

## THE BIG IDEA: WHO we have in common is more powerful than WHAT we don't.

### The Take-Off

Sometimes we follow God in a direction and he changes things - that's exactly what happened for me this week I had a direction that I thought we were going and then God took it somewhere unexpected

You know that this Party of Twelve series is all about how **who we have in common is more powerful than what we don't** and that we're looking at each of the 12 men who were called by Jesus to follow as his apostles

In week 1 we talked about Jesus and how he is the life of the party - there is no Party of Twelve without him!

Last week we focused on the brothers, Peter and Andrew, and saw that Andrew was a bringer and Peter was a mess

We also saw that Jesus uses us even when he knows that we're going to make messes

Remember what we saw in the last verse of John 13 and the first verse of John 14? "Peter, you will deny me, but don't let your hearts be troubled!"

I came into this series with a general idea of what we'd talk about with different ones in the 12, and today as we talk about another pair of brothers - James and John - I thought we'd be talking about anger

But that unexpected direction change I mentioned earlier?

Watch a short clip introducing James and John and how they were called right after Peter and Andrew and then I'll explain what God showed me about the difference Jesus made in them - and how he can do the same for us.

[VIDEO - **Jesus calls James and John**]

### 1. Let's talk about labels

- a. The reason why I thought we'd be talking about anger today is because of what we find in **Mark 3:17 (NLT)**
- b. Jesus gave them the nickname "sons of thunder" and while the Bible never explains why, most scholars believe this had to do with their character and possible outbursts of anger, frustration, and impatience
- c. A couple of examples:
  - Matthew 20:20-21 / Their mother asked for her sons to be numbers 2 and 2.1 behind Jesus!
  - Luke 9:54 / When Samaritans rejected Jesus, their solution was to call down fire and kill them
- d. That's why I thought we'd talk about anger - you can see it, right?
- e. But I couldn't get past the fact that Jesus gave them that nickname - was it a joke or a slam?
- f. That's when I got the first takeaway about James and John
- g. **The enemy tries to lock us in with labels**
- h. Have you noticed how often he uses people to do it?
- i. You're a \_\_\_\_\_ (and you always will be)! He sticks labels on us to keep us stuck in that identity
- j. Many of us here today are stuck with a label that the enemy put on us and it's kept us where we are
- k. They're not always bad, either. "I'd worship more, but I'm more of a thinker than a feeler."
- l. Don't buy the lie of the label!
- m. Which brings us to the obvious question: was Jesus putting a label on James and John?

### 2. Why Jesus calls us out

- a. Why did Jesus call them out? Because **Jesus reveals who we are in order to set up the miracle of who we're becoming.**
- b. Jesus rightly identified who they were when he called them - thunderous - and yet that makes who they became all the more amazing
- c. James 3:6 / James wanted to call down fire but went on to write about how the tongue was set on fire by hell itself and that we should never praise God and curse men with the same tongue
- d. Acts 12:2 / He was the first apostle to be martyred
- e. John went on to write a number of books in the Bible, and 1 John uses the word love (or similar) 40 times
- f. John wanted to be number 2 and yet would not even mention his own name in his gospel, instead using the phrase "the one whom Jesus loved"
- g. He was called a "son of thunder" but became known as the "apostle of love"
- h. He was the last of the apostles to die and the only one to die a natural death (after surviving being boiled in a vat of oil!)
- i. What made the difference? That leads us to the last takeaway.

### 3. What happens when we partner with truth

- a. Something happens when we partner with the truth and the truth is that Jesus transforms
- b. Sure, thunder is loud and stormy, but it's also impossible to hide
- c. Jesus never had to wonder what James and John were thinking - they lived honestly before him
- d. 1 John 3:18 / John wrote "let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth"
- e. James 1:18 / James wrote "he chose to give us birth through the word of truth"
- f. Our final takeaway? **Our honesty about who we are opens the door to who God wants us to become**
- g. And not just honesty for honesty's sake, either
- h. Both of these men could have said, "That's just who I am. I tell it like it is! I'm a son of thunder!"
- i. God wants honesty to be the starting place; your true identity is the ending place

#### The Landing

It all begins with honestly coming to Jesus as you are

Come as you are

Become more than you were

Go farther than you ever dreamed possible

Let's pray