

Easter 7 (Exaudi) at Immanuel, Mercedes

INTRO: I have a pastor friend in MI who is a brilliant theologian; but he and I disagree on one issue. He insists that congregations must be governed by voters' assemblies. My synod and district commissions on constitutional matters agree with him and not with me. I'll be interested to hear your opinion when I've finished with this sermon.

I. THE OCCASION REQUIRING THIS FIRST SELECTION

A. The time and place of this selection

1. after Ascension and before Pentecost
2. at Jerusalem, as instructed by Jesus and angels
3. in an upper room large enough to accommodate about 120 people

B. The impetus for this selection

1. Judas had taken his own life
2. 'his own place' suggests 'hell' to me
3. the work of the Lord must go on

C. The number of apostles should be twelve (David's Psalms 69 & 109)

1. twelve tribes, disciples; symbolic of the ones called by God (church)
2. David: 'another take his place' (Gr. **episcopos** = office of oversight)
3. visible church has appointed offices (e.g., Old Testament priests)

II. THE AUTHORITY BEHIND THIS FIRST SELECTION

A. The original call of the twelve

1. personally, by Jesus
2. why call Judas? Any can fall away; foreknowledge/predestination
3. God did it that way, don't argue

B. On Easter night... (cp. John 20)

1. authority to forgive and retain sins (elucidate)
2. holy ministry, in Jesus' stead (as My Father ... even so I send you)
3. Keys given to the group assembled in one location (congregation)

C. 'Calls' are given directly or through means

1. to Matthew, 'follow me;' Andrew found Peter, 'come and see'
2. the Twelve called both immediately and personally by Jesus
3. 'whosoever sins ye remit/retain, they are remitted/retained'

III. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THIS FIRST SELECTION

A. Peter takes the initiative, it seems

1. no one individual can usurp the authority of Jesus
2. Peter does not appoint a replacement (as do Popes today)
3. nor do the Eleven usurp authority (as Episcopal or Cardinals)

4. Peter apparently acts as chairman pro tem
5. Acts 15 – Jesus half-brother James chairs the Jerusalem council

B. 'Brethren' v.15

1. term for fellow-believers; Peter acts as equal among peers
2. but v.16 says **Andres adelphoi**, i.e., 'men brothers' (why?)
3. v.14 mentions 'the women, Mary Jesus' mother'
4. BTW, also 'His brothers'! former non-believers!
5. one hundred twenty people is a large meeting group

IV. THE PROCEDURE DURING THIS FIRST SELECTION

A. Selection of candidates

1. first qualification = man of faith
2. witness of Jesus' career (miracles of healing, nature; teachings)
3. not everyone has the same office, or qualifications (today)
4. yet everyone then seems to have participated in some fashion

B. Prayer

1. specific, just for this selection; wording given to us – v.24
2. seeking God's guidance; committing situation to Him
3. Scripture and prayer still direct God's work on earth

C. Casting of lots

1. root of Greek word is 'wood', as in wooden cubes
2. ch. 6 re: deacons; stated qualifications, **named** seven; laid hands on
3. Holy Spirit will work via various means, in different cultures

V. THE OUTCOME OF THIS FIRST SELECTION

A. The issue was settled, period

1. no complaining, hard feelings
2. no boycotting or working against the selected one

B. In God's church, the work goes on

1. by people, brethren
2. from 120 to 3,000 to 5,000; to even some priests; Jesus' brothers
3. to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8) even RGV, Ghana

C. God's message gets proclaimed

1. people sin, like setting high priority on what 30 pcs. AG can buy
2. witnesses saw Jesus' holy life, innocent death
3. His resurrection and ascension finished world's atonement
4. a place in heaven awaits all who believe their/our report

CONCLUSION: There are still souls to be won. There is still work to be done. Prayerfully seek the Spirit's guidance through the Scriptures, and be about the Savior's work in our congregation. May His will be done by all of us, and His kingdom will continue to come. Amen.