

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew** 121- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 18 Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot

Church December 15, 2024

Matthew 10:1-4

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The pagan Unbelievers of this world are to be pitied. They have NOTHING beyond this Life to look forward to. Their entire Vision is grossly limited to 60, 70, 80, or even 90 years on this earth. But what is so pitiable about them is that they miss what is the MOST- Lovely; what is MOST- Important; and what is MOST- True. And it is the Lovely; the Important; and the True that work together to fashion our Minds and Hearts so that we look *beyond* ourselves into the Face of God- Who is the very *epitome* of what is Lovely; Important; and True wrapped in unspeakable Beauty; and adorned with unimaginable Glory.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is so much MORE than merely the “*Good News*” that Jesus saves Sinners. It tells us that not only does God forgive us- but that God is glorified the MOST in that Forgiveness. That forgiving unworthy Rebels and making them “fit for Heaven” causes God to be glorified MORE than when He builds a Galaxy or when He fashions a sub-atomic Particle. And this is what is called, the “*Scandal of Grace*”. The Reality that God forgives guilty Sinners and sovereignly credits them with the very Righteousness of the ONLY sinless Man who ever lived- BY the Grace of God and THROUGH the Gift of saving Faith- not

only is Spectacular in its Truth- but it is also totally and completely Ridiculous to the Mind of modern Man.

And that is why we MUST NOT ever try to change or alter what the Gospel says. We MUST NOT ever try to make the Gospel *less* Offensive to those who refuse to repent; nor less amazing to those who do. The Gospel is NOT “broken” and therefore, it doesn't need to be “fixed”. And there is ONLY one Gospel- precisely because there are ONLY two kinds of people:

1. *Saved Sinners*
2. *Lost Sinners*

... so, the SAME Gospel fits in with *EVERYONE!*

And that is why there isn't a “*Gospel for the Poor*” versus a “*Gospel for the Wealthy*”. There isn't a “*Gospel for Men*” versus a “*Gospel for Women*”. There isn't a “*Gospel for the Young*” versus a “*Gospel for the Aged*”. There isn't a “*Gospel for the Educated*” versus a “*Gospel for the Uneducated*”. There isn't one “*Gospel for White People*” and another “*Gospel for Black, Brown, or Yellow People*”. There is ONE Gospel; and its Message resonates with ALL People; from EVERY Background; and EVERY “socio-economic Group” on planet Earth.

Now we all know that the word, “*Gospel*” came from the Old English, “*God spell*” (Good Tale/Story); which came from the Greek, “*euangelion*”- which means: *Good News/Announcement/Message*. Interestingly, the English word, “*Angel*” came from the ancient Greek meaning: *Messenger*. The English word, “*Evangelist*” came from the word that has to do with an “*Angel*” or “*Messenger*”, who *heralds* the Gospel (*euangelion*).

So, for Example, when Jesus told John the Apostle to: “**write to the Angel**” of the various Churches in the first few Chapters of the **Book of the Revelation** back in the 1st Century- He meant for John to write to the “*Pastor*” (Elder); or the “*Bishop*” (Senior Pastor/Elder) whose *primary* Gift was to herald the Gospel to that particular Congregation. And when the Apostle Paul told Timothy to: “**do the Work of an Evangelist**” in **2Timothy 4:5**- he was instructing this young Pastor and his own “*Son in the Faith*” to make the heralding of the Gospel his *primary* Occupation.

So, God saves Sinners through the preaching of the Gospel. And the Kingdom of God grows in population by the Means of Words; and Persuasion; and Logic; and Reasoning and Passion. God Almighty does NOT require or even ask for “*Blind Faith*”. God wants us to know two things:

1. *What* we Believe
2. *Why* we believe it

... in contrast with Islam- whose main Method of Conversion is by the edge of the sword. In **Isaiah 1:18** the one, true, and living God said,

Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

... so, Christianity grows in both Numbers and Influence by people hearing the Truth of God; judging it to be true; embracing what it says; and then striving to live according to what it teaches. The ONLY entity that wants “Blind Faith” is the devil and those who follow him.

In **Matthew 13:31b&32**, Jesus said,

**31 ..."The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;
32 and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."**

So, the Kingdom of Heaven started very SMALL- meaning INSIGNIFICANT. It didn't have ANY Popularity and NO earthly Power. And the Kingdom was understood as being in two different Forms:

1. *Temporarily* on the Earth
2. *Eternally* in Heaven

... another Way to understand this- is the Church is understood as existing in two Dimensions:

1. Visible (professing Believers)
2. Invisible (genuine Believers)

... and yet, unlike any other Religion- Christianity ALWAYS was concerned about two Issues that the other Religions *purposefully* ignored:

1. The *physical* human Body
2. The *physical* Earth

Christianity has ALWAYS concerned itself with “*Redemption*”. But that Redemption is *specifically* detailed in the Bible as being:

1. The Redemption of our Soul
2. The Redemption of our physical Bodies
3. The Redemption of the Earth

We *experience* the sovereign Miracle of the New Birth which *initiates* the Redemption of our Souls. But we are also promised that there is a Time (in our Future) where our *physical* Bodies will be “*glorified*” and will be *re-united* with our redeemed Souls. **Romans 8:23** says,

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

... and **1Corinthians 15:51-53**, the Holy Bible says,

**51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,
52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.
53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.**

But then there is also the Promise that God will “redeem” the Earth and make it “*New*” as well. **The Revelation 21:1** says:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

... and Christianity is the ONLY Religion that is concerned with all three of these. Every other Religion completely *discounts* the human Body and has NO Intention at all of even caring about the Earth.

So, in the Beginning, the “Kingdom of Heaven” was WEAK- in that there were but a few Converts. At that Time- Christianity was a *persecuted* and *illegal* Religion- attacked by both Jews and Gentiles- as well as being constantly assaulted by the entire Roman Empire.

But as the Gospel continued to be preached and taught and believed on by more and more people- the population of the Kingdom of God grew. And that Growth

has literally been *exponential* until today- several Nations have a predominately Christian Population. *And that exponential* Growth will continue- so that just before Jesus comes back- it will be likened to what Jesus said:

... when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."

... and this is why I tell you that the Gospel will ultimately triumph over Unbelief and Doubt; and there will be MORE Believers than Unbelievers when Jesus comes back.

So, the "*Good News*" is that Jesus saves *repentant* Sinners. But I would suggest that the Reason that the Gospel is "*Good News*" is because there is some really "*Bad News*" out there. And the "*Bad News*" is that Almighty God is furious with Sin and those who engage in it. And God's Anger against Sin is justified because Sin belittles the one thing that God loves the Best: His Own Glory.

Romans 3:23 says,

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Now what caught my eye about 25 years ago, was the fact that the Apostle did NOT say, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the Righteousness of God*"; or the *Holiness* of God; or the *Standard of God's immaculate Purity*. Why did Paul say that our Sins "fall short" of God's *Glory*? What is it about our Sins that they "fall short"?

And to find that Answer, I began to research the "Glory of God" and ask as many people I knew about it. And even though I and many others had used that term many times- I found that few- if any- even knew what it was. We *talk* about God's Glory; we *pray* about it; *read* about it; and *sing* about it- and yet, very few of the people I talked to- many of them Pastors- would even guess what it meant. And that really bothered me- because I didn't know either.

What I found was that God holds His own Glory *higher* than anything else. And that led me to find out just what the Glory of God" is; and what "falling short" of that Glory actually means.

God has Characteristics that are amazing. For example, God is "One"; God is "Creator"; and "Owner"; and "Triune"; and "Immutable"; and "Love"; and "Omnipotent"; "Omniscient"; and "Omni-present"; and "Effectual". And all of these Qualities or Characteristics put together make God to be "*Holy*".

So, the "*Holiness of God*" is that no one is like God. He is truly a "one-of-a-kind" Being. Our God is *Unique*; and *Set Apart*; and *Different*; and *Higher*; and

Better; and *more Important* than anything that has been made. So, nobody is like God. **Isaiah 46:9b** says,

... For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me

... and that *Uniqueness* is called, the “*Holiness of God*”.

The “*Righteousness of God*” is that God is sinlessly Perfect. God has NO moral Weaknesses or Faults. He is Pristine in His Character and Nature. He is Pure and Undeified. And therefore- ALL that God does and says- is also Perfect, Pure, True, Correct, and Right.

As far as you and I are concerned- the 66 Books of the Holy Bible (rightly interpreted) are the *highest* and *best* Display of Righteousness and moral Purity. The Scriptures and the Scriptures ALONE have the Authority to “*bind the Conscience*” of the Individual (bring about Conviction); and the Scriptures ALONE determine what IS or is NOT Sin or Righteousness. And ALL people will be held Accountable to that Standard of moral Perfection. So, the Bible stands ABOVE the Individual- and his Ideas; Opinions; and Reasoning- as it pertains to What is Sin and what is Righteousness.

But God is NOT under the Bible. God stands ABOVE the Bible. And He alone is *superior* to the Scriptures. So, when we preach or speak to others about what IS or is NOT Sin and Righteousness- we appeal to the Bible; and we use the Bible as our Authority. So, we say, “*The Bible says...*”. But when God speaks of these Issues- He appeals ONLY to *Himself*. And God uses *Himself* as His own Authority and He simply says, “*I am the Lord!*” So, the “*Holiness of God*” is the *totality* of all His perfect Characteristics and Attributes. In other words, God’s Holiness is WHO He is. Those perfect Attributes are what makes God to be “Holy”.

Now, periodically, God *manifests* or *displays* or *shows* or *reveals* one or more of those holy Characteristics. For example, in Salvation- God *displays* or *reveals* MORE of His pristine Characteristics than He does by doing anything else. And so, Salvation reveals the Glory of God the MOST and the BEST.

And when God chooses to reveal His various Characteristics- those Characteristics are “seen” or “understood” or ‘comprehended’. And when they are “seen”- they are “marveled at” or “praised”. In other words, when God chooses to display His Holiness- or a *part* of the Attributes that make God to be “Holy”- the *Worth*; or the *Value*; or the *Beauty*; or the *Importance* of that Display is received. And THAT is called, the “*Glory of God*”.

So, the “*Glory of God*” is the *displaying* or the *shining forth* of *part* of God’s Holiness. And the *Response* that God’s Creation has to the Recognition of the

Value or Beauty of that *part* of God's Holiness that has been shown and seen- is called, "*Worship*"!

And that is *why* God desires to be worshipped and glorified. It isn't because God is simply a powerful Ego-maniac- as some have said. God desires to be glorified and worshipped because God is the BEST and the most IMPORTANT; the most GLORIOUS; the most VALUABLE; the WISEST; and the most BEAUTIFUL Being in the Universe. So, God DESERVES to be worshipped and glorified! And because God is Omniscient- God knows that more than anyone else!

But Sin stops God from being worshipped and glorified. And so, in order for God to receive what He is *entitled* to receive- God has to save Sinners by what He alone does for them. But He also knows that the *fullness* of Joy for us- lies in Him so radically changing us in the Miracle of the New Birth- that we genuinely *enjoy* God alone being worshipped and glorified!

And that is why I tell you that our innate Desire to be Happy and God's fundamental Desire to be glorified and worshipped- are the SAME! Our Desire to be Happy flows out from God's Desire to be worshipped- because we were made in His Image! And NOTHING glorifies God *more*- than for wicked Rebels to be so transformed (by what God alone does for them in Salvation) that they genuinely *enjoy* their Worship of God!

And so, THAT is why God saves Sinners- so, that we may have the joyful Privilege of glorifying and worshipping God the Way God DESERVES to be worshipped and glorified! And THAT is why our Sin "falls short" of God's Glory.

But just what does "*falling short*" actually mean? To find out- we need to read **Hebrews 10:28&29** that says:

28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Here the unknown Writer of Hebrews compares the Punishment inflicted on those who rejected the Old and New Covenants. Under the Old Covenant, he wrote, those who reject it...

... dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

... but then read what he said about the Punishment for rejecting the New Covenant:

How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

... this is the Definition of what it means to “*fall short*” of the Glory of God because of our Sin. So, because the New Covenant is infinitely *superior* to the Old- the Punishment for rejecting it- will be far GREATER than the Punishment under the Old. So, now, under the Grace and Truth of Jesus Christ, when we sin- we have...

- **Trampled under foot the Son of God**
- **regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified**
- **insulted the Spirit of grace**

... in other words, our Sin has made the one thing that God values the MOST- His Glory- to look INFERIOR or LACKING to whatever else we are lusting after. And that *robs* God of His Glory and our Worship- and gives BOTH to something (or someone) else that has been made; and that is passing away!

But in order to deliver us from the dictatorial Oppression of our Sin; the Guilt of our Sin; forgive us for our Sins; and make us Righteous- God Himself had to take on Flesh; live a *sinless* Life; Die a *vicarious* Death; raise again on the third Day; Ascend into Heaven itself; and “sit down” at the “Right Hand” of the Majesty on High- where He makes constant Intercession for us.

So, to make sure all that would happen- God the Father entered into an *everlasting* Covenant with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to redeem fallen Man. And so, by what God alone does for us- we are given the amazing Privilege of truly *enjoying* our Worship of God in both Spirit and Truth! And THAT is the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ!

And THAT is the Message that both Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot received from Jesus and took to the lost World as two of the original Apostles.

Now, as we have discovered with several of the men of the Bible- Thaddaeus’ Name was NOT “*Thaddaeus*”. In **Luke 6:16** and **The Acts 1:13**- the good Doctor called him, “**Judas the son of James**”. In **John 14:22** his Name was called, “**Judas (not Iscariot)**” to distinguish him from the Traitor. So, both the Apostle John and Dr. Luke called him, “*Judas*”- which was a common Name back in the 1st Century (until the Traitor ruined it). And “*Judas*” is a Greek *transliteration* of the Hebrew Name, “*Judah*”. And “*Judah*” originally came from “*Yehuda*” which means: *thanksgiving or praise to Yahweh*. It is also from the

Name, “*Judah*” that we get the “*Land of Judea*” as well as the Name of the original “people of God”- the “*Jews*”.

But as we have already seen- it was common for people to have more than one Name. And just like today- some people in the Bible also had “Nicknames”. So, the Apostle that both John Mark (**Mark 3:18**) and Matthew (**Matthew 10:3**) wants to call, “*Thaddaeus*” was also known as, “*Judas Thaddaeus*”; “*Jude Thaddaeus*”; or “*Jude of James*”. Now in **Matthew 10:3** in the King James Version- the translators called him, “**Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus**”. But since the Translators didn’t leave us any Notes- we really don’t know why they did this.

One hint is that “*Lebbaeus*” may be the original Greek Name while “*Thaddaeus*” is a Latinized or Aramaicized form of “*Lebbaeus*” and the KJV Translators wanted to preserve both Names.

Now the Name, “*Thaddaeus*” means: “*heart-child*”; while “*Lebbaeus*” means: “*breast-child*”. And these seem to be family Nicknames. So, it is possible that this Man was a very tender-hearted and kind Man, who was graced with much Compassion. One of the early Church Fathers, Jerome (AD 342-420), called this man, “*Trinominus*”, which means: *the Man with three Names*.

But the Reality is that we have very little Information about this Man other than his multiple Names. But where we lack inspired Information from the Bible- we do have some extra-biblical historical Information about him that must be “taken with a grain of salt”.

History tells us that twenty- three years ago (2001), the Nation of Armenia celebrated their 1700th consecutive year as a “*Christian Nation*”. So, this Country of less than 3 million Citizens have been organized and governed under Christ and by Scripture much longer than any other.

And if you were to ask members of the “*Armenian Apostolic Church*” about their Beginnings- they would point you to the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew- who first brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Armenia in the middle of the 1st Century. And as these Apostles heralded the glorious Gospel- pagans were saved. And almost 300 years later- God raised up a man, who today is called, “*Gregory the Illuminator*”, who believed the Gospel of those two Apostles; and who “preached with great Power and Conviction” the very SAME Gospel that these overlooked men brought to his Nation.

And through Gregory’s preaching, King Trdat (AD 250–330) believed in Christ and was baptized. Then, this King declared his entire Kingdom to be “*Christian*” and Jesus has been worshipped there by both the Church and the Government since that Time.

Now that all sounds very Neat and Tidy- but this Victory came with a huge Price. Because Gregory languished in Prison for 13 years before the King was

willing to listen to him- all because Gregory *refused* to worship the many demon-gods of the pagan Armenians. And when asked, Gregory said he was following in the footsteps of the Apostles- who spoke *loudly, fearlessly*, and completely *unashamedly* to both the Peasants as well as the ruling Class.

Now as I told you earlier, “*Simon the Zealot*” and “*Matthew the Tax-collector*” are the ONLY two Apostles, who are known by the sinful Occupations in which they engaged- BEFORE they were saved. And having learned about how the New Testament writers went about their Trade- I have come to realize that this was NEITHER accidental or incidental. Their Names were listed this Way on purpose. And one possible Reason was that they actually *requested* it- in an Effort to keep themselves Humble; and so, they would always marvel at the Grace of God that had called them...

... out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1Peter 2:9b)

... So, it is possible that both Matthew and Simon wanted everyone to know just how far God had brought them from their sinful Past.

But it is also possible that both Matthew and Simon were greatly motivated by being sovereignly redeemed from their sinful Beginnings and that this is what motivated them to do all that they did. We simply can't say for sure- because of inferior record- keeping back then.

Now in previous Sermons, I have articulated all that Simon was before Jesus saved him. He was probably a member of a Jewish Terrorist organization called, the “*Zealots*” or, the “*Sicarii*”. These people were known as the “*Zealots*” because they had mixed their religious Zeal with nationalistic Fervor. The King James translators wrote his Name as, “*Simon Zelotes*” or “*Simon called Zelotes*”. And this distinguished this man from “*Simon who was called Peter*”.

The reason there is some Confusion about this- is because “*Zelotes*” translates from the Greek, “*Kananite*”- which simply means: “*zealous*” and NOT “*THE Zealot*”. But some early Church Fathers (Jerome and Bede) taught that the word, “*Kananite*” *should* have been translated as, the “*Canaanite*” rather than the “*Zealot*”. And that would mean that this Simon was simply from the small town of Cana up in Galilee. Others have argued that “*Kananite*” was actually, “*Kanna'im*”- which is very similar. And that would mean that Simon was in fact, a member of the terrorist Organization before Jesus saved him. And that is why the majority of biblical scholars teach that Simon was “*Simon the Zealot*”- who had been a Terrorist before he was wondrously saved.

Now the Zealots were the fourth and smallest Group of religious Groups that operated in 1st Century Israel. Those Groups were:

1. The Pharisees

2. The Sadducees
3. The Essenes
4. The Zealots

The Pharisees were the largest and most influential of the four Groups. They were the “*religious Conservatives*” of their Day. These men supposedly believed that the 39 Books of the Old Testament contained ALL that God wanted to reveal to His people (Jews). The Sadducees were the “*religious Liberals*” of their Day, who discounted any supernatural Manifestations like Miracles; Angels; and Resurrections. As time went on- the Sadducees came to *dominate* the Sanhedrin Court during the Time that the Romans occupied Israel. The Essenes were the religious Mystics, who shunned cities and lived in caves and out in the desert. They sought for Visions; Dreams; and angelic Visitations- but discounted the written Word of God.

And then there were the “Zealots”- who were the *first* terrorist Organization in the Middle East. These people were deceived into thinking that, since the Jews were God’s chosen people- that everybody else- was Evil. And since everybody else was Evil- they didn’t deserve to live.

So, these people talked themselves into believing that God was pleased with WHATEVER these Zealots could do- to rid the Promised Land of the pagans and restore Israel back to the Jews. So, the Zealots engaged in horrific Crimes- using violent and barbaric Techniques- including Murder; Rape; Extortion; Blackmail; Torture; Assassination; Kidnapping; and even the torture and murder of Children! They had reached a place of “religious Certainty” that deceived them into thinking that even a fellow-Jew should be killed- if that Jew didn’t agree with or cooperate with them- in their Wickedness. And what made these people so Evil- was they did all this “in the Name of” God.

The Zealots were also called, the “*Sicarii*” because they all had a small, curved knife that could be easily hidden in the sleeve or the belt of their robes. And they would walk up behind Roman soldiers or even Jewish Leaders at Parades or other official Functions and slit their throats with that knife and then blend back into the crowd. So, it is very possible that Simon engaged in these Actions before Jesus called him to Salvation.

What is amazing and something that testifies to the radical Transformation of the Apostles- was that Matthew the Tax-collector and Simon the Zealot were on the opposite ends of 1st Century Jewish Life. Matthew had betrayed his own people to purchase a Tax License from Rome in order to imposed confiscatory Taxes on his fellow-Jews that was used to help Rome keep their boot on the neck of the Jews. And so normally, Simon would have just as soon torture and murder Matthew as look at him. And yet, there is not even a hint of any Tension between these two

anywhere in the New Testament. And more than just about anything else- this *exemplifies* what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:43-48**:

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

44 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

... and in **Luke 6:27-36**:

27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

29 Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

30 Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

31 Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount.

35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

This is the Divine Teaching of supernatural Love that *dominated* the Church in its Infancy. And this is the Teaching that came to *dominate* Simon's Life as well.

And so, History also tells us that at some point after seeing Jesus exalted and the Gospel triumph in Armenia- Thaddaeus teamed up with Simon, who had been

the Zealot, and they both journeyed to Lebanon where they preached the Gospel in Beirut. And as the Gospel began to triumph there and souls were being saved- they were both martyred in Beirut around AD65.

Today, Simon the Zealot is usually pictured holding a saw- because History says that he was cut in half- while pleading with his tormentors to repent and trust in Jesus. Thaddaeus is usually depicted in Art as holding an ax as History says the pagans of Lebanon cut his head off for the “crime” of heralding the glorious Gospel of Jesus, the Christ.

So, even though there isn’t much in the Bible about these men- we know that God used them both- mightily. And that should give us great Hope that even if our Toil *seemingly* goes unnoticed by men- it will NOT go unnoticed by God because in **1Corinthians 15:57&58**, God has promised,

57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

We have now only to look at Judas Iscariot in our brief Examination of the men who changed the World. Lord willing, I will take a short “Vacation” from our verse-by-verse “Journey” through the **Gospel of Matthew** and will begin the new year of 2025 with a series of Sermons on the “*One Another*” Passages found in the Bible. And once we conclude that- I will rejoin Matthew’s Record by looking at the Life of Judas, the one who betrayed the Lord. And Lord willing, I will finish this Series on the Apostles (that I pray will one day become a Book) by looking at the “*Sovereignty of God in Forgiveness*” by contrasting the “Repentance” of Judas with that of Peter as BOTH men betrayed the Lord- yet ONLY one of them was forgiven. It will be a fascinating Study.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.