

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 3.2.2025

PART 4 - WAITING ON THE PROMISE

I. INTRODUCTION

- Our study in Acts so far has been a wonderful encouragement as we've begun studying the continuation of Jesus' ministry after his resurrection.
- We've looked at the many proofs offered by the resurrection of his deity, the promise to his apostles of the coming of the Spirit from on high, and his ascension into glory, leaving them as his witnesses to the world.
- And now with Jesus ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, we'll look at what the apostles and disciples were doing as they were waiting for the promised coming of the Spirit.
- They are busy in their waiting as they prepare to be a part of the expansion of the kingdom of God as his Spirit-filled witnesses.

II. A SIMPLE PREPARATION

Acts 1:12-14

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. **13** And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. **14** All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

- Christ preached of the kingdom of God during his three years of ministry, he spoke of it to his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection.
- And now he has ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, and the disciples are left being chided by the angels - "Why do you stand looking into heaven? Jesus went up to heaven, and he's going to return in the same way"
- They are left standing there, after having spent 3 years physically by the side of Jesus, being with him after his physical resurrection, and now he has ascended, and they are alone on the mountain.
- v12, Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.
- Luke doesn't speak of any uncertainty in their actions. They had a clear command to follow: wait in Jerusalem for the coming Spirit, and when he has come upon you, you will be Spirit-filled witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. We saw that order given to them in Acts 1:4-5 several weeks back.

- So the “they” that are returning are the 11 apostles. Having gone with Jesus out to the Mount called Olivet, or the mount of Olives, and having witnessed his ascension, they are now returning to obey Jesus’ command to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the promised Holy Spirit.
- And it goes on to say that when they had entered, that is Jerusalem, they went to the upper room, where they were staying.
- Now maybe this was the same upper room as where they stayed for the last supper. Or, more likely, the upper room they stayed in after the crucifixion in John 20:19.
- Upper rooms were used as meeting places. They were generally on the upstairs level of a home and had an external stairway leading to it, separate from the rest of the house.
- The Mount of Olives is where the Messiah was prophesied to return to in Zechariah 14. *4 On that day his feet shall stand on the mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east...! 9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one.*
- The mount of Olives is a significant place. It was the mountain where revolutions started. A mountain where prophetic events were to take place.
- And mountains themselves had the connotation of being connection points between heaven and earth.
- Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. God called Moses up the mountain to speak with him.
- They had been told previously in Luke 24:29 that the Spirit would be poured out from on high - so they went to a high place. But they didn’t go to the temple, but to an upper room.
- So then, Jesus’ ascension into heaven and the kingdom of Spirit-filled witnesses in all the earth kicked off, not from the mount of Zion in Jerusalem, the principal place of Israel, but from the mount of Olives, the place where Messiah would return to.
- And his people who will spearhead this new kingdom, return not to the temple to receive the Holy Spirit, the place where for centuries people had gone to pray and be close to the presence of God, but to an upper room, where the Spirit would be poured out from on high.
- The 11 apostles were all there. And this was the same list of apostles as was also described in Luke 6:13-16 with the exception of Judas (and the only other difference being a different order of their names).
- You have the apostles and also other disciples too. And it mentions specifically the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.
- How were they waiting on the promise of the Spirit?
- **They were obedient** - They were together obeying the Lord's command to return to Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit. Ten days they waited together from the ascension till the coming of the Spirit.
- **They gathered together** - They were busy gathering. This is important for the people of God. We’re commanded not to forsake gathering together. Gathering together characterizes his people because we are all one in Christ, one body, one family of God.
- **They were unified.** They gathered in one accord it says. The apostles returned as a group. The disciples gathered together as a group.
- When you accept the Lord and trust in the risen Savior, you are added to a group - the church.
- And so being with one accord - they were unified together by their faith in Christ.
- **They were praying.** They devoted themselves to prayer. Prayer characterized the early believers.
- And this devotion to prayer is so absolutely necessary as they wait for the coming Spirit. As they wait to become Spirit-filled witnesses. As they wait to begin the expansion of the kingdom of God.
- In fact, prayer in Acts precedes almost every important event in Acts!
- The choosing of a replacement 12th apostle as well see in a moment (1:24)

- The Holy Spirit coming to the saints in Samaria in Acts chapter 8(8:14-17)
- Saul at his conversion, in his blindness, was praying in Acts chapter 9 (9:11-12)
- Peter and Cornelius when the gospel goes to the Gentiles. In acts chapter 10 we see both are praying (10:4,9,30)
- When God called Saul and Barnabas to go out and preach the gospel - they were praying and fasting in Acts chapter 13 (13:2-3)
- In this case here in Acts 1:14, they were praying in preparation to receive the promised Holy Spirit.
- They were praying no longer with Jesus as they had for years, but now they are praying to the ascended Christ.
- Have you committed to praying for your church, and with your church? We need prayer!
- It is a means God uses in his sovereign governance and rule over this world. When his people pray, he hears them, and he responds, he takes action!
- Here we see that they are collectively devoted to praying and seeking the Lord.
- Women were praying. This is notable because we see here the gospel crossing gender and social boundaries at the time. The good news of the gospel is for men, women, children, young and old!
- We see Jesus' family here praying too. Mary, his mother, and his brothers.
- This is also significant because we know from Mark chapter 3 that initially his family didn't believe; they thought he was nuts.
- Mark 3:20-21 *20 Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. 21 And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."*
- John 7:5 says *"For not even his brothers believed in him."*
- And yet here we see his own family praying to him! His own mother is praying to her son. His brother James is praying to his brother!
- We know that Jesus's brother James believed because of the evidence of the resurrection. And in 1 Cor 15:3-7 when Paul recounts the gospel he includes that after Christ was resurrected, "Then he appeared to James"
- James believes so strongly in Jesus that he devotes himself to ministry. Later on in Acts 15 at the Jerusalem council, we see James is a church leader there.
- The historian Josephus wrote that ultimately James' faith in his own brother Jesus was so strong he was stoned to death for Christ.
- What is your response to Christ's resurrection and ascension? Has the overwhelming evidence and power of the resurrection transformed your heart and have you received the gift of salvation that was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ?
- And if you have, how has that transformed you? Are you emboldened to live all out for him? Do you believe so strongly that nothing can shake that faith, that your entire life is to be lived in service to the risen Lord?
- The gospel is good news for our unbelieving family members and friends. Even the resistant ones. Many of us have family or friends who we've been praying for.
- Be encouraged. Keep praying for them. The gospel is good news and the Lord who can give ears to hear and eyes to see can open the resistant hearts of those we love.

III. A SOVEREIGN PLAN

ACTS 1:15-20

In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, 16 “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong[[d](#)] he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,

and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and “Let another take his office.’

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” 23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

- In this passage, we see God’s sovereign plan involving the replacement of Judas with Matthias.
- And in those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was. in all about 120) and said “Brothers”.
- Now, we know that Jesus appeared to over 500 eyewitnesses after his resurrection. That’s a pretty big group.
- And from those, 120 disciples were gathered in this upper room. A disciple is a learner of Christ. A student of his. Jesus was a rabbi and he had students who were learning and following his discipline. And from among those disciples, there were 12 he had specifically chosen as apostles.
- If you recall, an apostle is an ambassador. A representative with authority of the one sending him on his mission. Not all disciples were apostles. But all the apostles were disciples too.
- And as ambassadors, they are sent as emissaries to foreign countries and places on behalf of the one they represent. Before king Jesus left this earth, he designated the apostles to be his ambassadors to the world, giving them apostolic authority.
- So Peter says here to the other apostles and disciples: “The scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”
- The actions of Judas were the fulfillment of Scripture -something which we’ll see happen all throughout Acts.
- So don’t miss this: the actions of Judas were part of the divine plan of God and in fulfillment of what the Holy Spirit said would come.
- God was working out his plans which sovereignly used the evil acts of Judas for ultimate good and for his glory.
- Peter is telling us that all this was a part of God’s plan being enacted! Jesus didn’t make a mistake choosing Judas! His evil actions were a necessary part of God’s plan!
- We know from scripture that God is sovereign. His sovereignty means that he has all power, all authority, all wisdom to rule over all that he has created.

- And in his sovereignty he has a plan for this world, a plan for all creation that includes his divine providence or governance of all that occurs in this world. The 1689 London Baptist Confession summarizes what scripture has to say about God's sovereign plans, specifically in regards to evil actions such as the betrayal of Judas, in this way:
 - *5. 4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God are so thoroughly demonstrated in his providence, that his sovereign plan includes even the first fall and every other sinful action both of angels and humans. God's providence over sinful actions does not occur by simple permission. Instead, God most wisely and powerfully limits and in other ways arranges and governs sinful actions. Through a complex arrangement of methods he governs sinful actions to accomplish his perfectly holy purposes. Yet he does this in such a way that the sinfulness of their acts arises only from the creatures and not from God. Because God is altogether holy and righteous, he can neither originate nor approve of sin.*
 - This is a mystery we hold to be true: That God in his wisdom and infinite goodness has a sovereign plan that includes all the good actions but also the evil ones of his creation.
 - He is not the cause of evil. Evil cannot be attributed to him for he is holy and righteous in all his being.
 - But he does govern sinful actions and uses them to accomplish his holy purposes. How does he do that? It's a mystery, but one we can hold open handedly knowing the scriptures tell us it's true.
 - God used the sinful actions of Joseph's brothers selling him as a slave to Egypt as a part of his good plan to preserve Israel and fulfill his promise to Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.
 - And Joseph sees that, and tells his brothers "You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good".
 - God hates sin. He is offended by it, it's an abomination to him, and an affront to his holiness.
 - And yet, he created a world and put a plan in place by his own sovereign decree that included the fall of man, man's rebellion, and also include the greatest display of his mercy towards lost sinners in his plan to send his own son on their behalf to die a wretched death, taking their punishment and shame upon himself.
 - There is a wonderful, sovereign, and wise plan in place, church, which God foreordained before the foundations of the world, and it is being enacted and worked out according to the definite plan of God.
 - Judas, his evil, the apostles, and the church, and you and I all have a part in that plan. It comes from his infinite goodness and wisdom, marvelously being worked out through the ages of time!
 - So then, we can join with Paul and exclaim as he does in Romans 11:33 *"33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"*
 - Because it is his plan, the scripture HAD to be fulfilled. It was necessary that it happen. It's a divine requirement, a theme Luke goes back to frequently in Acts an astounding 22 times, where he details that actions were necessary by divine decree.
 - In this case, the Holy Spirit inspired David to speak prophetically concerning the actions of Judas.
 - And by Peter saying this, it indicates he believed God's word to be true, prophetic, and without error. If God said it, we believe it.
 - It also affirms that scripture is the inspired word of God. That the Holy Spirit spoke through men like David to convey his word. It wasn't David's prophecy, it was the Holy Spirit using David as the means for his word to be given to us.
 - Peter writes later in 1 Peter 1:21 *"21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

- This was exactly what happened with David Peter says, he spoke these things via inspiration of the Holy Spirit, thus prophesying events to come.
- Peter also says that Judas was a GUIDE to the arresting crowd. That is similar to the word for “the way” like we studied in our series in Psalms. In Psalm 1 we saw the way of the righteous and the way of the sinner.
- Judas chose the way of the sinner - which wouldn't be expected since he was numbered as one of the 12. He was allocated his share in the ministry of Jesus. This is important because he was truly one of the 12. But he fell away. He walked in the path of the sinner instead of the path of the righteous.
- But there is a sober warning there: Judas, who was with Jesus daily, hearing him teach and preach the kingdom of God, served alongside him in his ministry, was face to face with him for 3 years, but then ultimately betrayed him, valuing his silver above the savior.
- He had every opportunity to trust in Christ, hearing him lovingly call lost sinners to repentance, and yet he chose to ultimately reject him.
- Don't choose the way of the sinner. Turn and trust in Christ.
- In verse 18 Luke puts on his narrator voice, you see the parenthesis here.
- And that's what Luke does here within Peter's speech, he jumps in and gives a quick backstory, a quick narration, for context about Judas.
- Luke says Judas acquired a field - now whether he purchased it with the 30 pieces of silver or the leaders with his silver, it was the silver paid to him which purchased the field.
- It calls that silver the reward for his wickedness. Now even though the entire framing of this is for the purpose of showing the fulfillment of God's plans, Judas' actions were still wicked. They were still evil, and he, not God, was accountable for his actions.
- Luke then goes on to say having acquired this field, he then proceeded to fall headlong into it and he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.
- These are some pretty gory details shared here, but they do serve to highlight God's judgement against him. The outcome of the one who opposed God, even as his opposition was within God's sovereign plan.
- The fate of Judas represents the fate of those who oppose Christ's kingdom.
- The Lord's judgement is awaiting all who reject, defy, and oppose him. Judgement is coming for all who remain in sin and trespass. This is a sobering reminder, God will judge the wicked.
- Therefore, repent and trust in Christ and accept the judgement placed on him as your own and flee from the wrath to come! And the Bible promises that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved!
- The differences between the account of Judas in Matthew 27:3-10 and the one here in Acts:
 - In Matthew, Judas repents. In Acts, it doesn't mention this.
 - In Matthew the chief priest buys the field; in Acts Judas acquires the field
 - In Matthew it's the Blood field because it's bought with blood money; in Acts it's the field of blood because Judas falls and bursts open
 - In Matthew Judas hangs himself; in Acts he fell and burst open
 - In Matthew it fulfills Jer 32:6-8 and Zech 11:12-13; in Acts it's tied to Ps 69:25 and Ps 109:8
 - The account in Matthew focuses on the guilt of Judas and the leaders in their actions, as well as the evil of the action, and the innocence of Christ.
 - The account here in Acts focuses on the fate of Judas and the fulfillment of Scripture, his judgement, and ultimately the faithfulness of God is replacing him with another.
 - But we should be clear, this is certainly an account of judgement on Judas for his wickedness.

- When we think of Acts, we often think of the Spirit filled witnesses boldly proclaiming the gospel, the birth of the church, or Paul's missionary journeys - but there's also a good deal of judgement in Acts on those who would oppose the Lord, and stand against him.
- The account of Judas is just the first, but think about:
- Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter 5 (5:1-11) - They lied to the Holy Spirit and literally dropped dead as judgement for their attempted deception, falsely claiming to have given their all.
- Peter curses Simon the sorcerer in Acts chapter 8 (8:9-24)
- An angel strikes Herod dead in Acts chapter 12 for his failure to give glory to God - Acts 12:20-24
- And Elymas the sorcerer was struck blind for a time in Acts chapter 13 (13:6-11)
- So Judas too was justly judged. This thing became known and the field got a nickname.
- Luke takes the time to point out the colloquial name for the field - Akeldama - the field of blood, which is significant.
- This field of blood was Judas' desolate place. We'll see this in the prophetic verse from David next in verse 20, "may his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it", referring to this field of blood.
- These were spoken by the Holy Spirit through David centuries before concerning Judas in Psalm 69:25.
- David had written this while surrounded by enemies. The insults of the enemy have gone on long enough and he calls out to the Lord for them to be punished as they are attacking God's chosen one. So he calls for punishment on their table, their eyes, their hips, and here, their dwelling, their camp.
- Luke and Peter apply this to Judas. Just as David was righteous and suffered by the hand of his enemy, Jesus was more perfectly righteous, suffering too by a betrayer.
- In fact the next verse in Psalm 69:26 also refers to Christ, the one God struck and wounded for our sins.
- *26 For they persecute him whom you have struck down, and they recount the pain of those you have wounded.*
- Judas the betrayer set up the arrest and capture of Jesus in the events leading to the cross. And for his betrayal, he was judged, his final resting place being a desolate place, the field of blood.
- This desolate place is not where you want to end up. It is a place of judgement. It's a place reserved for those who reject the salvation of the Lord.
- In Isaiah 32:15 we see that the Spirit is the one who turns desolate places into beautiful lush and fruitful gardens. But the rejection of the Spirit is wilderness wandering. A scattering into the wilderness, into desolate places.
- We won't get into it now, but I encourage you to go read in 1st and 2nd Kings of the account of Naboth, King Ahab, and Queen Jezebel. The account there occurs at a place called Jezreel which means "God Scatters" and it was at Jezreel many centuries before Judas that Naboth too had a plot of land, which the evil King Ahab coveted greatly.
- And when Naboth wouldn't sell out, Jezebel had him killed. And for her own wickedness, her blood was spilled.
- With God's Spirit, we see springs overflowing in the desert. It's life-giving and full of blessings. But the rejection of the message, rejection of God, puts you in the wilderness. In a desolate place.
- Whose blood are you covered by? Judas and Jezebel were judged, and their own blood is referenced in the scattered, desolate place.
- But if you are in Christ, then you are covered by the blood of a substitute, no longer in a desolate place, not in the field of blood, but covered by the blood of the lamb, and now he gives you life as springs in the desert.

- Ultimately Judas ended up in a desolate place, a field of blood, and eventually it was used as a place to bury foreigners and the living didn't dwell there.

IV. A SOVEREIGN CHOICE

- *"Let another take his office." This second prophecy comes from Psalm 109:8.*
- And here the story takes a turn. Judas, in the sovereign plan of God, being numbered among the 12, became a guide to those arresting Jesus, and who stood against the holy son of God, and ultimately he was guilty and judged, condemned for his sin.
- But now we read *"Let another take his office"*. In Psalm 109, David cries out to the Lord because of the accusations of the wicked against him. Listen to how he starts that chapter:
 - *Psalm 109:1-5 1 Be not silent, O God of my praise! 2 For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues. 3 They encircle me with words of hate, and attack me without cause. 4 In return for my love they accuse me, but I give myself to prayer. 5 So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.*
 - Sounds quite a bit like the garden of Gethsemane, doesn't it? Judas comes to Jesus in deceit, with accusations, the leaders and soldiers encircling him, and in return for his love, they are accusing him of evil, hating him for his good.
 - So then David goes on to say "Let my accuser be replaced!" May my accusers days be few, may he be fatherless, blot out his name from the earth and let someone else stand for him because he's bad news!
 - *"May his days be few; may another take his office!" - Psalm 109:8*
 - And so Peter, by way of the Holy Spirit, puts it all together and says because of this prophecy which indicates that the betrayer must be replaced, therefore "One of the men who can be a witness from the beginning of Jesus' ministry all the way through his ministry till now, let him become with us a witness to his resurrection."
 - Now certainly Jesus could have named a replacement apostle before he ascended. But he didn't. He left it to the other 11 apostles.
 - Maybe this is evidence of the leadership he intends for them, but it certainly shows that they are still guided by the Lord even after the ascension. They are following God's plan for the restored Israel to be made whole, the 12th tribe restored.
 - There are certain conditions that he names however for the apostolic candidate to meet:
 - **He needed to be with Jesus as he went in and out among them.**
 - This is important because they were to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
 - They had to be traveling with Jesus so they could be ready to be traveling witnesses.
 - Travel is a key theme in Acts where we see frequent traveling as a part of acts of the apostles in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.
 - **And the new apostle needed to be with him the whole time,** beginning from his baptism in the Jordan river until his ascension.
 - So if we sum these up, then the main requirement is - they needed to be with Jesus. They had to be close to him, so that they could truly bear witness.
 - Specifically to be witnesses to his resurrection. His resurrection was of utmost importance:
 - It provided irrefutable evidence that Jesus is who He claimed to be – the Son of God.
 - It fulfilled and validated the Scriptures, which foretold His coming and resurrection.

- But most importantly it proved Christ's claims that He would be raised on the third day (John 2:19-21; Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34).
 - Jesus went to the cross willingly, sacrificially, but before he did, he let them know that death wouldn't be the end. That death would not triumph, and after 3 days he would rise again.
 - *Mark 8:31-32 31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly.*
 - And so the resurrection was crucial to his claims of who he was - the Messiah.
 - 1 Corinthians 15 tells us that If Christ's body was not resurrected, we have no hope that our bodies will be resurrected in glory.
 - And that, apart from his bodily resurrection, we have no Savior, no salvation, and no hope of eternal life. Our faith would be baseless.
 - So it was highly important that this replacement apostle would be a witness to the resurrected Christ.
 - In fact, this "must" happen. Their understanding of God's will here. Of his plan. The prophecy didn't say who would take his place. It didn't describe their process of selection. There was no specifics given at all. But, they knew what God's word said, and they knew they were to follow it.
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- So they put forward two candidates: Joseph called Barsabbas called Justus and Matthias.
 - Both candidates were equal in terms of their qualifications. So how do they choose? How do you make an important decision where both options seem good, but the determination will lead to two totally different outcomes?
 - We encounter decisions like this in our own lives, right? Sometimes we wonder: what is God's will here? How do I know if I'm choosing the right thing? Whom do I choose to marry? Should I buy a house here or there? Which job should I take? How do I discern the will of God for my life?
 - We can agonize over these things, or waffle in them seeking clarity.
 - So then, look at what the apostles do here:
 - They Pray
 - They commit the decision to the Lord
 - And they took action
 - First, they prayed. So yet again, we see them go to prayer. Earlier we saw they obeyed the command to wait for the Spirit. And while they waited, they devoted themselves to prayer. And that prayer led to Peter standing up and recounting the scriptural need for a replacement apostle. And then, having selected several candidates, they again go to prayer.
 - When we have a decision to make - do we first and foremost take it to the Lord in prayer? We sometimes think we're smart, we sometimes try to first take control and wrestle open the way forward, or we tend to think a decision is clear because it meets what our flesh wants.
 - First take it to the Lord in prayer. As we've seen, prayer precedes so many wonderful acts of the Lord, so first pray!
 - Let's look at how they prayed here, because Luke takes the time to include what they prayed for this time. How they prayed.
 - *"Lord you know the hearts of all"*
 - He knows the hearts of all. He knows the hearts of these two candidates.
 - Scripture tells us this is true:
 - 1 Sam 16:7 The Lord says to Samuel concerning David " For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."
 - Jer 20:12 "12 O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind,"

- The Lord knew intimately the hearts of both these candidates. The disciples knew them to both be qualified, disciples of Christ, but only the Lord knew their inner hearts.
- So because of that they prayed *“Show which one you have chosen”*
- They acknowledge that ultimately the choice isn't their own. It's the Lord's. He chose the current 11 to be apostles, we saw that earlier in verse 2, and it's up to him to choose the replacement.
- And there is this continuing aspect here of acknowledging that because the plan was ordained by the Lord, it must happen.
- And so they pursue the means he's given them, looking to scripture for what must happen, and praying about this decision, but then acknowledging that the decision is ultimately the Lord's.
- It's his plan, he knows their hearts, and he's ultimately the one that's working all things out according to his sovereign decree. Show us which one of these you have chosen.
- He's working out a sovereign and good plan involving your life too. And my life. We can commit every decision, every stage of our lives, everything to him!
- Not only does he know what we're thinking and what we'll choose, but he's sovereignly working all things together for our good for his glory! So commit your decisions to him! Recognize that he is sovereign over them.
- We now have the Spirit indwelling in us if we're in Christ. We have the whole word of God, the canon of Scripture, fully inspired to guide us in our decision making.
- If two ways are before us which both are wise and good and true, then commit your decision to the Lord and trust that whatever you pick will be ultimately part of his plan for you.
- Whichever apostle was chosen, they were “to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.”
- Notice that they also recognize that the one taking this place of Judas would be in ministry and apostleship. Service, and authority. Jesus was their example as the ultimate servant. He had served them himself, and commanded that they serve one another.
- And as an apostle, they were to be ambassadors of Christ's authority. Apostolic authority was only for the apostles.
- So now they've searched scripture, they've prayed, and now it's time to act. And their action is to cast lots. Roll of the dice, or more accurately they would put little marks on sticks or stones to indicate decisions and then cast them into an area. Then, depending on how they fell, that would indicate the decision.
- Proverbs 16:33 tells us *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.*
- God's sovereign governance and rule extends to every action in all that he has created. Not even the outcome of the roll of a dice which to us is seemingly random is outside his dominion.
- This is important, because if even one little action was outside the scope of his sovereignty, then even a small thing like this could lead to another unplanned action, and then another, and ultimately make it possible for God's sovereign plan to be undone!
- And if his plans can be thwarted, then how can we have any guarantee that God will keep his promises to us in the future? We can't! But, since every action, every aspect of his creation is within his dominion and governance, we can depend on his sovereignty for every choice.
- This was the historical view for casting lots. Casting lots those times was a traditional way of decision making by acknowledging that the outcome of the casting of lots was within the sovereignty of God and ordained by him.
- It was an action that said, we commit the decision to the Lord and the outcome is by his determination.
- We see this used in numerous places in the Old Testament:

- In Leviticus 16 Aaron cast lots for two goats for sovereign determination for which was to be used as a sin offering.
 - In the book of Jonah, the sailors cast lots on the boat in the midst of the storm to determine who had committed such a grievous sin and incurred the wrath of God for the sending of the storm.
 - In Numbers 26 the inheritance of the land was divided by lot for the tribes of Israel
 - Earlier we read verse 17 where it says Judas was allotted his share in his ministry. The literal meaning there was he was casting lots in Jesus ministry, and now fittingly, he is also replaced by casting lots.
 - And the lot is cast and we see that Mathias was chosen and numbered among the 12.
 - The replacement was chosen, with dependence on the sovereignty of God for the choice, and the replacement made. Mathias is the twelfth apostle. And that is the last we hear of him in scripture.
 - We see the effect of the apostolic authority throughout Acts as the church grows and the kingdom expands, we know the apostles are traveling and being Spirit filled ambassadors for the risen and ascended Christ, but it's the last we hear of Mathias specifically.
 - After this replacement, there would be no more replacements. When James is martyred not much later on, executed by Herod, there is no replacement made.
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- As we think about the selection of Matthias and the replacement of Judas, it was all part of God's plan.
 - We see the scriptural support for it through the prophecies uttered by David under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
 - We see Peter acknowledge this MUST happen, it was necessary.
 - We see the casting of lots and the choice made ultimately by a sovereign Lord.
 - God's plan here for Judas being numbered among the 12 and ultimately replaced by Mathias was part of his wonderful and wise direction.
 - Judas was definitely one of the 12. And just like in the Old Testament where from among the 12 tribes of Israel, some fell away and the 12 tribes were no longer whole, restoration of the 12th was needed.
 - God had promised long ago that Israel would one day be unified and made whole again.
 - In Isaiah 49:9 he says: *"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*
 - The tribes of Jacob would one day be raised up and gathered together again as the preserved of Israel. Made as a light for the nations, that his salvation may reach to the ends of the earth!
 - In Isaiah 11:13 it says *"The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart, and those who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim."*
 - Israel had been divided, separated, Judah and Ephraim apart from one another. But one day, they'll no longer be separated. No longer be at odds with one another, but gathered together and made whole again as the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - And in the replacement of Judas, one of the 12, with Mathias, as the 12 apostles are made whole again, we now see fulfillment of Gods' promises in the Old Testament.
 - Just like the 12 tribes of Israel were the foundation of God's people under the old covenant, now 12 apostles would be the foundation of God's people under the new covenant.
 - These people would be Spirit filled witnesses, coming from every nation, tribe, and tongue, a people who are ruled by a good and sovereign king of kings and Lord of Lords.

- God had a sovereign kingdom expansion plan. It started with completing the 12, reconciling a whole people to himself, and as the kingdom expanded and advanced through his Spirit filled witnesses, people would be gathered to himself, who are called by his name.
- We are those people. Citizens of the kingdom of God. And as this passage reminds us, may we be people who:
 - Are busy as we wait on the Lord, obedient, gathering, unified, and devoting ourselves to prayer.
 - May we be people who find comfort in serving a sovereign and good king, one to whom even the evil actions do not disrupt our King's plans but are a part of it by design for our ultimate good and his utmost glory.
 - And may we pray hard about decisions in life, seeking scripture for godly wisdom and insight, and then commit our decisions to the Lord and take action trusting in his sovereignty over all.
 - The kingdom of God continues to grow and will do so until his return to the mount of Olives, which also will be right on schedule in the sovereign and good plan of our infinitely wise and good and almighty Father in heaven who governs in righteousness all the affairs of this world.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?