kenyan Mall and they came in this mall and they began to take hostages and out of this situation they killed or injured 250 Christians and they lined them up and they would ask them, "Who do you believe the Messiah is, Jesus or Mohammad?"

Imagine if you were in this situation and this just happened last year, this was a real account, this is not a fictional story or something that happened thousands of years ago and it was 250 of them. Imagine if you were in the middle and they turned to the person on your left and said, "Who do you declare the Messiah is, Jesus or Mohammad?" And if that person on your left answered Jesus, they took the gun and put it to the temple and pulled the trigger and you saw them collapse out on the floor.

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Then they turn to the person on your right and said, “Who do you declare the Messiah is, Jesus or Mohammad? And they said, “Mohammad.” And they said, “Good answer, get up and go home and be on your way.” Then they turned to you in the middle and said, “I’m going to ask you the same question. Who do you believe and declare that the Messiah is Jesus or Mohammad?” Think about it for a minute and be honest with yourself. What would you do? This is a real situation, as in real news and real current times. How much do you really believe what you say you believe?

Let that sink in for a minute. That’s a real question that we have to face. And even though we don’t have this level of persecution in the west today, we don’t know what’s coming upon this land. But even right now Satan has powerful weapons on both end of the spectrum.

In the East, he threatens to kill them with violence, but in the west, he kills us spiritually through comfort. You see, because we’re living in the promise land, we’ve gotten too comfortable to pray fervently. Nobody has got a gun to our head but he’s testified us to sleep with the Internet and with cozy homes and television shows and movies and comfortable jobs.

We’ve gotten too comfortable to go out and witness and to those who have never been properly introduced to Christ. We’ve gotten too comfortable to study our Bibles like we should and meditate on his word day and night as the word tells us to do. We’ve gotten so comfortable that we put more trust and money than we do God. Even though the very money that we trust has written on it, telling you to trust in God. And we will all be faced with situations like this in one form or another.

I know multiple pastors today that they were working on good high-paying jobs. They said that they got a call from up above and some of them even had businesses and God told them to drop it and go into ministry fulltime. They were uneasy about how they were going to make it. They had to step out on faith and many of them struggle for years trying to get their footing.

So you never know what he'll ask to do, how your trust will be tested and you really don't know what you're made of, you really don't know what kind of faith you have, what kind of trust you have until it's truly tested. Even in school, you really don't know how smart you are till the test comes.

See, everybody in class thinks they're smart till they get those grades back. So, we don't know in life what your faith and trust level is until you're tested and I can tell you, no matter how young, no matter how old you are, no matter where you're from, no matter what your race, sooner or later, it's going to be put to the test. You're going to be put to the test. Your faith, your trust and belief in it.

If you're a follower of Christ, there's going to be situations where you'll have to ask yourself, am I going to follow him or do what I want to do. And as a modern-day brother of the word, I tell you today as I close to go out and take this boldness of James, the disciple. Take the boldness that you had in his life and his speed of following Christ without asking questions, leaving his father and his business behind, not worrying about how he was going to make it but he saw the prize and he saw a man that represented all eternity that the Messiah had come and he left everything that he knew to follow this one man.

Take this boldness and this trust that which we (00:23:41) faced with death, he looked the executioner and said, "Do you what you got to do but I believe what I believe. Jesus is Lord." So as I leave you today television audience, ask yourself the question, when asked with a gun to your head, what will your answer be, who is the Messiah, Jesus or another?

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