

Upside Down: Explosion

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This is James {Pic}

Technically

We don't know what he looked like

This is just a famous painting

By some painter I found online

But his story is fascinating

There's a lot more I could say

But I want to show you 4 Scriptures about James

Before he has his

World turned upside down

And then 2 passages after

Sermon notes booklet...

OK?

7 passages in total

4 before his world is turned upside down

We'll look at the passage

Where his world is turned upside down

And then 2 after

The first passage

Was at Jesus' first miracle

At wedding in Cana

Where He turned water to wine

John 2:11-12 (NIV) - What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which He revealed His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum with His mother and brothers and His disciples. There they stayed for a few days.

#2:

Matthew 13:53-56a (NIV) - When Jesus had finished these parables, He moved on from there. Coming to His hometown, He began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked.

"Isn't This the carpenter's son? Isn't His mother's name Mary, and aren't His brothers *James, Joseph, Simon and Judas*? Aren't all His sisters with us?"

This is a little later in Jesus' ministry

I highlighted James' name

James is clearly one of Jesus' brothers

#3

Mark 3:20-21 (NIV) - Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that He and His disciples were not even able to eat. When His family heard about this, they went to take charge of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."

Mary, James, and His other brothers

"Went to take charge of Him"

Mary, James, and His other brothers

"Thought He (was) out of His mind"

It gets worse

Look at #4

John 7:1-5 (NIV) - After this, Jesus went around in Galilee. He did not want to go about in Judea because the Jewish leaders there were looking for a way to kill Him. But when the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles was near, Jesus' brothers said to Him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that Your disciples there may see the works You do.

No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since You are doing these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His own brothers did not believe in Him.

This is fascinating to me...

Later

When Jesus dies on the cross

We don't read anything

About any of the brothers being there

Mary was there

Jesus asks His disciple John

To take care of her

But none of His brothers were

Anywhere to be found

Jesus dies on the cross

He's buried in a nearby tomb

Everyone goes home

But then His tomb is empty

And then His closest friends say He appeared to them

That He talked with them

The early church records it this way

1 Corinthians 15:3b-7 (NIV) - That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles

Of all the interactions in the Bible

I think this is the one
I'd like to see on video the most

Can you imagine?

I'm pretty sure Jesus is better than me

But I'd have been sassy

"No one who wants to become a public-figure acts in secret," huh?!?

"Show Yourself to the world," huh?!?

Jesus is about to turn the world upside down

But before He does

Look what happens right after

His ascension

Acts 1:12-14 (NIV) - Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

How many guys are listed there?

Count 'em

11, right?

It's the 12 disciples

Minus Judas who had hung himself

And it continues in verse 14:

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

His brothers are now *with* them

James is now *with* them

James is now one of Jesus' disciples

What changed?

He talked to Jesus

Alive

In Galatians 2

Paul talks about getting established

As a leader in the church

Look who appoints he & Barnabas

Galatians 2:9a (NIV) - James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me.

James has gone from a skeptic

To an opponent

To an observer

To a leader

James' world was turned

Upside down

This kind of change

Wasn't unusual

The world wasn't changed

Because of what Jesus said

Or because of what the disciples taught

The world was changed

Because of what they saw

A dead man

Alive again

Jesus' resurrection

Turned the world upside down

Last week

We looked at the first Sunday of the church

Acts 2:41 (NIV) - Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

That's 3,000 men

Probably another 3,000 women

3-4,000 kids

Plus another 750 people who've moved from California

But look what happens

In this relatively small city

1st century Jerusalem was bigger than Spring Hill

But certainly smaller than Nashville

The church is 10,000 people

At this point

Acts 2:47 (NIV) - And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

At least 365 new people

Per year

The average church in America

Is under a hundred

They were adding 3x that many

Each year

Acts 4:4 (NIV) - But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

So now you have:

5,000 men

5,000 women

5,000 kids

Probably 1,200 more from California

Acts 5:14b (NIV) - More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

The church is growing

And surging

Acts 5:27-28 (NIV) - The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this Name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this Man's blood."

The religious leaders in Jerusalem

Are now bringing them in for questioning

I want you to notice something here:

The high priest

Who certainly knew who Jesus was

Would not use His name

"We gave you strict orders not to teach in this Name"

"You are determined to make us guilty of this Man's blood"

Why wouldn't he call Him by name?

The Bible doesn't tell us for sure, but I think it was a defense mechanism...

In Acts 6

They had their first internal snag

So many people

They had to restructure a bit

But they fix that

And after they fix the snag

Acts 6:7 (NIV) - So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

OK, so before that

Before Acts 6:7

That was growth

Increase

But now

Now the church increased "rapidly"

The church

Literally

Exploded onto the scene

We don't have exact numbers

To consider

But I've seen estimates

That says within the first few years after Jesus' death

As much as half the city

Came to faith in Jesus Christ

And verse 7 tells us

That includes a large number of priests

A large number of priests

Were willing to let down their guard

To investigate knowing it might cost them dearly

If they became obedient to the faith

What would it cost you?

God turned the world

Upside down

Because a "large number of people"

Became obedient... in their faith

In Matthew 8

Jesus encounters a Centurion

A Roman soldier

And the man tells Jesus

That he has a servant at home who's ill

Jesus offers to go

Heal the man

But the Centurion objects

Matthew 8:8b-9 (NIV) - "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But *just say the word*, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

"Just say the word"

That 4-word phrase

Could do more to change your life

Then maybe any other 4-word phrase

"Just say the word"

If God knew

We had "Just say the word" faith

He could lead us

And provide for us
In wholly different ways

I mean

What would it look like

If a church

A community like this

Decided as a group

To have “just say the word” faith?

What would that even look like?

We know exactly what it would look like

If a large number of people

Became obedient to the faith

It would turn our world

Literally

Upside-down

Let me get more personal

More direct

What would happen

If you became obedient to the faith?

Let me show you

Turn to Acts 2

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Look with me

At verse 42

Read Acts 2:42

Let me ask you

A really important question

What is the verb in that sentence

Re-read

There's a lot of action-oriented things:

Teaching

Fellowship

Breaking of bread

Prayer

But only one verb

“Devoted”

They devoted themselves

If you and I are obedient to the faith

It will involve

A heavy dose of devotion

We devote ourselves to things

All the time

We devote ourselves to our jobs

We devote ourselves to fitness

We devote ourselves to our kids

We devote ourselves to our favorite television show

We devote ourselves to things

All the time

And if we’re going to become

Obedient to the faith

It will involve a heavy dose

Of devotion

They devoted themselves to the Apostle’s teaching

We need to devote ourselves
To the Word of God

Read it

Find good teachers to teach you

I don't personally know any in our area

But if you hear of one

Let me know

If you don't understand something

Ask someone whose a little further down the road than you

Devote yourself to the Word of God

Devote yourself to the fellowship

The word translated fellowship here
Is the Greek word koinonia
Which literally means "partnership"

One of the reasons

Many Americans find the church unsatisfactory
Is that they have confused fellowship
With a cruise ship
Where you get all your needs met
Instead of a battle ship
Where everyone partners together

To achieve the mission

If you want WellSpring

To have a more significant place in your life

Give it

A more significant place in your life

Devote yourself

To being a partner

A participant

Not an observer

Who watches from the sidelines

They devoted themselves to the breaking of bread

There's a theme here:

Last week

We talked about honoring God

By waving Texas Roadhouse rolls

In front of the Lord

Today

We talk about honoring God

By devoting yourself

To breaking bread

They were devoted

To carving out time in their life

To eat

With other people

To eat

With other Christians

Most of our lives, today

Are not devoted enough

To connecting with other believers

Over a shared meal

I think one of Satan's chief strategies

Is to convince us

That God's ways

Are all painful

That God's ways

Are all things we don't enjoy

If you're not doing any of these

Maybe start here

Devote yourself

This week

To breaking bread

With another family from church

By the way

There'll never be an easier week than today

Because you've all heard me say it

Find that family that you kind of click with

And ask them to eat supper with you

One night this week

Maybe go to the new Texas Roadhouse

And take a picture eating rolls

Tag me in it, k?

The manager really should send me a gift card!

Lastly, they devoted themselves to prayer

Let me give you one prayer

To pray this week

That can tie all this together

That can help you be devoted

To the Bible

To partnership

And to eating together

Talk to God

Every morning as you start your day
And say to Him

This simple 4-word prayer:

“Just say the word”

Before you go into a meeting

“Just say the word”

As you pull up to the ballfield with your kids

“Just say the word”

You know

The next verse says

That everyone was filled with awe

Do you see that?

And I started to make that another point

But then I realized

Everyone... *was filled*

That wasn't something they did

It was something they received

And I think far too many of us

Go through our week

Go through our lives

Without a lot of spiritual awe

We often don't have spiritual awe
Because we don't take a lot of
Spiritual risks
And we don't chase a lot of
Spiritual dreams

And without spiritual risks
And spiritual dreams
You're not going to have a lot of
Spiritual awe

Let me say it this way:
If the highlight of your week
Spiritually
Is listening to me...

I know me
I'm not that good
If the highlight of your week
Spiritually
Is listening to me
You're not going to be filled with a lot of awe
Because you're going through life
Watching from the sidelines

Instead, try devoting yourself to God

Read the Bible

Find a way to make an impact

Eat with people

Pray – just say the word