

# Acts 1:12-26 “Unified Prayer”

~ C.S. Lewis “I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else.”

More than 525 saw Jesus after He had risen from the dead. Luke calls these sightings of the risen Christ... **“many infallible proofs”**. Jesus knew the faith of all future generations would hinge on the testimony of these eyewitnesses. Thus He made the evidence so **UNDENIABLE** and **IRREFUTABLE**, SO CLEAR AND CONCLUSIVE – that no one could discredit the news...

**Acts 1 verse 5** for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

**Verse 8** you shall receive power (**Dunamis**... Force... miraculous power... dynamite) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses.

**WE have a mission Church!** Our mission? **To be “His witnesses.”** The mission’s extent? “In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The mission’s power? “When the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

**Vance Havner was right on the money when he said, “We will move this world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it—but by combustion within it of lives**

**ignited by the Spirit of God.” PRAY!!!**

**The Day of Pentecost is coming...** and the powerful workings of the Holy Spirit will leave us in awe!

**Some of those powerful workings ...** In Acts 5 we will see the Holy Spirits working with Ananias...

**Verse 3** But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? **4** While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” **5** Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

→ As I mentioned last week... **Acts 5 verse 14...** **14** And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15** so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. **16** Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

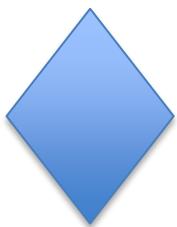


Philip’s amazing encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, who after his baptism “did not see him again” because “the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away” [8:39] **Poof and he was gone.**



Or Paul who, shipwrecked on Malta, built a fire for warmth, and a poisonous viper grabbed his hand, which he shook off into the fire and continued his conversation [28:3-5]. Oh it’s just a “flesh wound”. REALLY?

At Pentecost Peter preached with such conviction that the people were **“cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’”** [2:37].



Paul reached such heights of persuasion before Agrippa that the king was forced to exclaim, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” [26:28]. In such instances the Spirit of God uses the eloquence he has given to his servants to bring about great results in the kingdom.

**JOY!** Luke tells us, in Chapter 13 verse 52 “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”.

As Hughes says, “Ordinary people became fountains of divine power, eloquence, and joy. There were outpourings of God’s love and might in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Caesarea ... The power of the Holy Spirit erupted in Ephesus and Corinth and Rome, and such divine demonstrations have continued with intermittent flames throughout the course of history since then. Our hearts thrill at the stories of such wonderful times. Today the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ longs for the Spirit’s power, eloquence and joy!

**ONE MAN FURTHER ILLUSTRATES...** In John 16 Jesus promised that when He went away he would send another Helper to his people **John 16:7**. God still sovereignly sends the mysterious winds of the Holy Spirit – His power, His comfort, His presence – to those who know and serve Jesus Christ. We do not know exactly why and how the Holy Spirit works, but we have been told what we must do to enjoy the fullness of the Spirit. Our situation is like that of the little boy who asked his grandfather, “Grandpa, what is the wind?” “I cannot explain the wind to you,” the old fisherman replied, **“but I can teach you to raise the sails!”**

The book of Acts shows us how to have the wind of the Holy Spirit in our sails. The attitude that makes way for the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the same attitude seen in Christ’s followers just before the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost.

In a word, the apostolic attitude that preceded the Holy Spirit’s coming was **EXPECTANCY**. As we study God’s word may your hearts be filled with the expectancy of God’s Holy Spirit filling us with **power, eloquence and joy!**

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**Picking up where we left off in verse 12 of chapter 1... 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: *Think of the walk back to Jerusalem after the angels told them to quit looking up and to get going, as described in 1:12. It was only about two-thirds of a mile because this was all The Mishnah would allow on the Sabbath. A Sabbath Day’s walk was about 3,000 feet. Maybe they started out subdued, overwhelmed, stunned by the Ascension. Some probably were hardly aware that their feet were on the ground. Perhaps some pinched themselves. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy – mega-joy!* **The anticipation of Disneyland**

when you were a child... The expectation was all but unbearable...

**THE UPPER ROOM...** not just “a” upper room but “**the**” upper room. The very room were they shared the last supper?... If this is correct, it is beautifully fitting that the Holy Spirit was given in the very same room in which Jesus promised them the “Helper” the Holy Spirit. **John 14:16-18.**

Luke tells us in verse 13 that all the major players were there... **who would miss this?** 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,

Jon Courson “Prayer produces unity, and unity empowers prayer. When you pray with people, you experience a glorious unity that allows a greater release of blessing. That is why Jesus said, “If two or three of you agree in prayer, there’s a dynamic released, and things will happen” (see Matthew 18:20). As a result of this prayer meeting, the church would soon no longer consist of 120 believers hiding away in an upper room, but would, in a single day, explode to number over 3000 (Acts 2:41).”

**120 people there . . . a good sized room no doubt. Verse 14 again . . .** These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women (**the wives of the apostles; Martha, no doubt in the kitchen**) and Mary the mother of Jesus, **MARY (JESUS’ MOTHER) IS PRAYING WITH THEM TO THE FATHER; THEY WERE NOT PRAYING TO MARY!** (this is the last mention of her in Scripture), and with **HIS BROTHERS.**

**HIS BROTHERS. JAMES AND JUDE** John’s gospel tells us that even Jesus’ own brothers did not believe in Him. **James was one who didn’t... They thought He was a little “Loco in La cabeza”**

→ **Familiarity breeds contempt – My brother the Messiah of the world? Whatever!**

**Why is James here now... obeying His brother now his Lord, Master, Messiah and King. What changed everything for James?** What gave James the strength to lead the church in Jerusalem and die a martyr's death.

**The resurrection changed everything!!!.** 1 Corinthians 15:7 tells us that after His resurrection, Jesus made a special appearance to James. When he realized that His half-brother had conquered death, it dawned on James, **why Jesus seemed to be perfect... He was!!! Hey, Jesus was God!** James went from a **doubting brother to a devoted believer!** James' faith grew rapidly. He became the leader of the church at Jerusalem.

**His transformation was remarkable!**

**He walked what he talked and his life was an example of all he preached.** He was so exceedingly revered for his justice, faithfulness, and devotion, **that Josephus the Jewish historian records it as one of the causes of the destruction of Jerusalem, Quote, "That St. James was martyred in it."** In Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem, James was in charge. He was a man of great devotion. Nicknamed **"Camel Knees"**

Eusebius, a church historian, said James *"used to enter alone into the Temple and be found kneeling and praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew hard like a camel's because of his constant worship of God..."*

James died in 62 AD. The Jewish leaders took James to the top of the Temple, and ordered him to recant his faith in front of the people. But rather than recant, he preached Jesus. The Jews became so angry they pushed James off the Temple - and when he survived - they beat him to death with clubs as he knelt and prayed.

So verse 14 says they all (including his brothers) were waiting on the promised Holy Spirit. The Church is about to be set on fire!

**They still have some business to take care of... we need a 12<sup>th</sup> disciple to take the place of fallen Judas so verse 15**

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about 120), 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;

Peter quotes from Ps 69:25; 109:8. Peter begins by noting that Judas didn't spoil God's plan, he fulfilled it. This is something that only the wise and mature can see when evil happens.

**Not only was Peter a student of prophesy, but he believed in the divine inspiration of Scripture, saying it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through David.**

All Scripture is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16).

**The Bible judges us... we don't judge the bible!**

It's time to change the Bible and make homosexuality not a sin

It's time to redefine marriage... That's not up to us... **God already defined it.**

**Done!** **One man, one woman! Genesis 2:24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **Marriage**

God's word is God's word **IN IT'S ENTIRETY!!!** The Bible is not a bag of trail mix... pick out the pieces that you like and ignore the rest.

**Martin Luther said** "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me."

**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.)

We know from Matthew 27:10 and Zechariah 11:13 that this field was originally a potter's field—the field outside the house of every potter wherein he would throw any of his marred creations that, because they had become hardened, could not be reshaped. Over the years, due to the accumulation of broken pottery, the potter's field would thus be useless for anything but a burial ground.



**I really like Jon Courson's observation... "What happened to the money for which Jesus was betrayed? It was used to purchase a potter's field—a useless field full of broken pots and dead bodies. The picture to me is powerful: The blood money of Jesus—His work on the Cross—was spent to redeem useless vessels and lifeless bodies—us."**

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.' **this is the first time in the New Testament we read that Peter quoted Scripture!**

Their *desire for God's will* is notable; because of the principle of the quoted Scripture, they will replace Judas because they believe it is what Jesus wants, not because it is what they want.

21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **The disciples were bold enough to make a decision because they knew from God's Word that this is what He wanted. The apostles did not sense an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them; that was yet to come. But God did not leave them without guidance. They knew what to do from the Word. Even when we don't "feel" the Holy Spirit, we still have God's voice permanently established in His Word.**

When we don't feel a special blessing from the Holy Spirit in an area not revealed by God's Word, we still know what to do: Obey God's Word.

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."

### SO THEY LAY DOWN 3 REQUIREMENTS...

1. Whoever replaces Judas must be one who had been with them since they were baptized by John,
2. stayed with them during the days of Jesus' earthly ministry,
3. and they must have seen the resurrected Jesus.

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, **FIRST THING... THEY PRAYED; ALWAYS THE BEST PLACE TO START** 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 11 apostles.

Proverbs 16:33 ordains the use of the lot in the Old Testament. Often when they had something to decide they would cast lots:

\*\*\*The choice of the scapegoat on *Yom Kippur*;

\*\*\*When Joshua conquered the land, they cast lots to divide the land;

\*\*\*When Jonah was selected by a lot among the sailors.

The casting of lots was a common practice in Old Testament times. If a person wanted to know God's will, he would go to the high priest who had the Urim and the Thummim in his breastplate. The Urim and the Thummim were possibly two stones, one black and one white. When asked a question, the high priest would offer a prayer and then pull out a stone, perhaps black meaning "No" and white meaning

“Go.”

I personally don't think this is the best way to know God's will.

As Gideon did “setting out a fleece” (see Judges 6:36–40). Of course we see it here but once the Holy Spirit came we don't see it again. When Paul and Barnabas were commissioned for ministry in Acts 13, it was not through the casting of lots, but through the voice of the Spirit. How did He speak? I think it was through the gift of prophecy (Acts 13:2).

Next time you have a decision to make, or a struggle within, I would highly encourage you to get together with other brothers and sisters and say, “Would you pray with me about this?” While you may not get immediate vision or direction, God will indeed honor such prayer and will fulfill His promise to “write His will upon the table of your heart” (see Hebrews 8:10).

So pray for direction... seek the counsel of Godly and wise brothers and sister... search the scriptures... ask for circumstances to lead you with doors that open and doors that close... trust to speaking of the Holy Spirit.

Many believe they made the wrong choice... That Paul should have been the 12th apostle.

→ Paul could not have “filled up the ranks” because he could never have met the divine qualifications laid down in verses 21–22:

- Paul was not baptized by John the Baptist;
- He did not travel with the Apostles when Jesus was with them on earth; and, even though he saw the glorified Christ,
- Paul was not a witness of the Resurrection as were the original Apostles.

Paul made it clear that he was not to be classified with the 12 (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:15–24). And the 12 knew it. In fact, they refused to admit Paul into the Jerusalem fellowship until Barnabas came to his rescue! (Acts 9:26–27).

Even though we read nothing more of Matthias, we should not assume he

was a "dud" as an apostle; except for Peter and John, none of the original twelve are mentioned again after Acts 1. **I trust God's sovereignty over the matter.**

So again, Luke tells us they were obeying Jesus' words to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit... They were waiting with

**EXPECTANCY...** The primary problem with believers in this matter of the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the lack of believing expectancy.

Do we truly expect Christ to fill us with His Holy Spirit and thus empower our lives?

**Verse 14 tells us** They all **continued** with one accord in prayer and supplication,

**PERSISTENCE.** "These all **continued** with one accord." A. T. Robertson says this means, "they stuck to praying." There was a commitment to prayer! The text reads literally, "were continually devoting themselves to prayer."

As Hughes points out... "The one who wants his sail full of the breeze of the Spirit must have such perseverance in prayer. In Luke 11:13 Jesus says, "... how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" We must ask, but persistence is the key."

**UNITY.** "These all continued with **one accord** "This is amazing!



Another observation by one commentator... "11 disciples – strong-willed men, the kind who argued over who was going to get the best seat in the kingdom and who refused to wash one another's feet; \*Simon the zealot and a Matthew a tax collector (*Black revolutionary and a klu Klux Klan member*) Jesus' brothers who had been so perverse to reject his Messiahship; his mother and a whole household of women – rich, poor, chaste, unchaste – "all" of them were of one mind – literally, "of one heart and mind." How? Jesus is always greater than our differences...

The Lord is pleased to pour his Spirit upon believers who are living in unity.

We see the same thing when as Elders we pray for God's direction and will. We will not make a decision unless it's unanimous. UNITY!

**HOLY SPIRIT WE COME TODAY WITH EXPECTANCY... PERSISTENCE** and in **UNITY**.

**We can't and never were intended to walk this walk in our own strength. So with great hope and joy we cry out to you our wonderful King and Savior. So now we hoist our sails and say come Holy Spirit... we are hungry, we are thirsty for more of you.**