

Meditation Matthew 4:18-22.

Voice of John- the beloved disciple.

James and I were in the boat when he passed by with Peter and Andrew. We'd seen Jesus before, and we certainly knew Andrew and Peter. We heard him call to us to follow him, and James got out of the boat straight away and did just that. But he was a man. I was a kid, and although I knew I just had to go, I felt I needed Dad's permission. I looked at him over my shoulder: he was nodding, and there was a strange look on his face. I'd never seen a look like it; it was a sort of bewilderment combined with extreme joy.

I saw expressions like that many times during the three years or so I was with Jesus. Everything about him was bewildering! He was Israelite to the core, but he talked to Samaritan women and they believed what he said; he had no need to go near them, yet he touched lepers and other sick people, and they were well again; and one day when we were praying on a hillside, Peter, James and I saw him, glowing from head to foot, standing there talking with Moses and Elijah, and then he went back to the others as though nothing unusual had happened.

As time went on I began to realize that, for him, nothing special had happened. He really was 'in God and of God'. That was where the power came from, and the wisdom in his teaching. Teaching that, like him, was Jewish, but Oh! so different from what other people taught, and so radical. Love. That sums it up: the overwhelming love of God for

everyone, and forever, and close relationship with that loving God, now and even more so in the future.

As I began to accept what he said, even if I couldn't quite understand it, I grew closer to Jesus: I believed him, I felt his love and his power, and I knew, knew strange and wonderful things. That's the way it was in the tomb that Sunday morning when he'd risen: I believed it- I felt it- I knew it.

Anyway, after he left us and his spirit filled us all, I started what became my life's work: telling people about him and about God. I spent most of my time in Ephesus, but went to quite a lot of places in Asia, too. And he supported me every inch of the way, guiding me as I travelled and set up worshiping communities, sustaining them when I left, and keeping me going when things got tough.

He was with me on Patmos, and that was very tough. But it was there he gave me that special vision of the future, filled with his glory. I don't pretend to understand it, or not all of it. But I believe. I believe he will come again, and everyone will see him in his glory, far outshining even the glory Peter, James and I saw on the hillside. I believe it; I feel it; I know it. And that's all you have to do to be Jesus' beloved disciple: believe him; feel him; know him.

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