

Exaudi Sunday

June 2nd, 2019

Pastor Matthew Ude

Acts 1:12-14 ¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas *the son* of James. ¹⁴ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

They returned from seeing him ascend, but they did not return alone. As we learned on Thursday Jesus ascension was not the end of His presence among them but the beginning of His presence with them every step of the way. Before He was here or there according to His human nature, but now He was "with them always."

Notice that the eleven return. Every single one, just as Jesus had promised, "I have not lost any except the son of perdition." Jesus there Good Shepherd was watching over them and keeping them. As He promised.

Today is Exaudi Sunday, but even more importantly it is graduation Sunday. We take this chance to remember our graduates, prayer for our graduates and wish them the Lord's blessings. Which means of course we will be ending our service with hymn 800, "Go My Children with My Blessing."

Exaudi means, "grant our prayer O Lord." And so since it is both Exaudi Sunday and Graduation Sunday, we ask the Lord to grant that all, but especially our graduates would "Walk with Assurance in the Lord," assurance that is with you where ever you go, that He is your Good Shepherd.

Now the apostles are waiting. Good Friday and Easter are over, and even the appearances of Jesus and the ascension. They have seen Jesus ascend into heaven, but they aren't ready to go on yet. They know that. Jesus told them to have to wait in Jerusalem until, "they received power from on high"

But what does that mean and when was it going to come. They had no idea. So what do they do?

They continued in prayer. Now here prayer should be taken to mean worship, both prayer and bible study. And in this way they prepared themselves even though they didn't know when or how or what was going to happen. Peter himself wrote later:

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

They didn't know what life held but they knew that whatever came their way prayer and bible study would help them to be prepared.

Our graduates and not just them but many of us as well find ourselves in the same situation as the Apostles. They and we are waiting unsure of the future. For our graduates it is the waiting between the end of High School and the beginning of College. For many of us and those we know

Just like the apostle you are not really sure about what the future holds. You don't have your books and assignments yet, how can you prepare for your first day of class? You don't know what is coming but you know that Jesus will be with you and you know that prayer and study will give you the strength of faith and wisdom to prepare for whatever is coming.

To walk with the Lord in his word is to walk in assurance. No amount of work or study will ever prepare you for life. It might get you ready for a single event, but when you learn to daily walk with the Lord in His word you have assurance that no matter may happen, or what may go wrong your Good Shepherd will see you through it.

Acts 1:15-20 ¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, ¹⁶ "Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; ¹⁷ "for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry." ¹⁸ (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For it is written in the book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office.'

In verse 14 we have the apostles, a few women, and Jesus' brothers all meeting together in the upper room. Now here in verse 15 this is the gathering of all the disciples who still believed. Or at least all the disciples in Jerusalem. We find the church later in acts meeting together regularly for worship, so possible that is what is going on here. And at one of these meetings Peter stands up, and lets everyone know that there is a problem that needs to be dealt with.

Again the ascension is past and Pentecost is not yet come. But something must be done before Pentecost.

"it had to happen." Peter says.

All that had happened, Jesus ministry, death, resurrection and ascension, all that had to happen. But now another things also.

It had to happen that Judas betrayed Jesus. That is not to say that Jesus wanted Judas to betray him. Jesus tried to warn Judas and tried to call him to repentance. But knowing that he would it was foretold and planned for. It had to happen that Judas betrayed Jesus, and left the apostleship. This had to happen and more than that it was necessary that someone replace him.

It was God's will that the church was to be built on the foundation of the twelve apostles as we see in our reading from revelation. It was foretold that one should take the place of Judas. Peter understands from scripture that this must be done before "the out pouring of the promise."

Again we see that it is that daily walk with Jesus in his word that will prepare you for your life in college and beyond. Scripture will not give you an A on your physics paper. But it is through that word that Jesus provides you with the wisdom and insight you need to navigate relationships, work and school in a way that is pleasing to God and good for you.

Acts 1:21-26 ²¹ "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² "beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." ²³ And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen ²⁵ "to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." ²⁶ And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

There are two things that make an apostle and apostle.

First it is their unique role as eye witnesses to Christ's life and resurrection. You see that here in verse 21 and 22. He must be someone who had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, so that he could give first hand testimony to the things that Jesus had said and done, especially the resurrection.

Second, he must be specially chosen and sent out by Christ. That is what apostle means, one sent out. Thus they cannot make this decision themselves but gathering together the two men that meet the first qualification they ask the Lord to choose through the casting of lots.

The casting of lots could mean that they put the name on two pieces of stone and shook them, and whichever flew out first was chosen.

This method of choosing was never repeated. But here it is used because Matthias must be personally chosen by Christ. And so Matthias was chosen and numbered among the other eleven as a leader in the church and as an eye witness of what Christ had said and done.

This was the role of the apostles and that Christ chose for Matthias. But the question for you is what role has Christ chosen you for?

Not the role of an apostle to be sure, yet Christ does have a role for you. Whatever other role he has prepared for you, certainly you are also to witness. Not firsthand as did the twelve but nevertheless still to witness

Last Thursday was the ascension and next Sunday is Pentecost. But in between the two we have this reading from Acts which is actually a very important event, although we don't talk about it much

For it was necessary as Peter says, it was necessary before that Judas be replaced for it was God's will that there were to be twelve apostles. Twelve Apostles as the foundation of the new testament church, just as the foundation of the OT people were the twelve sons of Jacob

Twelve apostles to go to the twelve tribes of Israel

The role of these apostles was to be witnesses of all that Jesus said and did, most especially his resurrection

Peter knew this was necessary, why? Because he spent this time in prayer and meditation, and found in God's word this prophecy, which by the power of the Holy Spirit he understood to be talking about Judas

They were to wait but they didn't twiddle their thumbs – they continued in prayer and study – they used the time

WE never again here much about Matthias, but then again we never hear much about any of the apostles – their ministry was first to witness about Jesus in Jerusalem, as Jesus told them – the purpose of Luke's writing of Acts however was to show the Word of the Lord going out from Jerusalem. And so in Acts Luke starts with Jerusalem and Judea and Galilee, then also Samaria.

But then he quickly moves on from there to show the Word going out to Syria and Asia Minor and Macedonia and Greece and Rome. But notice how when he is talking about Syria and Asia and Greece, he is not going to talk much about the Apostles anymore because their focus is still mostly on Jerusalem and Judea

Later they did go out, so for example we find John working in Ephesus as an old man, but that isn't till later, after the events of Acts. If Luke had written another book no doubt he would have been writing about the apostles again as they went out to Rome and Persia and India

It was necessary in this case for them to choose by lots, because this man was to be an apostle, that is one chosen directly by Christ – we never hear of them using this method again

Thus we see that Matthais fulfilled both requirements of “an apostle” one chosen directly by Christ, two with him from the beginning and thus able to be a first hand witness of all that Jesus said and did

Paul for example later would be properly called an “apostle” for his calling did come directly from Christ, however he was never “numbered with the eleven” that is to say he was never one of the twelve, because he was not a first hand witness to the events of Christ life, although he did witness at least after the fact the resurrection

They returned but the Lord was with them, even so we walk with assurance that He is with us.

It was God's word that revealed to Peter what had to be done, even so we walk with assurance that His Word will guide us.

God choose Matthais, even so we walk with assurance that He has a plan for us.

As we wait for His return we wait with confidence that He is with us. Because He is with us we look forward to a future of hope. We wait in His word, and we know that he has future ready for us.

Amen