

Happy Father's Day To A Forgotten Father -Zebedee-

Text: Matthew 4 : 21-22

Introduction: Who would you wish a Happy Father's Day to if you could? Your Dad, Grand-dad, Step-dad, Adopted-dad, great Grand-dad, etc.?? Well, we can't go back and do it but we can call attention to one that needs attention... *A Forgotten Father In The Bible.*

Happy Father's Day to a forgotten father named Zebedee are long overdue, but certainly deserved. Most people may know that the celebration of Father's Day began on June 19, 1910. *Sonora Smart Dodd* began this celebration to honor her dad, *William Jackson Smart*, an Arkansas veteran of the Civil War. Mr. Smart raised one daughter and five sons by himself, after his wife died giving birth to their sixth child.

Zebedee means "God gives". He was the father of James and John, and the husband of Salome. He was a fisherman living in Bethsaida / Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Interestingly, we know less about Zebedee than we do about his wife, Salome. Using the Scripture to do a background check on Zebedee, we find no problem in his reputation or character.

Solomon writes about the integrity of a righteous man in **Proverbs 11:3-11**, *"The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth. The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead. An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered. When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked."*

Solomon also shares in **Proverbs 20:6-7**, *"Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, / But who can find a faithful man? The righteous man walks in his integrity; / His children are blessed after him."*

Maybe you remember the lyrics to a popular song, *"Papa was a rollin' stone. Wherever he laid his hat was his home. (And when he died) All he left us was ALONE."*

We read in **Matthew 4:21-22** and **Mark 1:19-20**, *"Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. . . . When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him."*

Please allow me to share four thoughts on Zebedee.

I. ZEBEDEE MENDING HIS NETS.

Matt. 4:21-22, *"Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."* This is part of mundane manual labor but remember that Zebedee had "hired servants" in the family business.

Matthew Henry (1662-1714) shares some of the benefits James and John received from working with their father, Zebedee, *"They were men of business, who had been bred up to labour."* **Henry** further shares, *"They were men that were accustomed to hardships and hazards; the fisher's trade, more than any other, is laborious and perilous; fishermen must be often wet and cold; they must watch, and wait, and toil, and be often in perils by waters. Those who have learned to bear hardships, and run hazards, are best prepared for the fellowship and discipleship of Christ."*

II. ZEBEDEE LENDING HIS SONS.

In the *Holman Bible Dictionary* we read, *"The Bible does not say if Zebedee ever became a believer, but he did not stand in the way of his sons or wife becoming Jesus' disciples."* Thinking about this reminds me in some ways of Hannah, who lent her son, Samuel, to the Lord. **1 Samuel 1:28**, *"Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord."*

Dr. J. D. Douglas (1922-2003), Christian scholar and author, explains, *"James, John, and Simon Peter, who were part of a fishing partnership that included Andrew, Simon's brother (**Luke 5:10**), were a trio who attained in some sense a place of primacy among the disciples. They are found at the center of things—for example, when Jairus's daughter was raised (**Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51**), at the Transfiguration (**Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28**), on the Mount of Olives (**Mark 13:3**), and in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Matt. 26:37;***

Mark 14:33). *It was James and John, moreover, who had earlier accompanied Jesus to the home of Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:29).*"

Warren W. Wiersbe explains in *Prayer 101: Experiencing the Heart of God*, "James was the first of the apostles to be martyred (**Acts 12:1-2**). John was the last to die, but before he died, he suffered persecution and exile for the name of Christ."

III. ZEBEDEE TENDING HIS FAMILY.

Herbert Lockyer writes, "*Reading between the lines, it is not difficult to detect the harmony in that Capernaum family, concerning the call and claims of Jesus (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19-20). Salome and Zebedee were the Lord's and both of their sons became His followers and died for His cause. Happy and grateful are those Christian parents who live to see their offspring wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord.*"

Some scholars explain, "*Zebedee was in the fishing business and may have been wealthy, considering that he had servants and apparent connections with the high priest.*" We read in **John 18:15**, "*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.*"

IV. ZEBEDEE BENDING HIS KNEES.

One day Zebedee will bend his knees to the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. The same is true for you and me, and everyone who has ever lived. From **Philippians 2:5-11**, we read, "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

Conclusion: Dr. Howard Hendricks, longtime professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, shared a message titled "*Three Models of Integrity*" the Moody Bible Institute Annual Men's Conference on March 6, 1993, titled "*Three Models of Integrity*". He confessed, "*I had a pagan father. But he was a man of incredible integrity.*" He recounted his father frequently saying, "*Son that is*

beneath you." Thankfully, Dr. Hendricks shared that his father "*came to faith four months before he died.*"