

## Acts, Sermon #2

Acts 1

History book of the N.T.

Last week we started a brand new series in the Book of Acts.

- If you missed it, please pick up a CD or go online.
- It is the foundational message for our new study.

I've entitled today's message: "**Waiting on God's Promise.**"

Acts 1:12

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

**Vs. 9-11**

After the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the end of the Gospels and the beginning of Acts,

The scripture says:

Acts 1:12-26

You may be seated.

## Waiting on God's Promise

Now, this particular section, vs. 12-26, function in this book in a very special way. The passage opens with three verses of description, vs. 12, 13 and 14, that tell us something about that small group of believers.

**Vs. 12** – they returned to Jerusalem

- Their very first action was one of obedience.
- Vs. 4, Jesus Christ had commanded them to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

As I look over these names in vs. 13, it is a victory of God's grace. Every one of those fellas had deserted the Lord Jesus Christ on the night of the crucifixion.

Here is denying Peter. Here is doubting Thomas. They all scattered and the Lord Jesus has gathered them all and not one is lost except the Son of Perdition, Judas Iscariot.

Gathered with them are these precious women vs. 14, Mary the mother of the Lord Jesus.

- This is the last time she appears in scripture.
- The last time we see her, she is praying.
- Nobody is praying to her. She is praying.

It refers to other women: probably Joanna, Susanna, and Mary, the mother of James and others who ministered to the Lord out of their substance.

It says that the Lord's brothers were there.

Jesus had a special birth but Jesus brothers came after Him from the union of Joseph and Mary.

- Four brothers ( Matt. 13:55) James, Joseph, Simeon, Judas
- And you remember, according to John 7:5, the brothers did not believe on Him.
- But in I Cor. 15, Jesus appeared to His brother James and evidently that resurrection appearance convinced James and His brothers.
- They too are now believers.

This description is followed in vs. 15-26 with the record of their choice for the one to take the place of Judas the betrayer.

### Waiting on God's Promise

The instructive thing for us is what were they doing while they were waiting for the coming of the Spirit?

According to this passage, they engaged in three activities.

First, according to vs. 14, these disciples gave themselves continually with one accord to what? **Prayer**.

Isn't that something?

- That is the first thing that the church did and all through the book of Acts it is the thing they do best.
- Read the Book of Acts and mark every time you see the word **Pray** – You will be amazed.

Do you realize folks that in this book, these people could literally pray down the power of the Spirit of God so the building in which they were meeting just shakes – physically trembles? (Acts 4:31)

These people knew how to get a hold of God. They prayed and you will notice two characteristics of their prayer, vs. 14.

- The little word “continued” means to give “your strength to something,” to take the best of your energy and to pour it in a certain direction.

- That is the meaning of this word, “these all gave their strength”; second description, “with one accord”, literally with one passion.
- This word sums up the totality of a man’s emotional being to the point where he is super charged with something.

They all gave their strength with one passion to prayer and supplication.

What does that tell us about their prayer?

- Obviously, it tells us it was their priority.
- Remember the Book of Acts is the headwaters, the spring, pure water, pure look, at what the church is supposed to be.

Let’s put ourselves as a church on the line here.

- Can it be said of us as an assembly that we give priority to prayer?

We approach prayer often as an organized event.

- We set time for it, length of it and when we are done, it’s over.
- This is not what this passage is talking about!

This talks about men and women who know for certain that they are going to receive the empowering of God to do a worldwide work and they are on their knees before God about this.

This was not organized; it was not a commanded meeting. Why?

- They had a passion, one heart.
- This was their priority and they were unified about it.

This is the thing we so desperately need. The church of Jesus Christ needs this.

- We need to find out what the Lord Jesus Christ is trying to do on the earth and then get ourselves together about it, to get unified about it in our spirits.
- We need to come to common agreement about it so there is no question about the direction we are going.

You get one person really burdened in prayer, who will wait on the Lord, employing his time in prayer and something is going to happen.

- Go back in the history of revivals and you will find a common denominator.
- Someone or some group was praying before hand.

The great revival in New York in the 1850's came out of one business man who had a burden to pray.

The Student Volunteer Movement, under the direction of D. L. Moody in 1886, invited students to come in July to the Bible grounds in Massachusetts for several weeks of Bible study and fellowship.

- 251 college kids came.
- For a while nothing happened but there was one kid there from Princeton who had fallen under the burden of world evangelization.

During the initial days of the conference on his own, he was praying that God would raise up some laborers from the 251 students that had met for Bible study.

- He began to talk about it and asked others to join him in prayer.
- Pretty soon, there were 21 praying and toward the end of the two weeks, July 16, A.T. Pierson (who followed D.L. Moody) came and preached a message.
- His theme was, "All Should Go and Go to All." It challenged the hearts of those students. Before the two weeks were up, 100 of the 251 stood and said, I'll go to the foreign mission field.

But, they did not stop there.

They appointed one of the students, Robert Wilder, to go all across the U. S. in 1887 to visit every institution of higher learning that he could and challenge the students for missions.

- Robert Wilder traveled for one year and at the completion of the year, he had enrolled 2,200 missionary candidates off of the campuses of this country.
- Their motto was "The Evangelism of the World in this Generation."

That folks is the right burden. That is taking the responsibility that God has given to every generation.

- By 1914, 27 years later they had over 5,000 missionaries on the field as a result of the Student Volunteer Movement.
- That began with one student.

You could find such a person in this church today, who would take God's Word literally, who would look at Acts 1:8 and say, this is our responsibility in my generation.

The evangelization of this world in this generation; where someone gets under the burden about prayer, that the Spirit of God Himself begins to call people out into the harvest?

We need to see that again.

- We desperately need to see God work like this again and the foundation of it, the start of it is prayer. It really is.

Prayer is like us pulling on the ropes and pulling on the ropes and in heaven the bells begin to ring and God hears them and sends blessing on His people.

Now, we have to get back to that.

- Let us not be absent at prayer meetings.
- We ought to give our strength to that.

As we look across our churches, from sea to shining sea, prayer meetings are a thing of the past.

- Until we get back to this kind of praying, we will stay in our weak, hopeless churches and be warmed by our materialism, pleasures, and hedonistic ways.
- We have got to go back to beseeching the Lord to do great things in us and through us.

Listen to what the Jesus said, without Me, ye can do what? Nothing.

What is the church accomplishing today? Look at the lives of church people today.

- We are inundated, overwhelmed, and submerged in the filth of this world and we defend it and call it Christian liberty. It is sad.
- We have to have someone come under this burden here, someone in this church and in every church in America.

These people prayed longingly, feelingly, prayed with a passion in them.

- These people prayed for 10 days, preached less than one hour and saw 3,000 saved.
- We preach for 10 days, pray less than one hour, and see hardly any saved.

It doesn't take a very powerful sermon, much skill or eloquence. All it takes is the heartbeat of the people of God united in one passion in prayer and the power comes down. God sends it.

Won't we make this our passion for our church? Won't we in the interest, in the advancement of His Kingdom make it our burden to pray that God will do something special for us in this generation?

- We need to have one passion.
- Do we have the Lord's passion for our church or is our passion worldly?
- Do we have the right passion?

Let us get our hearts united about what God has called us to do.

- Are we after the great American dream or the will of God for the world?
- Let us reach this world, in this generation

2. These people were united in prayer, but they mixed their prayer with something that God never intended to be separated from true prayer; they studied the scriptures.

What God has put together is prayer and Scripture reading.

This was what was going on here.

- Peter was searching the O. T.
- They were looking for messianic prophecies.

According to verse 20, Peter found the explanation for what had taken place with Judas Iscariot.

- He found the vacancy in the apostle's office had been predicted in Ps. 69:25 and he also found in Ps. 109:8 the necessity of filling that vacancy.
- He found a verse to explain what had happened and he found a second verse to explain what to do.

What is so inspirational and humbling is Peter's view of Scripture. Look at his words in verse 16 – The Inspiration of Scripture.

- Holy men of old moved by the Holy Spirit – II Peter 1:21
- That is what the church thought of the O.T. Books. Writings of men from the mouth of God.

Revival never comes to people with a low view of Scripture.

- How are we going to have an out-pouring of the Spirit when we disregard what the Spirit has already said?
- Honoring the Scriptures also honors the Spirit in whom we have asked to revive and fill our life.

**Vs. 20**, Peter says, "It is written" – that's the way Peter started his ministry.

Let us combine this with our prayer when we come to the Lord's house. Our view is "The scripture has to be fulfilled" for it is written.

Will we dismiss today's message and continue on being fattened and flattered by our drunken society of waste?

Do we have a high view of scripture and will we commit ourselves to this passion?

It is written and it must be fulfilled in my life, my family, in my church.

1. They **prayed**
2. They **studied** the Scripture for light – That is a proper approach to what faces a local church, prayer and looking in the Scripture.
3. **Leadership**, Peter stood up and took initiative
4. They came to a **decision**, vs. 23, two men that met the qualifications

**Vs. 24**, Lord, you show

- The book of Acts is the Actions of the Lord, the ascended Christ.
- They are looking to the leadership of Jesus Christ.

Thou, Lord – heart knower of all things. You show which of these two.

- The Lord Jesus knows all and He makes His own choices.
- Our job is not to choose, our job is to be in the position to know what choice the Lord made.
- That is a great choice to decision making

Does God still guide this way?

- Go to the Bible and to God in prayer and let Him lead.
- We need to have the leading of God when we have decisions facing our church.
- We need to talk to God about this.

Prayer, reliance on Scripture, let the heart knower reveal His decision.

So the leaders are to give themselves over to Acts 6:4 – continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Let us put ourselves into position so that the Spirit of God can empower us.

There were 120 people who succeeded in their generation.

- Typical men and women.
- God used them.

There are 400 people here; God can use us to reach this generation for Christ.

**Let us stand for closing invitation.**

We need to **pray** – Is there an urgency in our prayers, a unity?

We need to **search** our souls – Are we on the same page?

We need to **quit** the petty stuff/bellyaching and complaining; quit with our comforts and be focused on what God desires from us and His Church.

Let us get behind that in prayer and watch how God moves.

Let us ring the bells of Heaven.

Let us be used to reach the world for Christ.

May revival come to our hearts and homes

**GOSPEL**