

Week of May 17, 2020

Acts 1:1-26

Q: (vv.15-22) Peter takes leadership of the 120 disciples present. He recalls Scripture which foretold Judas' betrayal and death (Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8; see also Mt 27:3-7). Jesus essentially told the 12 (in Mt 19:28) that they would act as leaders of the Church (under Christ as Head), like the 12 tribes were leaders over OT Israel. How did Peter describe the chief function and qualifications of an apostle (v.21-22)? Why was it important for this person (chosen to replace Judas) to have been a witness of Jesus' entire ministry?

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Q: (vv.23-26) They choose between the two candidates through an Old Testament custom of casting lots (see Prov 16:33). *\*note\* with the coming of the Holy Spirit, this is the **last time** this OT custom of seeking God's will by "casting lots" was ever used again. Also, after James (see Acts 12), and the other 11 apostles (including Matthias) died, they would **not** be replaced by other apostles (such as Paul or Barnabas).* What was the role of Scripture, prayer, discussion, qualifications and trust in God when the disciples selected a leader to replace Judas?

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Q: What did you learn about the importance of corporate prayer and the dependence on the daily empowering presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in your life today?

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*PRAY! Lord forgive me for being content relying on my own strength and resources and not on You. Fill me with your Spirit, empower me to live today for your glory and honor. Unify Your church and keep us today in constant prayer throughout the day, connected to you, doing your will. In Jesus' name, Amen!*

*The book of Acts (Acts of the Apostles) was written as a follow-up to the Gospel of Luke to someone named Theophilus. It describes the risen exalted Jesus, sending the Holy Spirit to empower all believers everywhere to grow in faith and multiply His church. Jesus appeared to His followers at various times and places in the 40 days after His resurrection as valid proof He is the Messiah, but also to further teach them of God's Kingdom. Here in chapter 1, He instructs the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.*

Q: Someone once said "the Christian life is not only hard, it is impossible, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit." No Christ-follower can truly experience a vibrant stimulating, grace-filled life and witness for Christ, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Why is it then that many Christ-followers don't experience a Spirit filled life? (see also Eph 5:18; Luke 11:9-13).

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Q: How does this book pick up where Luke 24:36-53 leaves off?

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Q: (vv.1-5) What do we learn about Jesus and what He was doing in the 40 days after His resurrection?

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Q: (v.6) What were the disciples expecting would happen next? How does their view of God's Kingdom differ from what Jesus would describe (vv.7-8)?

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*Jesus essentially tells them not to focus too much on times of the end, but get busy and point others to Christ!*

Q: (v.8) this is the "Great Commission" verse of Acts (similar to Mt. 28:18-20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:46-47; Jn 20:21). Jerusalem (where Jesus was crucified) was their immediate location. Judea would be similar to our "county or state." Samaria is similar to a place where we may not wish to go to. We are to be a witness for Christ, starting at our immediate location (neighborhood/city). What is the role of a witness? Why do we need to be empowered by God's Spirit to be a witness for Christ?

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Q: What excuses keep you from being a witness for Christ? (i.e. lack of knowledge; don't care; I'm afraid of saying the wrong thing; I don't know where to go or who to talk to, or how to start the conversation...).

Q: Why is it critical to ask God to fill you (or to empower you) daily with His Holy Spirit (whom already lives within all believers)?

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Q: How would you explain the effect of Jesus' resurrection and impact on your life? (in other words, how would you be a witness (with words) of what Christ has done for you and wants to offer to others also).

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Q: (v.9-11) Why was it necessary for Jesus to leave the disciples (see John 16:5-15)?

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*In a human body, Jesus was "limited" to being in one location at a time. God's Holy Spirit can be everywhere at the same time! As more people received Christ, they also received the Holy Spirit, and His empowering presence would multiply throughout the entire world, even today, transforming lives for all eternity!*

Q: (v.11) How would the angels' promise to them encourage them to press on in fulfilling Christ's mission? How is that encouraging to you today?

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Q: (vv.12-14) Who all are listed as being together in the upper room?

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Q: (v.14) They all were unified ("of one accord"), devoting themselves to prayer (see also vv.24-25). Likewise, why are unity (on the essentials of our faith) and prayer so vital to church fellowship today?

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