

The Book of Acts

Lesson 2: Waiting Together and Choosing Matthias -- Acts 1:12-26

The mountain is behind them now. The cloud has swallowed their Lord, and the two men in white have sent them back down the road to Jerusalem with a promise ringing in their ears. So what do a hundred and twenty ordinary people do while they wait for the power of heaven to fall? They do not strategize. They do not launch a campaign. They climb the stairs to an upper room, and they pray.

Luke gives us a tender picture of this little community. The eleven apostles are there, named one by one. The women are there. Mary the mother of Jesus is there. And so are the brothers of Jesus, the very men who once thought He was out of His mind, now bowed in prayer to Him as Lord. They are all together, Luke says, with one accord. The room is small, but the unity is large.

Then Peter stands up. There is unfinished business. One of the Twelve is gone. Judas, who had walked with Jesus, eaten with Jesus, and been trusted by Jesus, had turned aside and gone to his own place. It is a sobering moment, and Peter does not gloss over it. He opens the Scriptures, shows that even this had been foreseen, and calls the group to fill the empty place so that the circle of witnesses to the resurrection would be complete.

So they pray, they cast lots, and Matthias is numbered with the eleven. It is a quiet scene, no miracles yet, no crowds, just a praying church putting its house in order and trusting God with the outcome. But everything that explodes at Pentecost grows out of this soil: a people gathered, united, soaked in prayer, submitted to Scripture, and waiting on God. Before the church speaks to the world, it kneels before its Lord.

Group Discussion: Luke says the believers were all together with one accord, devoting themselves to prayer, as they waited for the Spirit (v. 14). Why do you think unity and prayer came first, before any of the public work of the church began? What does that order teach us?

Personal Reflection: These believers waited together rather than scattering to wait alone. When you are in a season of uncertainty, do you tend to draw near to God's people or pull away from them? Why?

Read Acts 1:12-26

Study Questions

1. Luke notes that the believers, with the apostles, the women, Mary, and Jesus' brothers, all devoted themselves with one accord to prayer (v. 14). What does it tell us about the nature and foundation of the Lord's church that it began not with activity but with united prayer?

2. The first believers waited on God together, with one accord, rather than each going their own way (v. 14). Think honestly about your own relationships in the body of Christ. Where do you need to pursue greater unity, and what is one barrier you could work to remove this week?
3. Peter said that the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas (vv. 16, 20). What does Peter's use of the Psalms teach us about the inspiration and authority of Scripture?
4. Peter let Scripture, not his own feelings, govern how the church responded to a hard situation (vv. 16-22). In your own decisions, how much weight does the Bible actually carry? Name one area where you sense God calling you to submit your choices more fully to His Word.
5. Peter said the replacement for Judas had to be someone who accompanied them from John's baptism until the ascension, a witness with them of Jesus' resurrection (vv. 21-22). What do these qualifications tell us about the unique role of the apostles, and why does this matter for claims of apostleship today?
6. Matthias was chosen to be a witness with the others of the resurrection of Jesus (v. 22). Though we are not apostles, every Christian is called to testify to the risen Christ. In what setting do you find it hardest to be a clear witness, and why?
7. The believers prayed, Lord, You know the hearts of all (v. 24), then cast lots before the Spirit was given, trusting God to make the choice. What does this scene teach us about God's knowledge of the human heart and about seeking His will in our decisions?
8. These believers wanted God to search and guide their hearts, not just bless their plans (v. 24). Are there decisions right now where you have already decided what you want and are only hoping God agrees? What would it look like to truly seek His will instead?
9. Judas was one of the Twelve, chosen by Jesus and numbered among the apostles, yet he turned aside to go to his own place (vv. 16-17, 25). What sober warning does Judas' fall give us about the possibility of a person who once walked with Christ falling away, and how does this correct the idea that a believer can never be lost?
10. Look back across this whole passage of a praying, waiting, Scripture-shaped church putting its house in order. Name one specific way the Lord is calling you, through Acts 1:12-26, to grow as a disciple, and what is one step you will take this week in response.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8, the Scriptures Peter applies to Judas, showing prophecy fulfilled; 2 Timothy 3:16-17, all Scripture breathed out by God and sufficient for every good work; Hebrews 3:12-14, the warning to hold fast and not fall away from the living God; Acts 4:32-35, the one accord and shared life that flowed from this praying church; Proverbs 16:33, the lot cast yet every decision from the Lord