

Readings

Scripture

¹² 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.

¹⁵ 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 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.

- Acts 1:12-26 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

It is instructive to note the cluster of factors which contributed to the discovery of God's will in this matter. First came the general leading of Scripture that a replacement should be made (Acts 1:16-21). Next, they used their common sense that if Judas' substitute was to have the same apostolic ministry he must also have the same qualifications, including an eyewitness experience of Jesus and a personal appointment by him. This sound deductive reasoning led to the nomination of Joseph and Matthias. Thirdly, they prayed. For though Jesus had gone, he was still accessible to them by prayer and was acknowledged as having a knowledge of hearts which they lacked. Finally, they drew lots, by which they trusted Jesus to make his choice known. Leaving aside this fourth factor, because the Spirit has now been given us, the remaining three (Scripture, common sense and prayer) constitute a wholesome combination through which God may be trusted to guide us today.

- John R. W. Stott, *The Spirit The Church and The World: The Message of Acts* (p. 58-59)

Sermon Outline

The Heart Knower
Acts 1:12-26

The Acts of the Apostles
Brad Anderson

Because Jesus is the 'heart-knower', we can trust his leadership in all of life...
(Acts 1:24)

In what areas of life do we find it difficult to trust his leadership?

As we wait for his promises... (Acts 1:12-14)

As we struggle with faithfulness... (Acts 1:15-20)

As we make tough decisions... (Daniel 11:36-45)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- How do you make important decisions in your family? Do you consult others? Write down your options? Flip a coin? Pray about it?
- Who is present in the meeting? From Mark 3:20-21, 31-35 and John 7:1-5, how do you account for this change in Jesus' "family"?
- In light of Peter's denial of Jesus, how might the others feel about his leadership? How might events of John 21:15-19 calm any fears they have?
- Given Acts 1:6-8, how would you be praying if you were in this group? What emotions would you express?
- What is the role of Scripture, prayer, discussion, qualifications, and trust in God regarding the process for choosing a replacement for Judas?
- What have been your best experiences in group prayer? How might joining in prayer with others around a common mission (one that is way beyond your natural ability) enhance your own prayer life? How does Acts 1:8 provide that for you?