

THE WAITING COMMENCES

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

The disciples chose Matthias to replace Judas in accordance with the Scriptures and God's leading.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Acts 1

+ **SETTING:**

After Jesus explained to the disciples that they would bear witness from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, Jesus ascended to heaven. As the disciples watched where Jesus had gone, two angels appeared and assured them of Christ's return. All of this led to today's text, where we see the disciples obeyed Christ's command to wait as they prepared for the ministry that would follow when the Holy Spirit arrived.

DAY 1

READ:

Acts 1:12-14

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Acts 1:14

NOTES

In Acts 1:14, we see an example of the disciples praying together in unity. This was a time of great uncertainty and transition for the disciples, but they knew that the key to navigating this season was to seek God's guidance and wisdom through prayer.

As we read this passage, we are reminded of the power of praying with others. When we come together in prayer, we are united in purpose and in our commitment to seek God's will. We are reminded that we are not alone in our struggles, and that we have a community of believers who are supporting us in prayer.

Praying with others also brings a sense of accountability and encouragement. When we share our prayer requests with others, we invite them into our lives and allow them to see our vulnerabilities and struggles. This can be a humbling experience, but it also opens the door for others to offer their support and encouragement.

Praying with others helps us focus on what is truly important. In a world that is filled with distractions and competing priorities, prayer helps us to center our hearts and minds on God. When we come together in prayer, we are reminded of the things that truly matter—our relationship with God, our relationships with one another, and our commitment to living out God's will in our lives.

How has praying with others helped you to deepen your sense of connection with God and with your community of believers?

DAY 2

READ:

Mark 14:43-50

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Mark 14:50

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #82: PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

God's intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. Although God set up the priestly system in the Old Testament due to the sinfulness of humanity and people's need for a mediator, His ultimate purpose is that we come to God directly, through the mediating work of Jesus Christ, thus eliminating the need of another priest. Because of the work of Christ on the cross, exemplified in the tearing of the curtain that prevented access into the holy of holies, Christians are free to approach God with boldness (Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 4:14-16).

In Mark 14:43-50, we read a heartbreaking scene unfold as Jesus was arrested and His disciples fled in fear. These were the same disciples who had pledged their loyalty to Jesus, but in this moment of crisis, they abandoned Him. It must have been a painful and humbling experience for the disciples to come to terms with the fact that they had failed Jesus in His hour of need.

Yet, as we read on in Acts 1:12-14, we see that the disciples did not let their failure define them. Instead, they gathered together in prayer, seeking God's forgiveness and guidance as they moved forward. This is a powerful example of the restorative power of forgiveness, and of the importance of seeking restoration after we have failed.

When we experience a sense of guilt or shame over our past mistakes, it can be tempting to withdraw from God and from others. But as we see in the example of the disciples, this is not what God desires for us. He wants us to come to Him in humility and seek His forgiveness so that we can experience the freedom and joy of being restored.

The process of forgiveness and restoration begins with acknowledging our failures and seeking God's forgiveness. As we confess our sins and ask for God's forgiveness, we open ourselves up to the healing and transforming power of His love. We can trust that God is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

What steps can you take to come to God in humility and seek His guidance, even after you have failed?

DAY 3

READ:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

FOCAL PASSAGE:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

NOTES

In 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul wrote that all Scripture is inspired by, or breathed out by, God.

This is a powerful reminder of the importance of believing that the Scriptures are truly God's Word. The Bible is not just a collection of human writings or opinions—it is the very Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and given to us as a guide for our lives.

When we read and study the Scriptures, we are not just learning about God, we are encountering God Himself. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through the words of Scripture, revealing God's character, His will for our lives, and His plan for redemption.

Believing that the Scriptures are God's Word is not just a matter of intellectual assent—it is a matter of faith. We must trust that God is speaking to us through His Word and be willing to submit ourselves to its authority.

When we embrace the truth that the Scriptures are God's Word, we are transformed by their power. The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, able to penetrate even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

How has your belief that the Scriptures are God's Word impacted your life and your relationship with God?

DAY 4

READ:

Acts 1:15-26

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Acts 1:20-21

NOTES

In Acts 1:15-26, we see the apostles faced an important decision that led them to discern God's will. First, they turned to the Scriptures, citing two passages from the Psalms that directed them to act. Then they prayed for God's guidance, asking Him to show them which man He had chosen to take Judas's place.

The disciples did not rely on their own understanding or their own opinions—they turned to Scripture for guidance, trusting that God's Word would lead them in the right direction. By turning to the Scriptures in this way, the apostles were able to discern God's will and make an important decision that would shape the course of their ministry.

Similarly, we must be committed to turning to God's Word for guidance in our own lives. When faced with important decisions, we must pray for God's wisdom and guidance, and then turn to the Scriptures to seek His will.

God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105), and it is able to guide us in every decision we make. As we commit ourselves to studying and meditating on the Scriptures, we can have confidence that God will guide us and direct our steps.

How are you at allowing God's Word to lead you in making important decisions in your life?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"If you are ignorant of God's Word, you will always be ignorant of God's will."¹

—Billy Graham (1918–2018)

DAY 5

READ:

Acts 1:15-26

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Acts 1:23-26

NOTES

As Christians, we understand the importance of seeking God's will and following His commands. We spend time studying the Scriptures, seeking to understand what God wants us to do. But it's not enough to simply know God's will—we must also be committed to doing it.

In Acts 1:16-22, the disciples followed God's will by choosing a replacement for Judas. They were diligent in relying on Scripture to guide them in their decision. But they didn't stop there—they also took action, selecting Matthias as the twelfth apostle.

James 1:22-25 emphasizes the importance of not just hearing God's Word, but also doing what it says. We must be committed to putting God's Word into action, not just reading it and forgetting about it. We must be willing to take action and obey God's commands, even when it is difficult or goes against our own desires. May we be like the wise person in James 1:25, who not only hears God's Word but also puts it into practice. And may we always remember that true wisdom comes from doing God's will, not just knowing it.

In what areas of my life am I struggling to obey God's commands?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouses of God's infinite grace and power. . . . Prayer can do anything that God can do, and as God can do anything, prayer is omnipotent. No one can stand against the one who knows how to pray and who meets all the conditions of prevailing prayer and who really prays."²

—R. A. Torrey (1856–1928)

POINT 1: Jesus's disciples unite in prayer (Acts 1:12-14).

The disciples stayed in Jerusalem and waited in obedience to Jesus's command, revealing their genuine faith.

? Why is it sometimes hard to be obedient to Jesus?

KEY DOCTRINE #82: PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

God's intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. Although God set up the priestly system in the Old Testament due to the sinfulness of humanity and people's need for a mediator, His ultimate purpose is that we come to God directly, through the mediating work of Jesus Christ, thus eliminating the need of another priest. Because of the work of Christ on the cross, exemplified in the tearing of the curtain that prevented access into the holy of holies, Christians are free to approach God with boldness (Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 4:14-16).

? From Day 1: **How has praying with others helped you to deepen your sense of connection with God and with your community of believers?**

POINT 2: Jesus's disciples follow the Scriptures (Acts 1:15-22).

Peter and the disciples understood that Judas's betrayal and demise was part of the Scriptures being fulfilled because they believed the Scriptures to be true and God-inspired.

? How does believing the Word of God is true affect how we live?

To continue to fulfill Scripture, the disciples knew they had to choose a replacement for Judas.



What are ways we can learn to obey Scripture more on a daily basis?

POINT 3: Jesus's disciples trust in God (Acts 1:23-26).

When faced with a major decision, the disciples sought God's will in prayer.



When making a major decision, what are some helpful tips to help make the right decision?

After praying, the disciples made sure to act on God's leading.



When in your life have you asked for God's leading, He answered, but you didn't want to obey and follow?

MY RESPONSE

Because we believe that Jesus has risen from the dead, we unite with all who likewise believe in Jesus and live on mission together declaring the risen Lord.

- **HEAD:** How has God proven His Word is true as you have trusted in the Scriptures' promises?
- **HEART:** In what areas of your life are you frustrated or doubting what God can do and how can you confess it to Him today?
- **HANDS:** How are you prayerful and active in furthering the church and the kingdom of God?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God's grace; it is so certain, that someone would die a thousand times for it. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God's grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with regard to God and all creatures."³

—Martin Luther (1483–1546)