

# Twelve Ordinary Men: James

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] I want to now read the Word of God as we find it in the Gospel according to Mark, Mark chapter 10. Mark chapter 10, it's on page 1020 if you're using the Pew Bible.
- I forgot to mention to you before I started, Bill Harris, as you know, you know Bill, he's in hospital, he's in Gosport, got that right, Gosport, yeah, at the moment, which is where his son lives.
- And so he's in hospital, he has COVID, pneumonia, and a urine infection. He's been in hospital for a week, I only found out today. But he's on the mend, so please just remember Bill.
- As you know, Bill has been through a lot, so please remember him. His sister has been visiting back and forth over the past week to where Bill is. And so please remember him, and the sister is called Jill.
- So there's Bill and there's Jill, which is very confusing when you're talking about the two of them. So please remember Bill in your prayers, if you can. So we're reading Mark chapter 10, page 1020.
- [ 1 : 1 9 ] Boys and girls, we have three questions for you. Okay. I know you're delighted about that. Three questions. Question one.
- We're looking at James this evening. Jesus gave James and John the name Boanerges, the nickname Boanerges. What does Boanerges mean?
- Okay. What does Boanerges mean? Question two. Where was the high point in James's life? Where was the high point in James's life?
- And question three. This is a low point in James's life. How did James die? Okay. How did James die? So Jesus gave James and John the nickname Boanerges.
- What does Boanerges mean? Question two. Where was the high point in James's life? And question three. How did James die? So we're going to read the word of God.
- [ 2 : 2 2 ] Mark chapter 10. We're picking up our reading at verse 32. Let us hear the word of God. And they, that is Jesus and the disciples, they were on the road going up to Jerusalem.
- And Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed. And those followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him.
- Saying, see, we're going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes. And they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.
- And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days, he will rise. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.
- And Jesus said to them, what do you want me to do for you? And they said to him, grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory. Jesus said to them, you do not know what you're asking.

[ 3 : 28 ] Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? And they said to him, we are able. And Jesus said to them, the cup that I drink, you will drink.

And with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. And they came to Jericho, and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside.

[ 4 : 40 ] And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent.

But he cried out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, saying to him, Take heart, get up, he's calling you.

And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight.

And Jesus said to him, Go your way. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

And so on, may the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word. We're going to sing again, this time in Psalm 93.

[ 5 : 42 ] Psalm 93. It's in the Scottish Psalter, page 354. Did I put sing Psalms?

Did I say sing Psalms to you? I did not. Did I? Okay, Kenny John, we shall do sing Psalms then. Sing Psalms, Psalm 93.

He should have sing Psalms. Is the last one sing Psalms too? Okay. Good somebody's keeping me right. Good. Is that okay, Ivan?

Good. Everybody's happy. Psalm 93 in the Sing Psalms version, page 123. We're singing from the beginning.

The Lord is king, his throne endures, majestic in his height. The Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength and might. The world is founded firm and sure.

[ 6 : 48 ] Removed it cannot be. Your throne is strong and you are God from all eternity. We'll sing the whole Psalm to God's praise. The Lord is king, his throne endures, majestic in his height.

The Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength and might. The Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength and might.

The world is on the Lord. The world is firm and sure. The world is firm and sure. The world is firm and sure. Reboot it cannot be.

The world is strong and you are God from all eternity. And you are God from all eternity.

The seas, O Lord, have lifted up, they lifted up their voice.

[ 8 : 29 ] The seas have lifted up their ways, have made a mighty noise.

The Lord enthroned on highest strong, more powerful is here.

And thunder of the ocean's waves, are breakers of the sea.  
Your royal statues, Lord, stand firm. Unchanging is your word.  
And holiness, abhornt your house for endless days, O Lord.

[ 10 : 00 ] Amen.

And we're reading at verse 13, where we have that list of learners, these disciples. Luke 6 and verse 13.

And when day came, Jesus called his disciples and chose from them 12 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 the Zealot. And Judas Iscariot who became a traitor. You know, every time I read, or we read this list of 12 disciples, I'm reminded of what we said, first of all, that these men weren't chosen, called, and commissioned by Jesus.

[ 11 : 32 ] Because they were not because they were the best. Or because they were the best or the brightest, the smartest or the sharpest, the clearest, or even the cleverest. And it wasn't because they were the most educated, the most equipped, the most eloquent, the most encouraging, or even the most engaging.

Rather, these disciples of Jesus, they were 12 ordinary, everyday, run-of-the-mill men. Men who had been chosen, called, and commissioned to turn the world upside down.

And we are living, living and breathing examples of the mission that Jesus gave to them. And that's why it's good for us to learn from their experience and their example as disciples.

Because they remind us and reassure us that we're just like them. We're just like these men. We might not think we are. We might not feel we are.

But when we look at them, we realize that we're just like them. In fact, it's their character, conduct, and conversations when we look at them in the Gospels. That's what makes them so real and so relevant to us.

[ 12 : 40 ] Even all their faults and their failings, their tears and their triumphs, their doubts, and even their denials. It's all helpful. Because they assert and affirm to us that every disciple of Jesus is a learner.

Every disciple of Jesus is a learner. As you know, that's what the word disciple means. It means learner. And this evening we're learning from the experience and the example of the third disciple in this list of learners.

We're learning from James. And I want us to think about James under three headings. James is personality. James is points. And James is persecution.

James is personality, points, and persecution. James is personality, points, and persecution. So first of all, James is personality. James is personality.

Whenever James is mentioned in the Gospels, as you know, he's always mentioned alongside his younger and probably more well-known brother. And we know he was younger because, well, James is mentioned first.

[ 13 : 47 ] He's the eldest, and John is then mentioned. And yet James and John are always together. They're always mentioned together in the Gospels. And when they're mentioned together, we're told that they're always together because they worked together.

They came to faith in Jesus together. They followed Jesus together. They learned as disciples together. They questioned Jesus together. They witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus together.

They heard Jesus pray in the Garden of Gethsemane together. They served Jesus in the kingdom of God together. They were always together. James and John were this inseparable pairing because they were always together.

But, you know, this is the second set of brothers within this list of 12 ordinary men. We've already met two brothers. We're told there that the first of the apostles was Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew, his brother.

So we've already met two brothers, Peter and Andrew. And as we saw, they were different in many ways. And yet for all their differences, they worked well together as brothers. But it seems that the family of James and John, they were much more prominent.

[15:02] They were more of a prestigious and powerful family than the family of Peter and Andrew. And this is highlighted and even hinted to us by the fact that James and John are often referred to in the Gospels as the sons of Zebedee.

Whenever you read about James and John, the first thing we're told about them is that they're the sons of Zebedee. We saw that in Mark chapter 10. They were James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

And that's because it's said that Zebedee was a man of prominence. He was a man of prestige. He was a man of power. Some even claim that Zebedee was a Levite.

He was a close relative to the high priest's family. Which would actually explain, when you read in some parts of the Gospel, that why John was known to the high priest, because he was distantly related to him.

It would also explain how Peter gained access to the high priest's courtyard on the night of Jesus' arrest, because there was this family connection.

[16:04] Undoubtedly, Zebedee was this man of wealth. He was a man of wealth that not only stemmed from his family heritage, but also because he had this successful fishing business.

I don't know what the fishing business was called, but I'd like to think it was called Zebedee and Sons Limited. So Zebedee and Sons Limited was said to be this large business that employed a number of other hired servants who were fishermen.

Presumably, that's who Peter and Andrew worked for, alongside Zebedee's sons, James and John. So Peter, Andrew, James and John, they all worked together.

They were work colleagues. They were friends. So Peter and Andrew knew James and John very well. And that it was when they were working on the sea, beside the shore of the Sea of Galilee, mending their nets after a night's fishing.

You read it in the Gospels that Jesus passes by. Jesus passes by Peter, Andrew, James and John, and he says to them those wonderful words, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

[17:12] Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And we're told that immediately they left their nets and followed him. Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

You know, I don't think I'll ever forget what was said one night in the manse about Christianity, at Christianity Explored. We were considering Jesus' call to Peter, Andrew, James and John, where Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

And in Mark's Gospel, we're told that when Jesus called the disciples, immediately they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed Jesus.

And the person who spoke next at Christianity Explored will remain nameless. But I'll never forget her lovely Glaswegian accent, which might give it away, when she asked the question, what happened to Zebedee?

Why was he left behind? What happened to Zebedee? And you know, it got me thinking. I was thinking about this this week. Why was Zebedee left behind?

[ 18 : 19 ] Why was it when Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James and John, they immediately followed Jesus? They left their nets, they followed Jesus, but they left behind Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants.

Why was Zebedee left behind? Was it because his wealth was more important than Jesus? Or was it because his work, the business, the fishing business, was more important than Jesus?

Or was it because his religious witness as a Jew and his prestige and his power and his prominence among the people of his day, was that more important than Jesus?

Why was Zebedee left behind? What was it that made Zebedee stay in the boat when he called the disciples? Do you know, one thing we can say about Zebedee is that he was an older, more mature man with lots of life experience, like some of the gentlemen in our congregation.

And yet Zebedee was left behind not because he didn't hear the call of the gospel. He heard the same words that all the other disciples heard. Zebedee was left behind not because he didn't hear the call of the gospel.

[ 19 : 34 ] Zebedee was left behind because he didn't respond to the call of the gospel. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

Do you know, my unconverted friend here or at home this evening, I want to say to you, don't be like Zebedee. Don't be like Zebedee.

Don't be left behind. Don't ignore the call of the gospel. Don't ever think that your wealth or your work or your religious witness is more important than Jesus because you must respond.

This is the thing about the gospel. You must respond to the call of the gospel where Jesus says, follow me. Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

And you know, that day on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, James followed Jesus for the very first time. James followed Jesus for the first time.

[ 20 : 42 ] But you know, it's interesting, this wasn't the only James to follow Jesus because as you can see from our list of learners, there are two Jameses. Two Jameses among this list of 12 ordinary men.

There was James, the elder brother of John, whom we're looking at this evening. And there was also later in the list, we see that there was James, the son of Alphaeus, who was also the brother of the apostle Matthew, who was also a son of Alphaeus.

We'll come to that in time. But when you read through the gospels, we see that there's lots of Jameses. Jesus also had a brother called James. In fact, Jesus had four brothers.

There was James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, and he had a number of sisters. And it was James, the brother of Jesus. He was the James who wrote the New Testament letter of James, emphasizing that faith without works is dead.

Evidently, James was and still is a very popular name. We have a James with us here this evening. In fact, James is one of the top 10 boys' names of all time.

[ 21 : 48 ] And it's a royal name. It's a royal name with seven of our monarchs crowned with the name James, one of which had a Bible version named after him in 1611.

Some of you might be holding the authorized version, which is the King James version. And of course, the King James at the time in 1611 was King James, the first of England and the sixth of Scotland.

But the name James, it means the one who follows. The one who follows. Which, of course, is a very apt name for the Apostle James because he was a follower of Jesus.

So we all, are we all James? Are we all followers of Jesus? And yet, like Jesus did with Simon, we see there Simon whom he named Peter.

He nicknamed him Peter. Jesus also gave the sons of Zebedee a nickname. He called them Boanerges. Boanerges, which means boys and girls, it means sons of thunder.

[ 22 : 56 ] Boanerges means sons of thunder. And it's certainly not the easiest nickname to give someone, Boanerges. But it certainly defined and describes the personalities of these two brothers, James and John.

They were the sons of thunder. In this commentary on the 12 disciples, John MacArthur, he writes, he says, if there's a key word that applies to the life of the Apostle James, it's the word passion.

James was zealous, he says. James was thunderous. James was passionate. James was fervent. James had this fiery disposition. And John MacArthur writes, he says, while Andrew was quietly bringing people to Jesus, James was wishing he could call down fire from heaven to destroy whole villages of people who rejected Jesus.

There's a huge contrast. And you see that in Luke chapter 9. But you know, James lived up to his nickname because he really was a son of thunder. He really was a son of thunder.

He had this youthful zeal. He had this fire in his belly. He had this fervency in his character. He was passionate for the Lord and he was passionate for the lost.

[ 24 : 09 ] He was passionate for the Lord and he was passionate for the lost. And although it's good to be like Andrew, it's always good to be an Andrew, quietly bringing people to Jesus, quietly inviting them to church, quietly encouraging them to come to faith in Jesus, quietly getting alongside people.

Although it's good to be like Andrew, sometimes I think we need to be more like James, where we need to be less passive and more passionate. Less passive and more passionate for the Lord and passionate for the lost.

Do you know, we need to have this fire in our belly and a fervency in our heart where we need to have a zeal for the Lord and a zeal for the lost, where we are willing and wanting to step out of our comfort zone, which is not easy.

But it's to go through the pain barrier and speak to people or even to put ourselves forward in service to the Lord. We need to be less passive and more passionate, more passionate for the Lord and passionate for the lost.

And you know, that was James' personality. He was Boanerges. He was a son of thunder. He was passionate for the Lord and he was passionate for the lost.

[ 25 : 29 ] But then secondly, we see James' points. So James' personality and James' points. James' points. When Paul wrote about Peter, James and John in his letter to the Galatians, he described them as pillars of the New Testament church.

He said that they were foundational to the spread and the start of the gospel. And that's because Peter, James and John, they were part of what was often termed as this inner circle with Jesus.

And they were in this inner circle, not that they were more important than the other disciples of Jesus, but in order to effectively establish the church of Jesus Christ, Jesus had chosen them so that they would have specific roles and responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities for Peter, James and John. And we see that in the New Testament church. And as part of this inner circle, Peter, James and John, they were given these special privileges in which they encountered and they experienced and sometimes they even enjoyed all these special privileges where they were allowed to witness the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

They were given special privileges to witness the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. And you know, in my mind, there are three points in Jesus's ministry that James had the privilege of witnessing the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 27 : 01 ] I've called these points, James's points, the healing point, the high point, and the horror point. The healing point, the high point, and the horror point. The healing point was when Jairus, the synagogue ruler, came to Jesus, begging him.

You remember there in Mark chapter 5, Jairus is there begging Jesus to heal his dying daughter. But of course, there's a delay in reaching the 12-year-old girl on her deathbed because there's this unclean woman who has stopped Jesus on the road because she has an issue of blood which she's had for the past 12 years.

And although the disciples have this great privilege of witnessing Jesus heal the woman with the issue of blood, there are many who doubted in that moment that Jesus could do anything for Jairus' daughter because that delay with the woman had brought death to the girl.

And many of them even said to Jairus, they said to Jairus, your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any longer? Your daughter is dead. Why trouble him any further?

And you know, for any father to hear those words, they're devastating words. But you remember in Mark chapter 5, Jesus sent to Jairus those words that directly spoke into the devastation of death.

[ 28 : 23 ] Do not fear. Only believe. Do not fear. Only believe. And you remember with that, there was all these people wailing and crying outside Jairus' house.

Jesus puts them all outside. He puts everyone inside the house, outside, except the inner circle, Peter, James, and John. And as they watched and witnessed the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, they saw it when Jesus raises Jairus' daughter back to life.

It's one of my favorite passages in the New Testament, where Jesus stands over this 12-year-old girl and he says to her, Talitha humi.

You know, I'd love to have heard Jesus say those words. Talitha humi. which means, little girl, I say to you, it's time to get up.

It's time to get up. And at that point, at that healing point, James watched and witnessed the power of the resurrection in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 29 : 33 ] He saw the glory of God in the person of Jesus. So that's the first point, the healing point. James' second point, after the healing point, was a high point.

So boys and girls, you're listening. The high point was where Peter, James, and John were once again part of this inner circle and they were taken up to a high mountain.

They were taken up to a high mountain so that Jesus could give them a glimpse of his glory. Because it was there on the Mount of Transfiguration that Jesus revealed the radiance of his glory to the disciples.

And you know, the Mount of Transfiguration, it really was the high point. It really was a high point in James' life. It was a high point in James' experience because he saw Moses.

He saw Elijah. And he saw them both talking with Jesus. He saw the law, as we often say, the law in Moses and the prophets in Elijah.

[ 30 : 31 ] He saw the law and the prophets being revealed and radiated in the gospel of Jesus Christ. And it really was a high point in James' experience. But it was the high point for all those who were part of the inner circle too.

Peter, James, and John were there. And you remember that Peter said to Jesus, you just love what Peter says, Lord, it's good for us to be here.

Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. In other words, Lord, let's not go back down there. Let's not go back down there.

Let's stay here and stay on this high point, basking in the beauty of your glory. Lord, let's stay here. We don't want to go back down there anymore.

But then you remember there was this voice that came from heaven which said about Jesus, this is my beloved son. Listen to him. This is my beloved son.

[ 31 : 32 ] Listen to him. And what Peter, James, and John were going to listen to was what took place at the horror point. The horror point. So there's the healing point with Jairus' daughter, the high point on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the horror point.

The horror point wasn't on the top of a mountain, but at the bottom of a garden. It was at the bottom of a garden. It was in the garden of Gethsemane, with the shadow of Calvary looming before Jesus.

And you know, that was the last time that Jesus took this inner circle of Peter, James, and John. He took them with him. And he took them to a place of prayer.

Jesus had often taught his disciples the importance of prayer. But he took Peter, James, and John to this place of prayer. And he said, watch with me one hour. But you know, for the first time the disciples saw that Jesus was distressed.

He was troubled. He said to them, my soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Watch and pray.

[ 32 : 42 ] And we read that going a little further in the garden, Jesus fell on the ground and prayed. And what did he pray? Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless. And you know, I think we should always stop at the nevertheless. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.

And Luke tells us in his gospel that as Jesus earnestly prayed to his father, he was in so much agony and anguish about the cross that was before him. He sweated great drops of blood.

We're told that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling onto the ground. And yet the thing is, James is there watching.

He's witnessing. And what's he watching and witnessing but the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. James was watching and witnessing the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 33 : 43 ] And you know, James' encounters and James' experiences of these three points, the healing point with Jairus' daughter, the high point in the Mount of Transfiguration, and the horror point in the Garden of Gethsemane.

All these points were preparation for the heaven point. The healing point, the high point, and the horror point was all preparation for the heaven point.

But the heaven point, it came through James' persecution, which is what we see lastly. James' persecution. So we see James' personality, he was a son of thunder.

James' points, there was the healing, the high, and the horror point. But then James' persecution, which was the heaven point. James' persecution.

As we said earlier, whenever James is mentioned in the Gospels, James is always mentioned alongside his younger and more well-known brother, John.

[ 34 : 47 ] And that's because James and John, they were always together. They were this inseparable pairing. But the only time that James is mentioned in the New Testament on his own, without John, is when he's facing death.



The only time James is mentioned in the Bible on his own, without John, is when he's facing death. And you know, it reminded me of the stark and solemn reality that we might have this inseparable pairing in life.

We might have an inseparable pairing with someone in our home and in our family, someone in life, whether it's a husband or a wife or a friend or a father or a daughter, we might have this inseparable pairing, but when it comes, like it was for James and John, when it comes to death, we all have to face death.

Death on our own. And when we face the last enemy, you know, we often say, well, we can't take anyone with us. We can't take our spouse or our siblings.

We can't take our family or our friends. We can't take our elders or our minister. Not that you'd want to take your minister with you. But you know, we have to face death on our own. But of course, for the Christian, that's not strictly true.

[ 36 : 08 ] And it certainly wasn't true for James. For the Christian and for every disciple of Jesus who has claimed and confessed that the Lord is my shepherd, we have the affirmation, we have the assurance that even if we go through the valley of the shadow of death, we will not fear because the shepherd promises to us that he will never leave us, he will never forsake us, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God.

And that's the hope and confidence James had as he faced persecution and death. Because we're told in Acts chapter 12, we have recorded for us in Acts chapter 12 the opening verses of the chapter.

We're told that about that time, Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. So in AD 44, about a decade after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, it was Herod Agrippa who was the governor of Judea.

And in order to mark his territory and make a name for himself, Herod Agrippa's first move was to remove James' head.

[ 37 : 42 ] Herod Agrippa's first move was to remove James' head. So boys and girls, how did James die? He was beheaded. But if you remember, James' persecution, it was prophesied by Jesus.

James' persecution was prophesied by Jesus because we read earlier there in Mark chapter 10 that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, they came up to Jesus and they said to Jesus very boldly, very brazenly, they said to Jesus, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.

And you look and you read it and you think, really, are you asking that question? But Jesus graciously said to the sons of thunder, what do you want me to do for you? What do you want me to do for you?

And I don't know if you notice in the passage, but read it again when you go home. Jesus asked Bartimaeus at the end of the chapter the same question he asked James and John.

What do you want me to do for you? It's a great question that Jesus asks all of us. What do you want me to do for you? And yet the brothers here, they asked for majesty, while Bartimaeus, he asked for mercy.

[ 38 : 54 ] The brothers asked for status, Bartimaeus, you remember, he just wanted to see. The brothers sought recognition, but Bartimaeus sought the rabbi, saying, Lord, let me recover my sight.

What do you want me to do for you? Asks Jesus. And James and John, they boldly and brazenly say to Jesus, grant us to sit, one at your right and one at your left, in your glory.

Jesus says to them, you don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? And these inseparable brothers insisted.

We're able. We're able. And it was then that Jesus prophesied about James' persecution. He said, the cup that I drink, you will drink.

And the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

[ 40 : 05 ] And you know, the irony of James' persecution is that it was James and John, they argued about who would be the greatest apostle and who would have first place among the twelve apostles.

They wanted to be first. And yet the only time James did have first place among the apostles was when he was the first apostle to be martyred.

The only time James had first place among the apostles was when he was the first apostle who was martyred. But he was martyred because he was faithful and he followed Jesus.

Faithful unto death. And so we see James' persecution. James' personality, James' points, and James' persecution. But I want us to conclude this evening with the words of John MacArthur.

He's written a brilliant commentary on the disciples. And this is what he wrote in his commentary about James. He said, If I had to choose on the one hand between a man of burning, flaming, passionate enthusiasm with a potential for failure or a cold compromiser on the other hand, I'll always take the man with passion every time.

[ 41 : 26 ] Such zeal must always be harnessed and tempered with love. But if it is surrendered to the control of the Holy Spirit and blended with patience and long-suffering, such zeal is a marvelous instrument in the hands of God, the life of James offers clear proof of that, a proof that we should all adopt and apply in our lives.

So we are to be passionate for the Lord and passionate for the lost, just like James was. James' personality, James' points, James' persecution he was one of 12 men, chosen, called, and commissioned to serve our Savior, Jesus Christ, and he did it passionately.

So let's be like James, passionate for the Lord and passionate for the lost. But may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for the example and the experience of these disciples of these disciples, where we can learn from their example and we can glean from their experience and realize that we are walking in the footsteps of them, that we are living in this same world with the same struggles of sin and sickness and sorrow.

And yet, Lord, we give thanks for Thy Word that is so relevant and so real to us. Speak to us, we pray. Guide us, we ask. Enable us, Lord, we pray that we would not be cold compromisers as we read, but we would be passionate for the Lord and passionate for the lost.

O Lord, give to us a heart for those in our community, those in our homes, those in our families. And even as we go into a new week, that we would be willing to speak a word in season, that we would be saying like Isaiah prayed, speak, Lord, and Lord, here I am, send me.

[ 43 : 27 ] Lord, that we would be used for Thy glory and for the furtherance of Thy kingdom. Bless us together, then we pray. Bless our fellowship this evening as we meet together, whether here or at home, that everything we do would be to Thy glory.

Cleanse us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake. Amen. Now we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. We're singing in Psalm 77.

Psalm 77, it's in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 77, it's on page 101 in the Blue Psalm book.

And we're going to sing from the second half of verse 17, where it begins, the thunder rolled. As I mentioned earlier, all of our psalms this evening, they focus upon the theme of thunder because we're looking at the sons of thunder, which gives you a clue, boys and girls, as to your questions.

So question one, Jesus gave James and John the name, or the nickname, Boanerges. what does Boanerges mean?

[ 44 : 52 ] Sons of thunder. Yep. Sons of thunder. So Boanerges, sons of thunder. Where was the high point in James' life? Yep.

The Mount of Transfiguration. So the healing point, the healing of Jairus' daughter, the high point, Mount of Transfiguration, and the horror point, which was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And then there was the heaven point. Because when James died, he went straight to heaven. So how did James die? He was killed with a sword.

Yep. So he was beheaded. Wasn't he? So that's how James died. That's how James went to heaven. He loved Jesus, and he was faithful unto death.

So well done for answering the questions. So we're singing Psalm 77. That's 17, the second half of verse 17. In the Sing Sam's version, the thunder rolled across the skies as lightning bolts were hurled.

[ 45 : 52 ] Your thunder in the wind was heard. Your lightning lit the world. The whole earth trembled then and quaked. Your path was through the sea. Your way through mighty waters led.

Your footprints none could see. Your people like a flock of sheep. You're guided every day by Moses' and Aaron's hand.

You led them on the way. These verses in conclusion of Psalm 77. To God's praise. The thunder rolled across the skies As lightning bolts were hurled.

Your thunder in the wind was heard.

Your lightning lit the world. The whole earth trembled then and quaked.

[ 47 : 12 ] Your path was through the sea. Your way through mighty waters led.

Your footprints none could see. Your people like a flock of sheep.

You guided every day By Moses' hand.

By Aaron's hand. You led them on the way.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Now and forevermore.

[ 48 : 30 ] Amen.