

FAMILY PRAYER WEDNESDAY MAY 12, 2021, at 12.00 p.m.

Acts 1:1-26

Last week we studied in John 21:15-25; Jesus questioned Peter three times if he loved Him. Three times Peter answered in the affirmative that he loved Him, and Jesus told him to feed His Lambs and Sheep. Then He told Peter what kind of death he would die because of his love for Him. Then Peter looked around and saw John, he asked Jesus, what about John? Jesus told him that that was none of his concern, he should follow Him. John testified that he had given a true account of what happened in concluding his writings.

Today we will continue looking at the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus Christ as Luke records it in the book of Acts, we will focus on Acts 1:1-26. Luke's account is a continuation of what Jesus taught and did during His earthly ministry. Luke said that Jesus was seen by many during the forty days following His crucifixion, which serves as proof of His resurrection, that is, He is alive. During that time, He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. He was gathered with His followers on the Mount of Olive. He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but they should wait there for the promise of the Father of which He told them about earlier on several occasions. (John 14:26, 14:15-17) He said to them, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:5) When they were all together, they asked Him if He was going to restore the kingdom at that particular time. They were still concerned about the establishment of Christ's earthly kingdom. If He did, He would overthrow their oppressors, the Romans and they would be free. Up to that point they did not get it, they did not understand His purpose for coming to earth. They spent those three years with Jesus and still did not understand His purpose at that time. They were still

self-centered. Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:7b-8)

Jesus told them in John 21:21 that He was sending them as the Father Sent Him. In Acts 1:5 He told them that they should wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Father. In answer to their question about the restoration of His kingdom, He told them that it was not for them to know. What was important for them was, in a few days they would receive power when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they would be His witnesses. They would start in Jerusalem, then to the surrounding places. Places and people with whom they never wanted to be associated, such as the Samaritans and then to the ends of the earth. When He was finished speaking with them, He was taken up into heaven suddenly.

They stood in amazement looking up as He left earth. Two men who were dressed in white appeared unto them and asked them why they stood there gazing into heaven. They did not wait for a reply, but made this statement, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11b). Their statement tells us a number of things. (A) He is coming back. (B) The same Jesus who was taken up is coming back. Not someone who represents Him, not someone like Him, but the same Jesus who was taken up, is coming back. (C) He will be coming back the same way He went up. He went up in the clouds, He will come back in the clouds. (Revelation 1:7; Mark 13:26; Daniel 7:13) He went up suddenly, His return will be sudden. (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) The same Jesus who was taken up into heaven will come back in the same way He was

taken up. We must be ready; He could come back this very moment. Jesus ascended into heaven from Mount Olive, when He returns, He will return at Mount Olive. (Zacchaeus 14:4-11; Rev. 19:11-16, 20:1-6).

The disciples left Mount Olive and went to Jerusalem as they were commanded to do. It is interesting to note that after the crucifixion, they were hiding because of fear of the Jews. They left Mount Olive and went to Jerusalem and entered a upper room where some of them were staying. They were not hiding at that time because there were about (120) one hundred and twenty of them who were gathered there. They were gathered as a United Body. They went to the upper room in Jerusalem to pray. (14) They did not go the gossip or even to reminisce about their encounter with Jesus after His resurrection. They went to pray and wait. They had their assignment to go and make disciples, but they were also told to wait for the power which the Father would give them. They were obedient in going and waiting because they needed that power to be effective witnesses.

While they were praying and waiting, Peter addressed the group and reminded them that they had unfinished business to which they should attend. He reminded them that the Scriptures must be fulfilled by selecting one among them to take the place of Judas who betrayed Jesus. (Psalm 41:9, 69:25-26, 109:8) The one who would be qualified should have been proven to be a faithful follower of Jesus, beginning at His baptism and continued to that moment. It was important for that person to meet the requirements because he had to be an eyewitness of what Jesus did and taught.

In this passage we notice (1) The disciples were obedient, they went to Jerusalem. (2) They were not arguing who would be the greatest or on which side of Jesus they would sit. (3) They were United in prayer. (4) They waited. We can learn from them about waiting. They did

not just sit around and wait; they took care of what needed to be done while waiting. I believe that many times we miss our blessings because instead of doing what needs to be done while we wait; we become disengaged and stop serving and just sit waiting for the big moment. The disciples prayed and sought God, when choosing who should be appointed to take Judas' place in ministry. They did not just select someone whom they liked, one of their friends. The individual had to meet certain qualifications and they did not go to one person. They found two individuals and used their system of casting lot, to determine the one.

(5) (a) Jesus appeared to the women who were sorrowful and disappointed when they did not find His body in the tomb. (b) Twice while the disciples were afraid and were locked up in a room, He appeared to them. (c) He appeared to the two men as they walked in the country. (d) He appeared to the seven disciples who went fishing, they were dejected and disappointed because they fished all night and did not catch any fish. (e) He met them while they doubted (f) Finally, He appeared to His followers at Mount Olive. He is here with us, He is Emmanuel, God with us. In our moments of doubts, sorrow, toil, disappointment and fear He is saying as the Father sent Me so send I you. He is saying don't leave your post (Jerusalem) He is saying you are My witness; you cannot function in your strength, you need the infilling of the Holy Spirit in order to effective in your witness; wait for the power that will strengthen you, empower and equip you so that you will be able to stand firm as you face the difficulties that await you.