



**Sermon Title: Moving Forward**

**Speaker/ Date: Segun Aiyegbusi, September 5, 2021**

We are going to look at an account in the first chapter of the book of Acts where the disciples, like us, found themselves suddenly without their team leader, their pastor and shepherd.

Let's set up the section in Acts 1. After three adventurous years with Jesus, He is violently snatched away from His disciples and crucified, but rises from the dead, spends 40 days with them, and finally ascends to heaven.

For the disciples, Jesus' ascension is both a celebration and mourning. Though He was no longer physically present with them, He had promised He would send them the Holy Spirit who would not only comfort them, but also empower them to change the world with the Gospel. In fact, at one point, Jesus explains that it was actually better for Him to leave, so that He could send the Holy Spirit to them.

So, when we meet them in Acts 1, they are in a waiting-room of sorts, (waiting in anticipation for what God has next in store). **Acts 1:12-17**

**BIG IDEA: WE MOVE FORWARD BY PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE NEXT MOVE OF GOD**

There are four activities the early disciples engaged in that will serve us well to emulate as we prepare for who and where God is going to lead to Grace next.

### **1) GET CONNECTED IN COMMUNITY.**

The apostles were a diverse a group. Most of them came from different social and economic backgrounds and held to diametrically opposed philosophical and political viewpoints. Putting these guys together in one room, under any other circumstance is a recipe for disaster.

Yet, in Acts 1:13, Luke explains this diverse group of men did life together, they encouraged one another, they looked after each other's children, and they shared meals together. We live in a world today where this pandemic and toxic political climate has caused there to be increasing separation, crippling isolation, and ongoing division.

While it may all seem dark, it presents the church with a great Gospel opportunity because it has caused to be desperate for a church where the congregants are more in love with Jesus Christ and care for one another than they do about their political views.

It will not only strengthen your soul and your faith, but it will be attractive to the lost world, and it is one of the ways God prepares us as a church for what He will do next through whom He will bring next to lead His church.

## **2) WRESTLE IN PRAYER TOGETHER**

When you wrestle, something is always at stake. For the early church, what was at stake was the future of their movement that had just become “leaderless” so to speak. As a result, one of the first activities we see them engaged in when they met together regularly, was prayer.

Almost every instance of revival or spiritual awakening in church history, including here in the book of Acts is preceded by a time of focused prayer by the church or by a small group of Christians.

In fact, there are two events that often precede a spiritual awakening; Prayer..... Persecution (or some kind of societal upheaval)... and then revival.

- The revival is God’s part.
- The persecution or societal upheaval is the world’s part.
- Guess what part is yours to play in revival? Prayer!!

## **3) SERVING: STEP UP AND USE YOUR GIFT.**

The discovery of your destiny, your calling in life is closely tied to the exercising of your spiritual gifts in the church. Every single Christian has at least one, some multiple. The same Holy Spirit who entrusted these spiritual gifts to you to serve the Church of Christ is the same Holy Spirit who gives you clarity and direction in every area of your life, including the workforce, your career, relationships, schooling, and marriage.

For many of you who have been asking what God’s will is for your life and what path to take next, the answer is actually found when you step up and exercise what God has already placed on you.

- Roll up your sleeves and rally together by getting connected in a small group with other believers for encouragement and mutual spiritual support.

- Band together with a group of 10 or more and decide you're going to meet at some regular time to wrestle in prayer together (for yourselves, for Grace Church, for its new pastor, for the community, and for the country).
- Begin exercising the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit has entrusted to you by picking a ministry to serve in

We don't know how long the search process will take to find the new pastor that God is preparing to come lead Grace Church into its next season. But here's what we do know, God will be faithful to do His part, the world will continue to do its part and throw us curveballs, **SO IT'S ON US NOW TO DO OUR PART.**

### Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Grace Church has entered into a season of transition. Regarding the transition - What excites you most? What concerns you most?

### **Spend time in prayer:**

- 1) Pray together that God would prepare lead the man and his family that He has prepared to lead Grace into the next season (pray for the search committee).
- 2) Pray together that God would prepare Grace church to receive and welcome the family God would lead (ask God to align your expectation with His).
- 3) Pray together that God would strengthen and encourage the staff as they lead and teach the church each week the church during this season
- 4) Prayerwalk your neighborhood. As you walk by each house, pray a blessing over it. Ask the peace of Jesus to fill their home and for God to draw them to faith in Christ.