

## (Act)ivate (pt.2)

(Acts 1:15-26)

### Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. Background
  - a. After His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days teaching & preparing His followers before returning to His Father.
  - b. He leaves them with a huge responsibility, to start something new (His church) with a global-scale mission.
  - c. They anticipate the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit entering their lives, but He's not here yet.
  - d. They face uncertainty without Jesus, & the memory of a key leader's betrayal (Judas).
3. This passage deals with the selection of a replacement apostle.
  - a. Apostle: A special office & position of spiritual leadership in the New Testament.
  - b. It is important to set the foundation right for this new entity called the Church.
  - c. Before we start anything new as individuals/a church, we need to understand what Jesus values for leaders.
4. You are a spiritual leader in your context.
  - a. Jesus' followers are given gifts from the Holy Spirit to serve & influence others in the Body (cf. 1 Cor 12-14).
  - b. You're a spiritual influencer in your marketplace (work, school, etc), impacting the eternal trajectory of others.
  - c. Jesus is activating His followers by setting up their leadership, putting them on active duty.
  - d. We'll learn from 2 examples of spiritual leadership: One of failure, the other of success.

### Leaders are disqualified by wrong motives [Acts 1:15-20]

1. [1:15] Peter takes the spiritual lead, standing up to address the followers
  - a. *Onoma* [Greek]: 120 names/persons in all; gender neutral; inclusive of both men & women.
  - b. Addressing their fear: What really happened to Judas? How could he betray Jesus/us?
  - c. Learn from a negative example of spiritual leadership in Judas.
2. [1:16-17] Reassurance: God is still sovereign & in control.
  - a. [16] Judas' betrayal wasn't a surprise; God the Holy Spirit prophesied in Scriptures about it.
  - b. [17] Judas was "allotted his share [Greek: *kleros*] in this ministry": literally, an object used to cast lots.
    - i. Lots are not chosen by random luck, but hand-selected by God (cf. Prov 16:33).
    - ii. They're also used to arbitrate disputes without personal bias (Prov. 18:18).
  - c. Jesus hand-selected Judas to be an apostle (cf. Acts 1:2).
    - i. Jesus wasn't surprised or thwarted; it fulfilled the Holy Spirit's prophecies in Scriptures.
3. [1:18] Judas' motives disqualified him as a spiritual leader
  - a. [18a] "Reward [Greek: *misthos*] of his wickedness": wages; what one earns or seeks from one's efforts.
    - i. What he earned: Blood money paid for the field in which he died & was buried.
    - ii. What he sought: Out of wicked greed he betrayed Jesus (cf. Matt 26:14-16; John 12:6).
  - b. His attitude/motive: What can I get out of this now?
    - i. He did not care about the promise of Heavenly/eternal reward.
  - c. His functional underlying belief: I can get away with it because God won't do anything about it.
  - d. Application: What are you seeking in your sphere of influence? What do you think you're getting away with?
4. [1:18b-19] Judas' wickedness led to self-destruction
  - a. [18-19] Luke inserts a historical explanation to fellow non-Jews (translating from "their language" of Aramaic).
  - b. [18b] Overwhelming guilt led to his suicide (cf. Matt 27:3-7; also prophesied in Jer 19:1-13; Zec 11:12-13).
  - c. [19] Word spread quickly amongst all the Jerusalemites; they nicknamed the place: "Field of Blood."

- i. His wickedness was self-destructive; wickedness is always self-destructive.
  - ii. He missed out on God's blessing for him & through him.
5. [1:20] The Holy Spirit prophesied against enemies of the righteous, suffering King (David, & ultimately Jesus).
- a. Judas' death & judgment left his "camp" desolate, as a cemetery, like David's enemies (cf. Psa 69:25).
  - b. Judas' position & privilege are given to another, like David's enemies (cf. Psa 109:8).
  - c. When you are placed in a position of spiritual leadership/influence, motives matter.
    - i. Application: We need to ask the Holy Spirit to examine our motives.
    - ii. Every day, we make choices whether we move toward wickedness & self-destruction, or not.

### **Leaders are chosen with right hearts [Acts 1:21-26]**

1. [1:21-23] General qualification for the replacement apostle
- a. Apostle: "Sent one/agent"; representatives who speak on Jesus' behalf.
    - i. In the New Testament, a specific office of leadership in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church.
    - ii. The 12 represent each tribe of Israel, whose original mission is to be messengers of blessing & good news to all families of the earth (cf. Gen 12:3).
    - iii. 12 disciples; later Paul & Barnabas (Acts 13:50-14:4; 14:14); James, half-brother of Jesus (Gal 1:19).
  - b. [21-22a] One of the men present during the entirety of Jesus' earthly ministry (from His baptism to ascension).
  - c. [22b] An eyewitness willing to testify to others about the truth of the resurrection.
  - d. [23] 2 qualified candidates: Joseph (son of Sabas, Roman/Latin nickname: Justus) & Matthias.
2. [1:24-26] Selection Process
- a. [24] They prayed (as Jesus did all night before selecting the original 12; cf. Luke 6:12).
    - i. "Lord... you have chosen": Jesus is who they pray to, & who chooses apostles (cf. Acts 1:2).
    - ii. [25] To replace Judas, who turned from Jesus & apostolic ministry, and chose to receive judgment.
  - b. [26] They "cast lots" (again: *kleros*; cf. 1:17).
    - i. Matthias was hand-selected by Jesus (cf. 1:2, 24).
    - ii. He's never mentioned again, but made it into the Bible, one of the 12, participated in the Gospel & Church being planted across the Mediterranean region.
    - iii. Nicephorus [historian] records he preached in Judea, Aethiopia/Colchis, where he was crucified.
  - c. We don't make decisions by casting lots (culturally-bound by its time).
    - i. With the coming of the Holy Spirit, followers are directly led by God.
    - ii. Other New Testament leader selections were only made by prayer (Acts 6, 13).
    - iii. Every use of *kleros* afterward refers to God's selected/appointed inheritance of salvation/eternal life.
  - d. The difference between luck & God's selection: They prayed (1:24); not for what they thought they want/need, but according to God's will (cf. Matt 6:10; John 14:13).
3. What's the difference between Joseph & Matthias?
- a. Key: [24b] Jesus "knows the hearts of all."
    - i. God doesn't choose leaders based on external qualities, but what's in the heart (cf. 1 Sam 16:7).
    - ii. In Luke/Acts, the heart is about one's inner intention before God, which only Jesus sees.
  - b. Clue 1: The text contrasts Judas & Matthias: Matthias' heart isn't filled with what he can get in this life.
  - c. Clue 2: Apostle's goal: [22] A willingness to tell the truth about Jesus & His resurrection to people.
    - i. Something in Matthias is ready to go: He knows/experiences Jesus, trusts & obeys Him, and is ready to tell the world about Jesus as resurrected Savior King & God.
  - d. Application: Are you willing to tell people the truth about Jesus? To go wherever Jesus sends you?
    - i. You need the right heart toward God & others, to be willing to go His way, however He selects you.
    - ii. 360° Living: As you connect with Jesus, you'll be led by the Spirit to spiritually influence others' lives.

### **Conclusion**

1. Before we can start anything new, we need to determine what kind of spiritual influence we're going to be.
- a. There's only 2 directions: Judas or Matthias
  - b. Don't hide behind ivy-covered fences; don't keep your light under a bushel.
  - c. Shine for the world to see; engage, don't hide. Let Jesus activate you.
2. If you hear His Word & respond in faith, He personally selects you to receive the *kleros* of salvation/eternal life.
- a. He also personally selects you to love & serve Jesus by loving & serving others with good news.
  - b. Be a spiritual leader of influence.