

ZEBEDEE- A DEDICATED FATHER

Matthew 4:21-22

(21) And going on from thence, He saw other two brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. (22) And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him.

Introduction

Allow me to begin this sermon by saying that we have many great fathers at Antioch-Lithonia. Let me say that again: We have many great fathers at Antioch-Lithonia. I am sure you have heard the phrase “dead beat dad.” That term does not apply to the fathers at Antioch. They are “dedicated do right dads.”

While I am talking about great fathers, I cannot resist mentioning my father, William Bradford Ward, Sr. If I were one-tenth the man he was, I would consider myself a great success. I am certain many of you feel the same way about your father.

Now, let's talk about Zebedee. Zebedee is a shortened version of the Hebrew name Zah-bad-yah, which means a gift from Yahweh, or a gift for God. He was the husband of Salome and the father of the Apostles James and John. Perhaps he resided in Bethsaida or Capernaum.

Zebedee and his two sons, James and John, operated a thriving fishing business on the Sea of Galilee with another set of renowned brothers, Andrew and Peter. His business must have been one of the largest public establishments because there were hired men at his service. Fishing was an important industry in that part of the country and we are told that the pickled fish of Galilee were so fine that they were served on the emperor's table a thousand miles away in Rome.

When Jesus came along and found in Zebedee's sons talent for leadership, He invited them to follow Him for special training for a special mission. A lot of fathers would have objected. They would have said, “Why are you willing to give up a thriving family business which brings in a lot of money and follow some unknown, traveling rabbi?” Zebedee did not object. He knew there are things more important than making money, so he continued the business without them and allowed his sons to depart to prepare to make the world a better place.

Zebedee appears in all four gospels, without great details, as the father of James and John. On the surface this may not seem like much, but on closer inspection and thought, it speaks volumes. There are a lot of modern Zebedees around – especially at Antioch-Lithonia. Let's take a closer, more detailed look.

Exposition

1. He Provided For His Family.

(A Categorical Imperative.)

2. He Blessed His Sons By His Good Name.

(They Were Proudly Known As The “Sons Of Zebedee.”)
(Sometimes “Sons Of Zebedee” Was A Substitute For Their Own Names.)

3. He Developed A Positive Relationship With His Sons.

(His Sons Worked In The Family Business.)

4. He Taught His Sons Spiritual And Practical Values.

(The Value Of Hard Work.)

5. He Released His Sons To Do Greater Work.

(They Were Permitted To Leave The Family Business.)
(He Sacrificed “Zebedee And Sons” To A Higher Calling.)

6. He Left A Legacy Through His Children.

(James And John Were Both Part Of The Inner Circle.)
(John Wrote Five Books Of The New Testament.)

Closing Thoughts

The role of the father cannot be underestimated. His influence cannot be overstated. True fatherhood is an awesome responsibility, but very meaningful and fulfilling. A Christian father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, and unnoticed, yet one of the most valuable assets in our society. Thank God for Christian fathers. Give God Glory! Give God All The Glory!

Related Scriptures

**Matthew 10:2; Matthew 20:20; Matthew 26:37; Matthew 27:56;
Mark 1:19-20; John 21:2**

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