

St. James, your brother-in-arms, among the first called as a disciple. Along with his brother John and Peter, he is one of the 'inner three' who witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter, the Transfiguration of our Lord, and can't stay awake with Jesus at Gethsemane. But as the Lord would have it, the special distinction for which James is remembered this day, in 44 AD; was murdered by Herod's sword because he preached the Christ. 1st of the 12 martyred, only his brother John lives a long life here.

From the world's perspective, according to human wisdom, James' life and work was cut short, he had no chance to achieve anything great or make a name for himself. Yet, that's precisely the point: James desired no other name than that of his Lord. What greatness, legacy do you desire? Only one name, legacy, work truly matters, provides all that James and you would ever need in body and soul.

You are not here to make a name for yourself. Sorry to break it to you, but you will be forgotten and a landfill will be a place for all your things and work here. There is only a legacy and glory in one person.

Not James, but his brother John made it so clear in his Gospel, that the glory of Jesus is His Cross, thus is yours too. But neither of the Sons of Zebedee understood that, yet, when they made their brash, prideful request in the Gospel appointed this festival day.

Jesus says, in His response to James and John: **Can you drink the Cup that I must drink? Can you be baptized with My Baptism?** You can. You must. **You will**, He says! But how? The answer is there in the way that He describes the glory of His Life and Ministry in the terms of His Holy Sacraments. His Baptism, His Cup really are the heart, center of everything -of all Jesus does for you, gives to you, shares with you.

James and John do not realize the yet uncrowned King is crowned with thorns and His throne is a tree of hate. **The Son of Man comes to serve, to give His life as a ransom.**

James and John's request can annoy us. It's presumptuous, vain. Who do they think they are? 2000 years later -we are no better than the 10, worried about our own position, worried over what someone else gets; seek your own glory and name and legacy and honor for yourselves more that your Lord's. Desiring others serve you, more than humbly serve others as your Lord. Repent. You get so consumed over you. What is it to you if a James and John sit on the right and left?

What would make these ordinary, smelly, uncouth fishermen think they had the right to ask? Grace. Thus, our Lord's rebuke is not harsh. He is patient. For though they didn't know what they're asking, they were on the right track. They believed their Lord, not only to be in the kingdom but also to be honored. They were right. They would drink the Cup He drank; they asked for glory and got it.

James, John knew in the Kingdom of God -lowly are exalted. But they still didn't realize that the lowly are exalted to lowly things. For in this Kingdom, it is ruled with grace and forgiveness, the King is a servant, the weak are strong, the faithful are full of doubts, the victors lose, the living die, and the masters serve. The Lord buys back rebels who still hate Him. He submits to their violence to bring peace and lets them do their worst to Him that He might do His greatest to them.

What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits, all His grace, all His love? We shall take the cup of salvation and call on the name of Lord. We do not repay Him to whom we owe all things. Instead, He pays us! He gives us not just the laborer's wages for work we did not do, He gives us all the vineyard's bounty. We harvest where we did not sow. We bask in light we did not earn. We are blessed with prosperity we don't deserve. Our cups overflow. The Son of Man lives to serves us. The stars sparkle in the heavens for no more reason than to give us light and beauty!

Our Lord does not grow angry with James, John, and likewise us. For He is good. His mercy endures forever. He is kind, gracious, patient. He is forgiving. James, John were corrupt, impure, nonetheless, they desired a noble thing. They wanted a place in His Kingdom. Though they knew not what they asked, God still provided.

We honor James this day with the Martyr's red. Whatever his weaknesses, he did not love his physical life more than his spiritual life. How can God's own ever be in danger? He was not concerned over his legacy, his name, how he accomplishes anything to be remembered. He confessed the truth. He drank the Cup of Salvation and martyrdom.

James, as well John are examples for us. They play the fool, to record for us their faults, their sins, their ambition and pride -to better show the character of our Lord who comes to serve. We join with them, fools all, and the whole company of heaven, we drink the Cup He drank. The Son of Man serves you with His Body and Blood; unites you to Himself and those on His right and left in glory. There is a place, even for you, in the Kingdom. Thanks be to God for your brother James. You will meet him in paradise. That the Lord deliver you all to the same fate.