

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

### The Take-Off

Have you ever stopped to think about how much we rely on sight?

A famous preacher once talked about preaching in a foreign country when the power went out - as he preached to the people in the dark he came to realize how much he relied on seeing their faces

But as he learned that day, sometimes the things we can't see hold a lot of power because the Holy Spirit (who we can't see) applied the truth of God's word to the hearts of the hearers (a process that we also can't see)

Other things that are invisible and yet really, really important: gravity, air, electricity, God, Wi-Fi

Really, we could stop the message right there - the fact that Wi-Fi can disrupt so much when it isn't working should be a powerful reminder of how important you are even when you feel invisible

The good news? 2 of the 3 disciples we're talking about today are barely mentioned in the Bible outside of the lists of the 12, and the 3rd disciple - while remembered - is remembered for the wrong thing.

Curious? I thought you might be.

Let's turn our attention to 3 of the remaining 4 members of the Party of Twelve: James, Judas, and Thomas.

### 1. James

- a. James is known as James the Less, probably referring to being little or younger
- b. This isn't the same James that we learned about earlier - James son of Zebedee - and no, this James didn't write the book called James in the NT :)
- c. Guess what else we know about James from the Bible? Nothing. He's only mentioned here.
- d. Tradition says he went and preached the gospel in Persia (modern-day Iran) and was martyred there

### 2. Judas

- a. Some call Judas "the man with 3 names" because he is called Thaddeus in Matthew and Mark, in the KJV he is called Lebbaeus, and in Luke and Acts he is called Judas son of James
- b. In John 14:22, he's called Judas (not Iscariot)
- c. Don't overlook the mercy of God for including that disclaimer!
- d. Many believe that Judas was a gentle man and his only words recorded in John 14:22 seem to back that up
- e. He asked Jesus why He was only going to reveal Himself to the 12 and not the whole world?
- f. It's clear from tradition that Judas took Jesus' answer to heart: he obeyed the Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples
- g. He planted a church in what is today known as Turkey and was either clubbed or axed to death or crucified
- h. Either way, wow! That's love for Jesus marked by obedience of Jesus.

### 3. Thomas

- a. Which brings us to Thomas, who is mentioned more than the other "invisible" apostles, and yet Thomas ends up being remembered for the worst reason: he doubted.
- b. Why - or what - did he doubt? He doubted what he couldn't see.
- c. John 20:25 / "unless I SEE...I won't believe"
- d. But Jesus didn't condemn or shame him - instead, Jesus showed him what he needed to see

### The Landing

So this morning, whether you feel invisible or feel like the evidence you need is invisible, I want to remind you that we serve a God who sees us and reveals Himself to us

This is huge, because it hurts to feel invisible and it's hard to trust the invisible

I think this is the part where I need to take a step of brave communication and tell you that there are plenty of days that I feel invisible - a text that isn't responded to right away, an email that isn't even opened, a response to a question that took longer than I deemed necessary, a post that isn't liked or shared

It's so easy to feel invisible - but God sees us - and that's the invisible truth that we must trust

We are not alone or irrelevant or invisible. Rev. 21:14 - even the least known of the 12 will have his name engraved in the New Jerusalem. Keep serving, obeying, abiding - even when it seems unseen. Your Father sees.

Let's pray