

LOCKDOWN DAY 40 – 5 MAY 2020

Scripture Reading: Luke 6: 12-16 and the Book of James.

Hymn: *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.*

Yesterday, we looked at St Philip and today we turn to **St James the Less**. The feast of these two holy Apostles, who were among the closest friends and co-operators of the Lord, offers us one more opportunity to **compare ourselves** with them and **to renew our commitment** to the Lord and to the faith. The twelve apostles, as we know, are the pillars of the Church. They are amongst our spiritual guides and models. What they **did and taught** has become our source of **instruction and inspiration**.

St James, son of Alphaeus, is called James the Less on account of his small stature as well as to distinguish him from the other Apostle James who was the son of Zebedee and brother of John. James the Great is celebrated in July.

James is called one of the **pillars** of the Church of Jerusalem. A dominant tradition holds that he is the author of the Epistle of St James. (*Notwithstanding, I encourage you to read the whole letter of James. It only has 5 chapters*). In it he **insists** on active and living faith that produces good works. He teaches that faith without works is dead, that faith and favouritism cannot go together. His letter places **greater emphasis** than any other New Testament letter on good works which should be an **essential** part of the **lifestyle** of the Christian. It contains much wise, practical advice about Christian living, beginning with listening and speaking. It is sometimes said that we have two ears but only one mouth, so we should be twice as ready to listen than to speak

We are currently in lockdown, but a greater harvest is to follow. In preparation, God is planting God's word in us. Sometimes our listening is like looking in a 'poor quality' mirror but then forgetting what we look like. Rather, we should look **intently, earnestly, seriously** at God's word and put it into practice, allowing it to **shape** the way we live and how we speak. James simply says that true faith finds expression in helping those in need.

James was the first bishop of Jerusalem and governed the Church amidst serious dangers and violent persecutions. He was highly esteemed by the people and envied by the Scribes and the Pharisees because of his influence over people. Under Ananias the High Priest, James was martyred in the year 62 when he was addressing the people in the Temple premises.

The proclamation of Christ as the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6) was entrusted first to the apostles, from whose time it has been handed down from generation to generation until the present day.

Let us pray the collect for this feast day, in its original form: *'Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life: grant us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ, to be the way, the truth, and life as thou hast taught St James and the other Apostles; through Jesus Christ our Lord.'* **Amen**

Today, I invite you to reach out to any person you know who bears the name **James**; and also to any person in Blue Downs Archdeaconry.

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases and His mercies are new every morning.*