



Message #3
“REPLACING THE TRAITOR”
Acts 1:12-26

Remember....If you want to hear the message again, or watch the message presentation again, you can always catch up with the audio & visual presentations of the sermon each week on our Faithlife site.

Having just witnessed the Ascension, the disciples travelled back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It was a “Sabbath day’s walk” which, according to the Mishnah, is about 1.25 kms.

How do you think you would be feeling after witnessing Jesus’ ascension?

They gathered in an Upper Room and there were about 120 followers of Jesus present, including:

- 11 disciples (listed here in a different order than in Luke’s Gospel)
- Faithful women followers of Jesus
- Mary, the mother of Jesus
- The brothers of Jesus (the biological brothers of Jesus as listed in Mark 6:3) of which James and Jude would become prominent in the early church.

TWO KEY PRINCIPLES:

Verse 14 introduces a couple of essential principles for any church that wants to be biblical in its life and ministry.... “They were **together** and **in prayer**”.

TOGETHER

In this verse (14) we find a special Greek term, *homothymadon*, which literally means with “one mind or passion”. 11 of the 12 uses of this term in the NT are found in the Book of Acts.

What was the basis for the unity and harmony of these believers?

- They loved Jesus.
- They loved each other.
- They had a great story to tell.
- They were willing to give their lives to tell it.
- They wanted to see Jesus again.

The theme of unity and harmony in the church continues throughout Acts.

What is the difference between “unity” and “uniformity”?

What threatens / destroys unity in a church?

Why do you think it was important for the disciples to be together?

IN PRAYER

Constant, prevailing prayer is vital for any spiritual revival. Are we willing to “pray the price”?

Why do you think prayer seemed to be the major activity that they engaged in after they returned?

How are you affected when you pray with other believers?

In what ways can you be more serious about prayer in your life?

THE APOSTOLIC VACANCY

At some point, in the 10 days between the Ascension of Jesus and Pentecost, Peter stood up and took charge. Given Peter’s history, we might assume that he would be the least likely to assert leadership in the early church. Remember his three-fold denial of Jesus during Christ’s trial?

Nevertheless, Peter was restored (John 21:15-19), and we find here that Peter is “feeding Christ’s sheep” just as Jesus had commanded him to (John 21:17).

Peter’s address to the other disciples focuses on Judas’ betrayal of Jesus. It is sobering for us to consider that Judas was one of the Twelve Disciples, chosen by Christ. He had been with Jesus for His entire earthly ministry. He witnessed the miracles of Jesus and sat under His incredible teaching. He was privy to the heart and mind of the Son of God. Yet, in spite of all this, Judas turned his back on Jesus and betrayed Him. Judas, who was the treasurer for the disciples (John 12:6), obviously loved money more than Christ.

Judas’ life and death is a reminder to all of us of the need of genuinely examining ourselves to see if we are truly trusting in Christ. The reality of Judas’ fall after being so close to Christ serves as both a reminder of the need to exercise true repentance and as a warning against false assurance and secret sins. None of us are above or beyond abandoning Christ. Though we won’t be presented with the same opportunity that Judas faced, we still in effect betray Christ whenever we make any created thing a higher priority than Christ Himself. We must always be on guard against trading our Christ-won heavenly inheritance for the things of the world.

What was the difference between Judas the betrayer and Peter the denier?

What were the qualifications of the person who would replace Judas (Acts 1:21-26)?

Why were these qualifications important?

THEY CAST LOTS

This was not an act of “chance”...Lots had been used in a variety of circumstances in the Old Testament.

Proverbs 16:33 indicates that it was a process through which God made known His decision/will.

In this instance, we note that the disciples were earnestly praying over this matter and these two men before the lots were cast...they genuinely wanted God to make the choice, not themselves.

Interestingly, this was the last time we hear of the casting of lots being used to know God’s guidance. The Holy Spirit would soon become the only guide the disciples would need.

The decision between Matthias and Joseph (aka Barsabbas) was made, with Matthias being selected to be the 12th apostle. We hear nothing more about either of these two men, but we can safely assume that they continued on to serve the Lord and the church, even though they didn’t get the headlines!

Just like us...**God wants us to serve Him faithfully – not famously!**