



**SAINT JAMES'**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
Fremont, California

## **SERMON**

29. October, 2008. Sts. Simon and Jude

Title: Called To Be Saints

Text: St. John 15:17-27

J.J.

Today the Church celebrates the feast of Sts. Simon and Jude whose names occur together in the Church's Liturgical Calendar. Some ancient Christian writers say that Simon and Jude went together as missionaries to Persia, and were martyred there. If this is true, it explains, to some extent, our lack of historical information on them and also why they are usually put together.

Jude is so named by Luke and Acts. Matthew and Mark call him Thaddeus. He is not mentioned elsewhere in the Gospels, except, of course, where all the apostles are listed. Most Biblical scholars hold that he is not the author of the Letter of Jude.

Simon is mentioned on all four lists of the apostles. On two of them he is called "the Zealot." The Zealots were a Jewish sect that represented an extreme of Jewish nationalism, and they did not have a very good reputation. They are believed to have been the spiritual heirs of the Maccabees, carrying on their ideals of religion and independence. They raided and killed, attacking both foreigners and "collaborating" Jews, and were chiefly responsible for the rebellion against Rome which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

As in the case of all the apostles except for Peter, James and John, we are faced with individuals who are really unknown, and not who did not have the best of reputations. Jesus chose some strange and unlikely people to be apostles and saints: a former Zealot, a former (crooked) tax collector, an impetuous fisherman, two "sons of thunder" and a man named Judas Iscariot.

Today, as we remember Sts. Simon and Jude, we are reminded that holiness does not depend on human merit, culture, personality, effort or achievement. It is entirely God's creation and gift. God calls each one of us to be a saint . . . and invites you to use the unique gifts that God has given you.

S.D.G.

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