

TRANSITION IN THE MINISTRY

ACTS 1:15-26

Text:

Introduction:

It's a tremendous blessing to consider the sovereignty of God. His providential control takes into account all the sinful and selfish acts of human will such as were committed by Herod and Judas Iscariot.

The Lord knows the void that is created at times of transition, and He always provides the truth of His Word and godly leadership to help us through times of adjustment. Here, we see God using Peter to lead the church through their time of transition. Remember:

- Growth requires transition.
- Mistakes require transition.
- Trials require transition.
- Loss (death or otherwise) requires transition.

Sadly many Christians and churches are unwilling to pay the price of transition, so they lose the blessing of growth.

1. THE REALITY OF TRANSITION (v. 15-20)

Acts 1:15-20

¹⁵ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) ¹⁶ Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. ¹⁸ Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. ²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

The apostles were going through a time of transition:

A. After the Ascension of the Savior

The Apostles had been with the Lord on an almost constant basis for more than three years. He had always been there when they had questions, when they were tired or discouraged, or when they were in danger. They had grown to rely on His presence. Now, He Has returned back to Heaven leaving them, and though they had the promise of the Holy Spirit, He had not yet come.

B. After the betrayal of Judas.

1. This betrayal was revealed (vss. 16-19)

Acts 1:16-19

¹⁶ Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. ¹⁸ Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

Note:

Matthew 27 records that when Judas saw Jesus suffering, he threw the thirty pieces of silver down at the feet of the chief priest.

Note:

David spoke of this.

Psalms 41:9

⁹ Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

The fact that David wrote prophetically about Judas reveals the truth of inspiration – the words of Scripture are God’s not man’s.

2 Peter 1:21

²¹ For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

B. The betrayer must be replaced (vs. 20)

Acts 1:20

²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Note:

The word bishoprick means “the office of the overseer.”

Note:

Peter is speaking in such a manner to remind the church that the Lord’s plan of transition was under way.

2. REASONING DURING TRANSITION (VS. 21-25)

Acts 1:21-25

²¹ Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. ²³ And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew

whether of these two thou hast chosen, ²⁵ That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

A. A proven man must be chosen (vss. 21-23)

Acts 1:21-23

²¹ Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. ²³ And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

Note:

They were to choose from among the ones who obviously had trusted in and followed the resurrected Christ. He must have seen the earthly ministry of Christ. Only those who had seen Christ were even considered for apostleship.

Note:

Sometimes there are those who are around religious gatherings, but do not know the Lord.

1. We need proven men with experience.

The church needs men who have walked with God and have experienced His work in their lives.

2. We need proven men who are doctrinally grounded.

The church needs men who are grounded in the faith and know the doctrines of the Word of God.

- B. A prayer plan must be followed. (vss. 24-25)

Acts 1:24-25

²⁴ And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, ²⁵ That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

1. Only God knows the hearts.

The best that we can do is evaluate based on what we see. By praying, we ask God to show us what He knows from the heart of man.

2. God is concerned for the ministry of His church.

God knows that a church will not move forward unless it does so, on its knees

3. Judas had made his own choice.

Despite spending three years in close personal contact with the Lord, Judas chose to betray Him, at least in part, because of his love for money.

3. THE REPLACEMENT AT TRANSITION (VSS. 26)

Acts 1:26

²⁶ And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

A. The manner of their choice.

Casting lots is not something we do today. Now that we have God's Word we have been given all that we need to make decisions.

2 Peter 1:3

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Examples:

Numbers 26:55-56

⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. ⁵⁶ According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

Proverbs 16:33

³³ The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

B. The man of their choice.

The name Matthias means "a gift from the Lord." He was selected to fill Judas' office, but there is no further

mention of him in the New Testament. With the choice of Matthias, the early church was saying they were ready to move forward.

Close:

As we transition into this new century our message will not change but we must exemplify strong, yet compassionate leadership.

- This church needs to be a place where a thirsty soul can hear the truth of the Gospel
- A place where a broken family can be mended
- A place where a little boy with no dad can see a Christian man who loves the Lord
- A place where a future pastor or missionary can train like Moses and David of old, and learn to dream for God