



2 | ACTS 1:12-26

READY FOR REVIVAL

*We dare not go forward in our own power.
Without the filling of the Spirit from on high, we are powerless.*

Outline

1. **READY FOR GOD TO WORK (1:12-14)**
 - The Place of Prayer
 - What Precedes Prayer
 - The People of Prayer
 - The Power of Prayer
2. **READY FOR WORLD TRANSFORMATION (1:15-26)**
 - Peter the Brokenhearted
 - Judas the Betrayer
 - Matthias the Humble
 - Criteria for Apostles*
 - Trusting God Alone*
 - Rise Up!*

Call to Worship

Zechariah the prophet said in chapter 4: "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. ³Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." ⁴I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied. ⁶So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

Songs

10000 Reasons
We Will Glorify
Lord I Need You
Take My Life and Let it Be
Hear the Call of the Kingdom

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees.

Use secretary@livinghopechurch.net.

We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

Verse: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —Matthew 6:19-21

LIFE GROUPS: LIFE Groups begin next week, February 7. If you don’t have a life group, look on the front page of our web site for a group. If you already have one, see your group leader to see where you are meeting, or if it is online. Most groups meet Wednesdays at 7pm

LADIES’ BIBLE STUDIES: Cindy Klikas leads a Bible study for women online at 10am every Wednesday. If you need the Zoom link, please email or text Cindy. Nicole Andrews also has a Ladies’ Bible Study every other Thursday at 7pm. If you are interested in joining, email or text Nicole.

Introduction

We continue our series in the book of Acts called “Life on Life Discipleship.” Our title this morning is: “Ready for Revival”.

Power Outage

Have you ever had a power outage? This past summer in Elgin, we had a microburst come through and rip up trees, tear up yards, and bent my son Will’s basketball rim structure in half. We were without power for a bit. Isn’t it frustrating to be without power? You’ve got your fridge, but you can’t open it often, or the food will spoil. You’re wired for electricity, but no power is surging.

We are often powerless in our Christian life. We’ve got all the equipment, but no power.

So the question is: how do I get the power of the Holy Spirit surging in my life?

Where do we start? We need to see what those early disciples did. They met together continually. Satan does his most destructive work when he isolates us. Are you isolated? Are you on your own in your Christian life? Maybe you feel no one cares.

If we want to the world to be interrupted and turned upside down by the Gospel we have to start with coming together. Right after the ascension, the disciples don’t disperse, but their grip on each other is tighter; their love is deeper.

God had to bring the disciples and apostles together in a unique way: they had seen the Lord risen from the dead. They were taught by him for 40 days. But they are told to wait for the power from the Spirit on high. We learn a lesson from these dear disciples.

Key thought: We dare not go forward in our own power. Without the filling of the Spirit from on high, we are powerless.

We have to be fully committed the idea that God alone must work. We cannot manufacture godliness in our lives. We cannot construct peace and contentment in our own power. Everything we build is a house of sand that only leads to anxiety and anger and despair. Let's not go there, but be ready for God alone to work. That's our first point.

1. READY FOR GOD TO WORK (1:12-14)

Acts 1:12 | Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

I have a vision of excitement in my mind when I picture the disciples returning to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives to obey the instructions that Jesus had given them. They were ready to obey the Lord together. Many of them had lived life with Jesus for the last three years. Gathered in the upper room were 120 (1:15), the apostles, the family of Jesus, Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and many others. The eleven Apostles that were left after the death of Judas are named in the text, and we are told, these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.¹ This is life-on-life discipleship. They were gathering in the Temple and in the upper room near the Temple. They were eating together (1:40-45), having times of fellowship and talking about the kingdom. But overall, this was a time where they were **praying** together.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER

Acts 1:13a | when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying...

Though we cannot be perfectly sure, I personally believe this was the same Upper Room in which our Lord ate the last supper with the disciples. The Greek text says, “*the*” upper room” (not just any upper room). If this is correct, it is beautifully fitting that the Holy Spirit was given in the very same room in which Jesus promised him.²

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper [Counselor], to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth... ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. —John 14:16–18

The upper room is traditionally thought to be above John Mark's home. He's the youngest apostle, and it's likely that this upper room was the enclosed upper floor above where he lived. There is a good view of the Temple Mount from that the traditional place of the upper room.

¹ R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 32.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 25.

Oh Holy Spirit, you were promised to us! Meet us where we are. We need you more than we need air. Guide us. Lead us. Let us never go one step in our own human wisdom.

THE PEOPLE OF PRAYER

We are told in passing that the Apostles were there with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.

Acts 1:13 | 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.

This is the last reference to Mary that we have anywhere in the New Testament, but we see Mary as a member of the first church. She was there with the rest of the disciples as part of the gathered church, praying for and to her own Son. This is the last mention of her in the Scriptures. Along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, were his own **half-brothers**. We know from the Gospels that Jesus' brothers were skeptics who rejected his claims to be the Messiah. They asked out loud if he had **lost his mind and gone crazy**. They said, "He is out of his mind" (Mk 3:21).

Jesus' brothers had been unbelievers (Jn 7:5) who opposed Jesus' ministry. But here is hope for all of us. They were persuaded and converted by the resurrection of Christ.³ James and Jude were both half-brothers of the Lord who each wrote a letter in our New Testament.

There was also and "the women" who had so faithfully ministered to Jesus during his life on earth (1:14): dear Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas, Susanna, Joanna, Mary of Bethany, Martha (in the kitchen no doubt!), and many others.⁴

But there were many others: 120 in total in fact (1:15) who were there praying. It's a diverse group, but it's about to get more diverse. So far you have **rich** and **poor**. **Lazarus** is likely there, so you have the **formerly dead** and the **living**! You have **former prostitutes** (like Mary Magdalene), **fisherman**, probably some **Pharisees** like Joseph and Nicodemus. It's a motley crew that's about to get "motlier"! Pentecost is coming, and that means, the Spirit is going to be poured out on all flesh.

WHAT PRECEDES PRAYER

We see already two things about how the church behaved in its first week of existence: **obedience** and **fellowship**. These things came before the powerful praying they were doing.

Acts 1:14 | All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Radical Obedience

The first thing that characterized the church in the early days was a **radical obedience to Christ**. This wasn't easy. One thing they might have done was to give up. **Jesus didn't drive out the Romans**. So they could have given up waiting on the Spirit and gone back to work like it was all a big game or fairy tale.

³ Sproul, 34.

⁴ Hughes, 25.

They could have given up. Peter had given up when Jesus caught him and restored him. They could have went back to their various professions and business obligations. Some had been fishermen. One was a tax collector. During the prior forty days some of them went back to Galilee and began to take up fishing again. The disciples could have said, “Jesus has left us. He said he is going to come back, but we don’t know when that’s going to be. Right now we have to **get on with the business of living.**”⁵

They could have went straight to evangelizing. But remember, Jesus says, wait for the Spirit. Who, having witnessed Christ, wouldn’t be eager to go out and spread the news everywhere? They were biting at the bit, eager to go.

Nevertheless, **they stayed where they were told to stay.** They waited, and they waited obediently. They knew without Christ they could do nothing.

Without Me, you can do nothing. —Jesus in John 15:5

We dare not go forward without the power and blessing of the Lord.

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. —
Psalm 127:1

Or remember what Zechariah the prophet said.

Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty.
—Zechariah 4:6

If you aren’t radically committed to moving forward in Christ’s power alone, then you are depending on another savior. You are worshipping yourself or someone else. All idolatry is rooted in self worship. There is a sweet trust in Christ and a radical abandonment of the world for these who gathered. If you want to see real intimacy in our church, it has to first begin with a radical obedience to Christ.

Deep Fellowship

Second, they needed **deep fellowship** with each other. We are told that when they came back to the upper room, they came as a group, as a body.

People need people. This need is part of what it means to be a human being. One of the worst things that can happen to a person is to be utterly isolated from other people, and the converse of this is that if we are to grow intellectually, socially, and spiritually, we need others. Christians need other Christians. When you become a Christian, you do not become a Christian in isolation.⁶ Instead we intertwine our lives with one another. We help each other. We do the hard work of helping each other forward pointing each other to Christ.

White Hot Coal Turned Cold

I heard of a pastor who visited with a parishioner who had been derelict in his duty to participate in the life of the church. The minister asked him, “Why is it that you are never in church? Why aren’t you involved in any of the programs? I know you’re on our rolls. I remember the day you joined. You’ve been baptized and you’ve made a profession of faith, but you’re never around.”

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 32.

⁶ Boice, 32.

The fellow replied, “Well, I don’t need the church. My faith is private and personal. I don’t need the rituals and trappings of religion. I can worship God by myself. I can get by just fine on my own.”

They were having a picnic while this discussion was going on, and the minister walked over to a charcoal grill where there was a heap of white burning coals prepared for the cooking of the hamburgers. With the tongs he took one of the coals off the pile and moved it out to the side, away from the center of the fire, and continued to converse with this church member. After a few minutes, he pointed to that coal and said, “Ten minutes ago that coal was white hot, but now it’s cold.” Once it was removed from the support system of the rest of those burning coals, it lost its heat, its capacity to be productive in the purpose for which it was made.

We cannot stand alone. We need each other. We need the support of fellowship, the mutual encouragement, the strength, and the prayers of the community in which we are involved. I get excited when people join Living Hope and become part of the congregation. There is such a diversity in the Body, and yet there is such a fervency! That is what happened in the early church. The Apostles went back to the upper room. Later 120 gathered there as a group—the very beginning of the church. What did they do? How did they spend their time? “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” They gathered together for prayer.⁷

THE POWER OF PRAYER

When the Lord cleansed the temple from its commercialism, he reminded the people that his Father’s house was to be a house of prayer (Mt 21:13). **The church, during the first week of its existence, was united together in prayer.** Don’t forget the incredible promises of the power of prayer.

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. —Jeremiah 33:3

No matter what situation you are in, you can call on God.

When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. —Psalm 91:15

Luke does not tell us what they were praying about, but there was plenty about which to pray. They could have been offering thanksgiving for what they had witnessed and experienced. They might have spent time in confession as well as praying for the burgeoning expansion of the church that was going to come in the near future. Whatever might have comprised those prayers, they stayed together, praying with one another.

What is prayer but connecting with a God where no idolatry is permitted? You cannot have two masters. You cannot worship God and money, God and sex, God and any way that you want to choose to worship yourself and your way. There is no competition in God’s realm. He is God alone. When we enter into eternity, there will be no sin, no confusion, no idolatry. Prayer is turning our hearts to that realm and bringing that realm to earth.

⁷ Sproul, Acts, 32.

God Alone Can Do What is Needed

Most importantly, prayer teaches us that needs to be done in your life, only God can do. Now we have to come together, as we will see, for God to do it. But the pastor or counselor or fellow believer can't change you. What needs to be done is always done by God, and that is why prayer is so important.

2. READY FOR **WORLD** TRANSFORMATION (1:15-26)

When the apostles would one be those who transformed the world. It would later be said of them in Thessalonica:

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.—Acts 17:6

But at this moment they felt powerless, not world transformers. You may feel **powerless** today. That's where the disciples were. They had the kingdom teaching from the resurrected Christ. But they lacked power. They dared not go forward without his power. **All the men and women listed here are sidelined if you will.** They are waiting on God to go forward.

Sidelined because of Hurt

Maybe you feel sidelined today. Perhaps it's because you've been hurt by the church in the past. The church is an imperfect place. There are sins and scandals sometimes. Jesus had great scandals among his own 12 disciples. Peter had denied him three times.

Discipleship is messy. And what about **Judas**? What greater scandal is there but to have one of Jesus own 12 disciples turn against him and **sell him to the highest bidder for 30 pieces of silver**? What scandal. But that's how discipleship is. It's messy. If you don't want messiness, you don't want discipleship. Look at how the disciples were scattered.

Remember **Peter** had given up completely. And what did Jesus do? He went after him. And what did the apostles do after Judas had betrayed Jesus? They followed the leading of the Spirit.

Cursed is the Man that Trusts in Man

You can't change the world if you are looking at anyone but Jesus. Some of you might be looking at the church, and you're disappointed. You're looking at your spouse, and you're disappointed. You're looking at yourself! And you're disappointed. Stop looking at man and look up to God!

Cursed is the man who trusts in man... ⁶He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. ⁷"Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. ⁸He is like a tree planted by water...
—Jeremiah 17:5-7

Everytime you look to man, you will be disappointed. God alone can give you the power for joy, satisfaction, and power for the Christian life.

PETER THE BROKENHEARTED

Now we have Peter, in verse 15, standing up and getting them ready as they replace Judas Iscariot. He knows what Christ can do. Here's a man that can testify of the power of Jesus to restore!

Acts 1:15 | In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120)...

Perhaps you are here like Peter, and you are powerless, because you need restoration. You've sinned against the Lord, and you think the Lord is done with you. Can I just encourage you this morning?

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. —Psalm 34:18-19

Maybe you're like Peter—afflicted, brokenhearted, crushed in spirit. God will deliver you out of all your afflictions. He loves you. I know you can't imagine a God that would love so deeply, but God is the ultimate standard of what love is. "God is love" (1 Jn 4:8).

The story of Peter is a wonderful and thrilling story of the power of God to transform the life of a humble fisherman into that of a mighty leader in the early church.

His prophetic change of name implies that though Peter was weak and impetuous and headstrong, he was going to be a foundation stone with the other Apostles. God can take a weak, cracked vessel of clay, and make him a strong foundation stone. Peter would eventually display that rock-like faith that would enable him to emerge as the leader of God's making.

There is a real sense in which God's grace is doing that all the time. God molds and shapes men and women to make them the kind of people he wants them to be and to fit them for the tasks he wants them to do.⁸

JUDAS THE BETRAYER

Here we are dealing with a totally different kind of person as Luke makes clear in his reference to the **tragic suicide of Judas**.⁹ Judas was a very dangerous kind of powerless. He wasn't a believer. He trusted in his own power. That's a scary and frightening thing. He trusted in his education, his family's reputation, and his money. Oh, he had lots of money. He lived the comfortable life, the materialistic life. And Peter stands up among the disciples and tells his story.

Acts 1:15-17 | 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."

⁸ Peter Williams. *Acts: Church on the Move: An Expositional Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Exploring the Bible Commentary (Leominster: DayOne, 2004), 17.

⁹ Williams, Acts, 18-19.

His Teacher. Judas sat under the **greatest Teacher in the history of the world**, and yet he remained unconverted. God in human flesh was his Teacher, yet his heart remained hard.

His home. Judas was raised in a **believing and devout home**. We learn this by his name: “**Judas**”. Judas today is not a good name, but then, it was a **name of great honor**. With a name Judas, or as it is in Hebrew: “**Judah**,” he was named after the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. He would have grown up in a very devout Jewish family.

His education. We learn something from his surname as well. The name “Isariot” tells us where he lived. Isariot in Hebrew means “Man of Carioth” which is a city between Jerusalem and Hebron. Judas was not from Samaria, but **a highly educated man** of Judah, near Jerusalem.

His deception. Judas was a false convert. He might have fooled the other disciples, but he didn’t fool God. He betrayed the Almighty Son of God. But why? From the Scriptures Peter quotes, we see how God sovereignly guided the events. Judas sold the Son of God to be crucified. God is able to use the greatest sins for his greater glory. Through Judas’ sin came the greatest redemption. God is not bound by man’s sin. James tells us that **God is not the author of sin**.

God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. —
James 1:13

God is good all the time. Not even this evil man could stop Jesus from pouring out his love to the world. So God guided the events after Judas committed his sin. And Judas was to be replaced. That was what God put in the Scriptures.

His suicide. One other thing. The price Judas received was 30 pieces of silver, but the price he paid in remorse and revulsion was so enormous he could not live with it, and “he went and hanged himself” (Mt 27:5).¹⁰

Acts 1:18-19 | Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong 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.)

Evidently Peter gives a **fuller description of the suicide**. Judas did hang himself, but the rope snapped, and **the traitor fell headlong and was dashed to pieces** in the gruesome way Peter describes. Such was the traitor’s end: he went “to his own place” (Acts 1:25). He was hurled headlong into a lost eternity.¹¹

Judas was remorseful but not repentant. Remorse leads to hopelessness and despair, but repentance leads to restoration and life.¹²

His destiny. After Jesus ascended, the Apostles went back to the upper room and searched through the Scriptures to see if they could find anything about Judas, and they read David’s prophetic writing about the one who would betray the Messiah and how that one would have to be replaced.¹³ Peter quotes directly from Psalm 69:25. The second text is Psalm 109:8.

¹⁰ Williams, Acts, 18.

¹¹ John Phillips. *Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2009), Ac 1:18.

¹² Williams, Acts, 18-19.

¹³ Sproul, 36.

Acts 1:20 | “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.””

Judas is called the “son of perdition,” or *eternal damnation*.

Jesus said, “none of them [his disciples] is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”—John 17:12

Judas was prophesied by Jesus to be the son of perdition according to Psalm 109:8, “Let another take his office.”

His choice. Though all of this was prophesied, we must understand that Judas made all his own **free choices**. All the great confessions of faith from the Westminster to the Baptist confession all teach that God does not hinder the free agency of man. It was **Judas’s choice** to give himself to the wicked one and try and destroy Jesus. In Luke 22 we read how “Satan entered Judas” (verse 3). That is a dreadfully chilling phrase, since it tells us that Judas, with his eyes wide open, gave **our great God incarnate** over to death. Judas deliberately sold his soul to the devil. He willingly allowed himself to become the instrument of Satan.

This is a terrifying warning about the **hardening power of sin**. Judas sinned in the light! He knew better! Judas had shared in the ministry of Christ, had seen his miracles and witnessed his love and compassion. But as time passed instead of growing closer to Christ, he grew away from him. Sin exerted its hardening power until Satan possessed him completely. Don’t harden your heart!

Don’t Be Discouraged

So, if you want power, don’t be like Judas. He trusted in himself: his education, his money, his ability to deceive people. And don’t be discouraged those like Judas in the church. If one out of twelve was a devil in Jesus’ congregation, what does that say about his church today? We must not give up on seeking God’s power and enablement just because of those like Judas.

Even Paul testified of those like Judas among his own friends.

Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me. —2 Timothy 4:10

My Conviction

Don’t get distracted with those who fall away from Christ. It’s been my conviction that I will stand, even if I’m the last Christian on earth. Those who we thought were good men have been disqualified from their office, and some have even fallen away from the faith. My constant prayer is God will give me the strength to stand. And in his strength, I will stand for Christ, even if I have to stand alone. Will you?

Don’t look to those who fall away and get discouraged. Look to those like Peter, who have fallen and been restored!

MATTHIAS THE HUMBLE

Now we come to another person who perhaps felt powerless, but he was ready. He wanted the Spirit’s. He had been with Jesus from the time of John the Baptist. He was willing

to wait as long as he could be used by God. He was faithful. His name is **Matthias**. We find out he is a man who is willing to replace Judas. He's a man who had **intimate personal knowledge of the Lord** during his earthly ministry from beginning to end.

Evidently there were a number who were qualified to take Judas' place, which indicates that the number of faithful and consistent followers of Jesus throughout the years of his public ministry was far more than the twelve.¹⁴ We read about **Matthias** beginning in Acts 1:21.

Acts 1:21-23 | 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.

Joseph “Justus” Barsabbas. Now you see these two men: Joseph Barsabbas, whose nick name is “Justus”. I kind of get that this is the guy maybe the other disciples were pulling for. They seem to know his father, since he's called Joseph bar (which means “son of”) Sabbas. Maybe they knew Joseph's father Sabbas. They knew him well enough that they gave him a nickname, “Justus.” This is a Latin name, meaning “just” or “righteous”, and was probably given him on account of his high character and integrity. In Christian tradition he is numbered among the seventy disciples mentioned in Luke 10, although the Bible mentions no names. It is said that he became the bishop or pastor of a small town church in northern Israel where he died as a martyr under the persecution of the Roman Emperor Vespasian in AD 68.¹⁵

But it's not Justus who is chosen. It's Matthias. God often chooses people who we are not considering.

The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. —1 Samuel 16:7

God doesn't call many mighty, but he calls the least among us to be used in the greatest of ways.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you.²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.²⁸ God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.²⁹ As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. —1 Corinthians 1:26-29, NLT

Criteria for Apostles

If we look carefully at this, we can see three basic criteria for apostleship before Pentecost as they choose **Matthias**. Matthias had been traveling with Jesus since the beginning. Of course, we know that Jesus personally chose his disciples. He said to them.

¹⁴ Phillips, *Exploring Acts*, Ac 1:21–22.

¹⁵ Josephus. *Wars of the Jews*, Book 4, chapter 8, section 1

You did not choose me but I chose you. –John 15:16

And this is the **first** qualification to be an apostle: a candidate had to have been a member of Jesus' disciples from the beginning, for the three years of Jesus' public ministry in order to qualify for selection to the rank of Apostle.

Second, he had to have been an eyewitness of the resurrection.

The **third** criterion for apostleship, far and away the most important, is the direct and immediate commissioning to the office by Christ himself. Paul was an exception, but he was commissioned by Christ directly and went back to Jerusalem for a time to have the full blessing of the twelve there.

Trusting God Alone

The eleven apostles didn't trust themselves to choose the twelfth apostle, so they let God choose by lots. They knew their Bible. The lot was a way of giving God complete control of a decision.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. –
Proverbs 16:33

It's kind of like rolling the dice. In choosing lots, they were following an ancient tradition in the Old Testament involving the use of the Urim and the Thummim. When Old Testament priests were unable to discern the will of God, they prayerfully cast lots, the outcome of which was determined by the providence of God. Here, the lot fell upon Matthias, and we hear no more about him afterward. We have only the record of his selection to apostleship, which completed the Twelve. James was martyred shortly thereafter, but he was not replaced.¹⁶ So Matthias was chosen by lots.

Acts 1:24-26 | And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

What a curious practice! Being chosen by lots is not unheard of, even in our modern day. My children's great grandfather (Ira Wenger, 1911-1991) was a Mennonite deacon and preacher. He was chosen by lots. They brought forth the qualified men there in Wayland, Iowa at Bethel Mennonite Church, where they are still faithfully preaching the Gospel today. That's how they did it. They didn't want to choose for themselves. So they took three strips of paper—lots, if you will. They let the strips stick out of the Bible, and each man chose a lot. The one with the longest lot was to be the preacher. And that landed on Great Grandpa Ira. I have stacks and stacks of handwritten sermon notes from the late 50s until his death. But he was chosen by lots.

So the apostles had chosen Mathias. They were ready: ready to turn the world upside down. But they had no power. They needed the Spirit to come and clothe them. They dare not venture out in their own power.

¹⁶ Sproul, 36-37.

They were powerless to witness. They could gather in fellowship, they could pray, they could act in unity, they could make decisions regarding the corporate life of the assembly, they could have assurance among themselves that their actions were right, they could talk to each other about Jesus, care for each other's needs. But they were powerless to witness. **A hostile world lay beyond the walls of their upper room.** They were powerless to impact that world for Christ. For that they needed the Holy Spirit, and for him they had to wait.¹⁷

Conclusion

Do you feel powerless this morning? Don't be afraid dear child of God. It's true, we have all the equipment: all the Bible learning, all the giftedness and the ability to carry something forward, but we dare not, until we truly have the power. Trust the Lord. Wait on his timing. Surrender all that you are and all that you have to him.

Perhaps you are on the edge, teetering in **defeat in your marriage**. Maybe you are **defeated in some sin of pride and self-will**. Don't move forward in your own power. Lean into the Holy Spirit. Be sure you are filled and clothed with the Spirit. Let the gentle dove rest on your marriage. You can't do it alone. You need fellowship. You need brothers and sisters surrounding you with prayer.

You might be like Peter, defeated and brokenhearted. Oh, God's got something amazing for you. **You see, just when you think it's the end, that's when God steps in.**

Rise Up in Christ's Power!

We dare not go forward in our own power.

In C. S. Lewis's novel, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Aslan, the great lion, is the Christ-figure. The evil White Witch captures him, binds him, and kills him. The four children, Lucy, Edmond, Susan, and Peter, give up all hope. Exhausted weeping over Aslan, they sleep. When they wake up, they're horrified to see mice gnawing on Aslan's dead body.

But upon further, closer, inspection they realize that the mice are actually eating away the ropes that bind the great lion king. Before their eyes, **they see him rise**. With their own ears they hear him roar. They're ecstatic yet confused. "How? Why? What?" they stammer. Aslan hushes them. And then, Aslan roars a roar that frightens the White Witch, but when the children hear the risen Aslan roar, **they are revived** go forward in his power, and they conquer the White Witch.

What about you saint? Are you weeping? Do you feel defeated? Powerless? Let's join our Aslan in resurrection power! Let's lean on the power that raised Jesus from the dead. When our peace is interrupted, and our fullness is drained, let us look to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. This resurrection power is the same power that is at work now within us (Eph 1:18 – 23).¹⁸

Jesus Christ is alive! He is risen! He is raised to the right hand of the Father in victory! **We dare not go forward in our own power**, but we go in the power of the Spirit that will transform the world.

¹⁷ Phillips, *Exploring Acts*, Ac 1:26.

¹⁸ Robert Kelleman. *Gospel-Centered Counseling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 90-91.