

FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD 5.16.2021

Let's look at the Bible readings for the 7th Sunday of Easter, May 16, to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy.

1ST READING: Acts 1:12-26 A new apostle is chosen to take the place of Judas

¹²The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to **prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in **this ministry**.” ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed

out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’; and “‘Let another take his office.’

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us — one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.”

²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they **prayed** and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in **this ministry and apostleship** from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO ACTS, CHAPTER 1

1. What's the significance of 12 when it comes to the needed number of disciples?
2. How do you reconcile the demise of Judas here (vs. 18) with the account in Matthew 27:3-5?
3. What requirement for Judas' replacement is stated in vss. 21 and 22?
4. What key role or task do apostles have (see the end of vs. 22)?
5. What are the three steps the disciples go through to choose Judas' successor (vss. 23-26)?
Might those same three steps be helpful for us in our decision-making in the church today?

2ND READING: 1 John 5:9-15 We can know right now that we have eternal life in Jesus

⁹If we receive the **testimony** of men, the **testimony** of God is greater, for this is the **testimony** of God that he has borne concerning his Son. ¹⁰Whoever **believes** in the Son of God has the **testimony** in himself.

Whoever does not **believe** God has made him a liar, because he has not **believed** in the **testimony** that God has borne concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the **testimony**, that God gave us **eternal life**, and this **life** is in his Son.

¹²Whoever has the Son has **life**; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have **life**.

¹³I write these things to you who **believe** in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have **eternal life**. ¹⁴And this is

the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO I JOHN, CHAPTER 5:

1. What's a good synonym for the word "testimony" as used numerous times in vss. 9-11?
2. How does the discussion of life in the Son in vss. 11-13 related to what we said a few weeks ago in John 15 about Jesus being the vine, and we being the branches?
3. Can you think of a more straightforward way to say that Jesus is essential than the way it is stated in vs. 12?
4. How does vs. 13 address those Christians who say, "I hope I'll make it to heaven when I die, but I'm just not sure"?
5. Look up Hebrews 10:19-25. How does this relate to verse 14 above?
6. How do the words "according to his will" help you make sense of vss. 14 and 15?

THE GOSPEL: John 17:11b-19 Jesus prays for our unity, life, truth, and holiness.

^{11b}Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Holy Father, keep them in **your name**, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them in **your name**, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that **the Scripture** might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

¹⁴I have given them **your word**, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷**Sanctify** them in the truth; **your word** is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sake I **consecrate** myself, that they also may be **sanctified** in truth."

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO JOHN, CHAPTER 15:

1. Look up Hebrew 7:25. How does that relate to what Jesus is doing here?
2. In vs. 11 Jesus prays that our relationship with him would be as tight as Jesus' relationship with the Father. What do you think about that?
3. Who is the "son of destruction" mentioned in vs. 12?
4. Our Lord Jesus uses the term "the world" to describe humanity and creation in a state of rebellion against God. What does it mean for us to say that as Christians we are "in the world but not of it"?
5. In vs. 17 the term "sanctify" means to make holy. The same word is translated here as both consecrate and sanctify. The Holy Spirit's role is to make us holy by apply the saving Word of God to us in Jesus. God says He has made you holy in Jesus. Do you feel very holy most of the time? What are you going to trust, how you feel or what God says about you?