

Easter - Meeting Jesus

James and John

Foundation

Bible passage : Mark 10.32-40

James and John were brothers and fishermen, not just disciples but part of the 12, and, along with Peter were present with Jesus at some key moments, such the transfiguration and when He went aside to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane. They also became leaders in the early church. Yet as we have seen in previous units the Bible seems to spotlight the failings of the disciples, including James and John. Jesus gave them a nickname, probably in Aramaic, which in Latin letters is *boanerges* and means “sons of thunder”. It suggests they were strong minded and fiery in their opinions.

In Mark 10 they were travelling with Jesus to Jerusalem and He had already spoken twice about the betrayal, suffering and death that awaited Him at the end of the road. The trouble was that the disciples believed Jesus was the Messiah (the Christ), which He was, but also that He was going to Jerusalem to establish His kingdom.

On the road, when Jesus spoke about His death the words just seem to float over James and John, and instead they ask whether, when He had “come into His kingdom” they might sit one on His left and one on His right.

“You do not know what you ask.”

Because we know what did lie ahead this seems an incredibly insensitive thing to ask when Jesus was expecting to suffer and die. Yet, in their



Jesus named the brothers “sons of thunder”

thinking it was obviously a reasonable question. First, because, along with Peter, they did have that special place among the disciples. Then, secondly, because they were still thinking that as Christ Jesus was about to become King. In a way the question shows the strength of their faith, that He was the Messiah and was going to triumph. But they were focussed on their own ideas about Jesus, rather than on what Jesus said about Himself (that he came to suffer and die) their faith was misguided. The Bible tells us what happened, their faith was misguided. The same thing still happens when people put their own understanding before what the Bible says.

As it was, James and John did finally get it right, though only after Jesus had died and risen and explained once more how it all happened to fulfil what God had said in the Old Testament (Lk 24.27). This was what Jesus talked about in Mark 10.39-40. Then, they were both ready to suffer for Christ rather than seek their own glory. For James the cup and baptism would mean dying for his faith, about 10 years later, the first of the 12 to do so. For John it would mean a long life (more than 60 years) of service and adversity, until was the last of the 12 to die.



James and John believed in Jesus, but for a long time wrong in some of what they believed, and selfish in their interests.