

Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus, James the Less, *The Unseen*

March 17-23

GAMECHANGERS

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Mark 3:13-19, 31-35

Little is known about Simon the Zealot, Thaddaeus, and James the Less. We only know their names and that they were disciples from the lists like what is found here in Mark 3:18. Being mentioned briefly, they characterize the whole of the disciples. They are not celebrities, but every day, unknown people chosen by God to do something extraordinary.

With Simon the Zealot, more is known about a Zealot than what is known about Simon. Zealots during this time were a political party dedicated to the fall of Rome. Zealots often used terrorism to fight against Roman occupation. In fact, one of his worst enemies would have been someone like Matthew who would forsake their Jewish identity to work for Rome.

Thaddaeus is also known as Judas—not Judas Iscariot who would later betray Jesus. Judas was a common name during this period and simply means, “God leads.” Thaddaeus is mentioned only in the list and in John 14:22 where he asks why Jesus has not yet taken over the world. Jesus responds to Thaddaeus by telling him that He has come for hearts rather than to establish kingdoms.

James the Less could have gotten his nickname a number of ways. It could be that he was the younger (the lesser) brother of Matthew or the other James. Or his name (literally, little James in Greek) could have been given to him because of his short stature. We cannot be certain because scripture only gives us his name in all the gospel accounts.

Despite the fact that the scriptures speak so little of these three men, Jesus makes their value known in Mark 3:31-35. Jesus reminds his followers that performance and notoriety are not necessary in order to be useful to him. His relationship with these little-known men was founded upon their willingness to be led by him, not their fame. When God changes the world, He chooses those who are unseen who are willing to make Him seen.

Possible point of confusion: While it may appear that Jesus is being rude to his family, he is making an incredible statement about His relationship with those who have faith in Him.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

March 24	Thomas – <i>The Doubter</i>	John 20:24-29
March 31	Judas – <i>The Traitor</i>	John 12:1-6; Matthew 26:14-16
April 7	Peter – <i>The Performer</i>	Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23