

MOVING ON

(Fifty Days of Prayer for the Coming of the Holy Spirit; Message Six)
(Reimagining Church; Message Five)
Acts 1:15-26A

A. The only thing that stays the same is that things are constantly changing

“For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different Spirit from the one you received, or a different Gospel from the one you accepted -- you put up with it easily enough.” (2 Cor. 11:4)

B. The disciples are undergoing major changes

ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAST

A. Because of the suicide of Judas, they're down to eleven disciples

B. Judas is the example of one who made himself unavailable to the Spirit

“With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field...” (Acts 1:17f)

1. Judas had a reputation for siphoning money from the purse (John 12:6)
2. Judas' wickedness kept him from seeing Jesus and his mission clearly

C. Peter tells the 120 this was all part of God's plan

1. Was it necessary to have twelve?

[Peter] *“We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”*
[Jesus] *“I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:27)*

“It had a great high wall with twelve gates, and with the twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel...the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb.” (Revelation 21:12f)

2. Peter encourages the disciples to deal with the past

ACCEPT THE PRESENT

A. In their search for a twelfth disciple, Peter outlines the qualifications

1. He must have accompanied Jesus throughout his ministry
2. He must have observed the Lord's appearances after the resurrection
3. He must be a witness to the fact of a risen Christ

B. They decide the only way they know - Old Testament style (cf. 1:24f)

“Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” (Acts 1:24)

1. It's hard to imagine making a decision without the guidance of the Spirit

2. After Pentecost, the NT Church never casts lots to determine God's leading

C. In Acts 1, we find an unimpressive group of disciples, yet they are obedient, preparing, together and praying (1:14)

ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE

A. Imagine for a moment the anticipation of these disciples and followers

1. They're gathering together waiting for the promise of Jesus to be fulfilled

2. That's still the work of Jesus' disciples and followers

- a. Promises of Answered Prayer and his Presence: *“I tell you if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three of you come together in my name, there I am with them.” (Matthew 18:19-20)*
- b. Promises of his Return: *“This Jesus who has been taken from you...will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11b)*
- c. Promises of his Triumph: *“...when every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:10-11)*
- d. Promises of his Church: *“I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18)*

B. The best way to “anticipate the future” is to follow the pattern of the disciples: obeying, preparing, being together, and in prayer (1:14)

1. Pray this simple prayer - *“Holy Spirit, what do You want me to do?”*

- a. Allow people to prompt this prayer in you
- b. Allow your feelings to prompt you
- c. Allow the day's events to prompt you

2. Fact is, everything God-honoring is done through Christ's Spirit

C. Our model for the Spirit's role is Jesus...

“Jesus is living proof of how those who are His followers may exceed the limitations of their humanness, in order that they, like Him, might carry to completion against all odds their God-given mission in life, by the Holy Spirit.” (Jerry Hawthorne; Wheaton College)

1. Why is it having received the Holy Spirit, we have so little power?

2. Many have lost the desire to arrange their lives around practices that allow us to draw power from the Spirit

D. We don't set the course. We don't command the ship. But since the Spirit is here, we can make the course corrections and move on together