

James and John were called sons of thunder by Jesus. Mk. 3:17. They even wanted to take revenge upon Samaritans who rejected Jesus. (Matt. 10:9-15; Luke 9:51-56) They were brothers in the fishing business who were known for their hot tempers. But Jesus radically changed their lives. In his apostles and in our lives, Jesus sets about changing us into His image. He loves us too much to allow us to continue in sinful ways.

1. Leaving all to follow Jesus.

When James and John first heard of Jesus, they alternated between fishing in their father Zebedee's business and part time travel with the Lord. During this time, they witnessed Jesus turn water into wine and the salvation of the Samaritan woman at the well. Then came Jesus' call to follow him full time. Matthew 4:18-22

We don't know what the fathers of these four men, Peter, Andrew, James and John but we can say that at least initially they were probably not happy about it. But they left everything.

Mark 10:23-30 Jesus promises a great reward for those who are willing to place Him first in their lives even at the cost of giving up what is most valuable to them in this life.

Are there situations where you lost a relationship because you had to choose between serving the LORD and pleasing that friend or loved one?

2. The Inner Three.

Peter, James, and John were chosen by Jesus to see and experience things that the others were not permitted to see or experience. James saw Jairus' daughter raised to life (Mark 5:34-43), James witnessed Jesus' transfiguration. (Matthew 17:1-9); James along with the other were also closer to Jesus as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Matt. 26:36-46)

Why did Jesus allow these three and not the others witness these powerful events? That's ultimately in the mind of God. But what we can say is that Jesus thought it necessary for their service to Him in the future that they see these things.

When what is perceived as preferential treatment occurs, human beings will become jealous of one another or get an inflated view of themselves. But remember Luke 12:48b *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*

Among the disciple's pride and jealousy did occur. James and John and their mom came to Jesus asking for preferential treatment. It's one thing to receive it, it's another thing altogether to ask for it. SEE (Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45).

3. James' Early Martyrdom. Acts 12:1-3

After Jesus' resurrection James was one of the seven who went fishing., He was among the apostles in the upper room, was present at Pentecost and with the twelve mentioned as a group.

Tradition states that James made a voyage covering the entire Mediterranean, landing in Spain for a lengthy residence, where he founded many churches. This accounts for his selection as the Patron Saint of Spain. James was the 2 recorded martyr of the Church after the deacon Stephen, and the 1st of the apostles to be martyred for His testimony of Christ.