

Drawing Near (5-25-2012)

Living Courageously

The twelve apostles included "Thaddaeus" (Matt. 10:3).

Lesson: Thaddaeus was a man of many identities. In the King James translation of Matthew 10:3 he is called "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus." He is also called "Judas the son of James" (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) and "Judas (not Iscariot)" (John 14:22).

Judas, which means "Jehovah leads," was probably the name given him at birth, with Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus added later as nicknames to reflect his character. Apparently Thaddaeus was the nickname given to him by his family. It comes from a Hebrew root word that refers to the female breast. Basically it means a "breast-child." Perhaps Thaddaeus was the youngest child in the family or especially dear to his mother. Lebbaeus comes from a Hebrew root that means "heart." Literally it means a "heart-child," and speaks of someone who is courageous. That nickname was likely given him by his friends, who saw him as a man of boldness and courage.

Early church tradition tells us that Thaddaeus was tremendously gifted with the power of God to heal the sick. It is said that a certain Syrian king named Adgar was very ill and sent for Thaddaeus to come and heal him. On his way to the king, Thaddaeus reportedly healed hundreds of people throughout Syria. When he finally reached the king, he healed him then preached Christ to him. As a result, the king became a Christian. The country, however, was thrown into chaos, and a vengeful nephew of the king had Thaddaeus imprisoned then beaten to death with a club. If that tradition is true, it confirms that Thaddaeus was a man of great courage.

It takes courage to die for Christ but it also takes courage to live for Him. That's why Paul said that God hasn't given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline (2 Tim. 1:7). Each day trust in God's promises and rely on His Spirit. That's how you can face each new challenge with courage and confidence.

Suggestions for Prayer:

Thank God for the courage He has given you in the past and ask Him to help you face future spiritual battles without retreat or compromise.

For Further Study:

Read Daniel 3:1-30.

- Why were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego punished by King Nebuchadnezzar?
- How did God honor their courage?

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