

Acts 1:12-26
CBBC
July 13, 2025

Introduction—Passages, this is just a slice of life, in the church.

I. The church is unified in prayer.

There is a list of the current apostles at this point. Remember that apostle means “sent out one,” and in this case, the apostles were the inner circle of disciples who had been personally trained by Christ for the future work of laying the foundation of the church. The list differs somewhat from the other lists, not just in the absence of Judas but in the order itself. Peter, James, and John are all at the forefront, but some of the other one’s shift. We don’t exactly know why. I don’t think it was meant to be a strict pecking order of the apostles.

Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was the baptism of the Spirit. They would be regenerated and made into the family of God. That is where being born again would really take place. They were to wait there. They did not know how long they needed to wait. They just knew that was what Jesus had commanded them.

What did they do while they were waiting? Remember what they had been asked to do at the Garden of Gethsemane? And what they had miserably failed at. Praying. What did praying mean at this point? Well, Jesus had taught them to pray through the Lord’s prayer. That is a combination of adoration, gratitude, deliverance from temptation, and supplication. They also knew that they were not ready for the task set before them. They also knew that they had Satan and his demons set before them. Remember what Jesus had said to Peter back in Luke 22. “Peter, the devil wants to sift you as wheat.” That has

to be frightening. So they are going before God in prayer, thinking over what they have learned from Him. They had to have learned to pray from Him, from the Psalms, from the Old Testament, and I could go on and on.

They were waiting for God to bless them in a way that they really couldn't understand. But they knew that they needed to be doing something. So, they pursued God in prayer, and they all agreed with it. Unity is not shown just by words, but it is confirmed in action. How could you tell that these disciples all felt that prayer was vital? They prayed together. You can tell that people agree on the best course of action because they are doing the best course of action.

The church pursues prayer together, regardless of all situations for all reasons.

The church trusts God's hand in the catastrophe. During the time that they are waiting, Peter is concerned about something. He is concerned about what the absence of Judas means to the community there. He addresses what happened to Judas, which included his ministry, his place with the apostles, his betrayal of Christ, and the aftermath, which was Judas' death. He also talks about the hole that was left behind.

Not only were they there waiting for the Holy Spirit to come, but there was celebration, Jesus was alive. This was incredible. Everything was true. But there was some fear, what was next. It was going to be hard. It was a struggle. Could it happen to them?

In verse 18, we are told that Judas guided the soldiers to arrest Jesus. He later acquired a field with the 30 pieces of silver, and he fell headlong and his guts broke open, with everything gushing or coming out. There are some who say that this contradicts what was written over in Matthew 27. Matthew says that Judas hanged

himself. I believe he hung himself from a high tree, and when his body fell, it split open. This could have been because he was hanged close to a cliff, and his body fell a great distance. Another possibility is that his body was not found for a few days, and what happens in very warm weather to dead things? I will leave that to your imagination.

Matthew tells us that the priests bought the field. They did. It was also bought with money that still technically belonged to Judas, as they could not take it back. It's all true at the same time. The field ended up being called "The Field of Blood."

He then quotes from two different Psalms. He quotes from Psalm 69 and Psalm 109. Psalm 69 is all about oppression and betrayal. He has gathered enemies, and those enemies hate him because he is doing the right thing, he is following the Lord, but everyone has abandoned him. (verse 8) He turns to God, asking for God to deliver him, because only God can bring deliverance. David then asks for God's punishment, and what does that punishment entail? Let us start with verses 22-28. This is God's punishment. I don't believe chapter 69 is a prophecy of what happened to Jesus. This is David saying, "I'm being persecuted maliciously, and this is what I am praying for you to do." This is all recorded as Scripture. This is done under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is not wrong to ask God to do these things under certain situations. David is asking God to take any property or anything good away from these evil people. If it was legitimate for David, a flawed person, to ask for this and expect it. How does that apply to the person who betrays the only truly innocent being that ever existed? This is why all of this happened to Judas, because we know this is what God does to those who betray the innocent.

He also quotes from Psalm 109, which is another imprecatory Psalm. Again, we see David telling God the terrible things that have happened to him, and how does he ask God to respond? Let's look at verses 6-15. This is pretty rough, and in the midst of that, someone who betrays is going to be removed from their office by God. This is what happened to Judas. Now we will talk in a moment about Peter's solution. But let's stop for a minute and consider something for a moment. Peter is saying, "Judas got his."

Application—We will be hurt by those who are believers and by those who claim to be believers and are not. We will know people who are damaged by others within the church. It is a terrible, terrible thing. (Remember that our damage is never as great as Judas' betrayal, remember that God is more just than we are. He will do what He should do. Should not the judge of all the earth do right? We immerse ourselves in God's Word to know God's heart, so we default to God's heart in the midst of sorrow.

The church is in motion. In verses 21-26, Peter really believes that they need to replace Judas. Part of that is because he sees that God has removed Judas from the position, so someone needs to fill it. He is showing leadership. I don't believe that this was a mandate given to him by God. I don't believe that Jesus told them to make sure there were always 12. But for the apostles, they are waiting; they want to make sure everything is right. Maybe it feels wrong not to have 12.

He gives the requirement for the person to do it. The candidate needs to be someone who was there from the beginning to Christ's ascension. While this person is not one of the 12, they are probably one of the 70 that Christ sent out.

They put forth two candidates, Joseph, called Barsabbas, also Justus, and Matthias. They pray. Their prayer is bittersweet. "Lord, you know the heart of these two.

Tell us which one you have chosen to take the place of Judas. Judas left that ministry to go to his own place, to go to hell.

They cast lots. This is pre-Holy Spirit. They don't wait for some sort of impression or feeling. They seek to find God's will the way that they were previously taught in Scripture. God revealed Himself through casting lots. That is, you would have marked stones, chosen blindly or randomly, and in doing so, you would know God's will. We see lots being used in Leviticus 16:8 to choose which goat is the scapegoat. Numbers 26:55 has the Israelites choosing sections of land by casting lots. Over in Jonah 1:7-8, Jonah is chosen to be the reason the storms had come because they had cast lots. God used lots to communicate His will. Why? Because God is sovereign, He will have the right stone come up. Proverbs 16:33. They cast the lots and choose Matthias, and thus, the 12 are 12 again.

God did not command Peter to do this. Peter did not need to do this. In fact, God already had the 12th apostle. Paul will say that he was an apostle as one born untimely. The resurrected Christ appears to Paul, and then Paul is trained over the years, at certain times even having heavenly visions. God did not need Peter to suggest the 12th.

God is not upset with Peter. Peter has done nothing sinful. He has taken what he has known up to that point, and he walks forward with his limited understanding. All of that is going to drastically change soon, but God does not correct Peter. God is not stymied by Matthias being an apostle.

We don't have to know specifically what God wants to move forward. When our obedience is based on God's Word, to the best of our ability, with wise counsel and prayer, we move forward. We throw it against the wall and see what God will do. Our

plans never get in the way of God's plans. We can't interfere with the Lord. Ephesians
2:10

The church needs to be in motion to be the church. Waiting on the Lord.