|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Title:*** | Taking Care of Business |
| ***Text:*** | Acts 1:15-26 |
| ***Subject:*** | How does a church find clarity and direction in matters not made clear in Scripture? |
| ***Compliment:*** | By trusting in that which Scripture has made clear, such as authority and leadership. |
| ***CIT:*** | The church in Jerusalem found direction in a matter not made clear in Scripture by trusting in the Scriptural authority they had been given. |
| ***Purpose:*** | To give the church Scriptural insight on how to properly deal with matters not made clear in Scripture. |
| ***Homiletic Idea:*** | Churches today can find direction in matters not made clear in Scripture by trusting in the leadership of the Scriptural authorities they have been given. |
| ***Intro:*** |  |

Jesus in Matthew 10:2-4 and in Mark 3:13-19 commissions twelve of his disciples as apostles. One of these men, Judas, betrayed Jesus, and ceased to be an apostle. This left eleven.

Peter and the other 119 people in that local church were gathered in prayer, waiting in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded when Peter stands up and makes his declaration.

***The Timing:***

Why Peter chose to do this now is not clear. John Phillips has this opinion on the matter:

“It did not take long for Peter to take the lead. His disgrace has been quite forgotten now, as it had long since been forgiven. He was a natural leader – impulsive but utterly devoted to the Lord Jesus; forceful, knowledgeable about Jesus, one of the very first of His disciples, rough and ready but warmhearted and sincere, a rough diamond.

Peter took the floor. Something had been bothering him. Jesus had chosen twelve disciples, but one was missing. The empty space left by the suicide of Judas bothered him like a missing tooth, so suddenly he stood up and addressed himself to the others and to the issue.

…In any case, Peter decided something had to be done about the missing member in the apostolic ranks. And, Peter-like, it had to be done right away so that there would be twelve of them again. **Perhaps, he may have thought, that was why the delay was so long.**”

***Why it was important for Judas to be replaced:***

Death was a common thing for the apostles. Most were martyred. None were replaced save for Judas.

Walvoord & Zuck offered this on the matter:

“Evidently it was necessary to replace Judas’ position because he had vacated his place of promise, referred to in Matthew 19:28. There the Lord promised the apostles they would sit on **twelve** thrones reigning over Christ’s kingdom of Israel when He returns to reign on planet earth (cf. Rev. 21:14)”

Peter references Psalm 109:8 and 69:25 with regard to the need to replace Judas.

The Scripture referenced was clear that the position needed to be filled. It was clear that the individual needed to be replaced, but Scripture gave no indication regarding who to replace the individual with.

***(Subject):*** So how does a church find clarity and direction in matters not made clear in Scripture?

***(Compliment):*** By trusting in that which Scripture has made clear, such as authority and leadership.

***(CIT):*** The church in Jerusalem found direction in a matter not made clear in Scripture by trusting in the Scriptural authority they had been given.

1. ***Peter, the Apostle, acknowledges the problem and presents a solution. V15-25***
   1. The position of Apostle was one that carried authority given by Christ.
      1. Jesus handpicked the twelve for the purpose of fully establishing the ministry he began while conducting his earthly ministry.
      2. The word ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek ‘apostolos’ meaning ‘a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders’
         1. A delegate is a person designated to act for or represent another or others.
         2. The authority of the one represented is implied.

Note: it wouldn’t be until a little later that the offices of pastor and deacon would come into full swing.

* 1. Both the problem and the solution were based on Scripture.
     1. Jesus had assigned twelve positions of promise to the apostles and Judas’ position would now be vacant. Matthew 19:28
     2. This position according to OT Scripture would need to be filled. Psalm 109:8 & 69:25
  2. The specificities of this issue were not addressed in Scripture.
     1. While the Scripture says that Judas position does need to be filled;
     2. There is no indication as to how to fill it,
     3. when to fill it,
     4. with who it would need to be filled
  3. So Peter appeals to the rest with the best solution he can think of.
     1. He lays out qualifications to determine eligible candidates. (probably by examining himself and the other apostles to see what they had in common)V21-22
        1. They had been with them since the beginning.
        2. Starting at John’s Baptism of Jesus.
        3. All the way to his ascension.
        4. He says they need to be witnesses of Jesus resurrection.

Note: I think it would good to point out that while there is Scriptural precedent for Judas position being filled, there is no real Scriptural precedent for this list of qualifications.

* + 1. Then they cast lots to decide between the two they are left with.
       1. Casting lots was the way to decide things in the O.T.
          1. It removed the human element
          2. Allowing God to be the determining factor.
       2. The Lot falls on Matthias.

1. ***The church was ok with the solution presented and the decision was made! V26***
   1. There may have been discussion and disagreement on a number of issues leading up to this decision.
      1. The qualifications, what they should be.
      2. How to decide between the two remaining eligible men.
   2. Once the lots were cast, however, the matter was settled and all seemed to be on board (which is right)
      1. Disagreement and discussion are fine until the decision has been made.
      2. At that point the only two options left are: get on board or get out.
      3. Getting upset and causing problems doesn’t make the list of acceptable options. (unless there is some Scriptural precedent and even then it isn’t right to be mean and ugly and cause a scene)

***Transition to Application:***

Note: One commentator wrote, “…no moral question was involved here. It was a matter of making a choice between two men who were apparently equally qualified.” This is good to keep in mind. While there are eternal matters at hand here (such as who will judge the twelve tribes) this is not an issue of doctrine or principle or anything of that matter. Whether they were right in there actions or whether they were wrong really won’t change anything in eternity. Does that make sense?

Good principle to live by: That which God makes much of you make much of.

***Application:***

* There are times a church must make decisions where the Scripture may provide little light regarding specifics such as:
  + Who is going to be the next pastor of a church?
  + Who is going to be the next staff member to be hired?
  + What is the next staff position to be filled?
  + Who are the next trustees going to be?
  + How is the money going to be spent?
  + Etc…(maybe get other ideas from the class)

Note: Some of these may have certain qualifications detailed in Scripture, but like the Jerusalem church, once you find those qualified a decision between them must be made!

* How does a church today find the answers to such questions? Ours takes a vote!

(Homiletic Idea): Churches today can find direction in matters not made clear in Scripture by trusting in the leadership of the Scriptural authorities they have been given.

* + We elected (by vote) a pastor, a God ordained position of leadership for the local N.T. body.
    - He has chosen staff to help him fulfill that role.
    - He has chosen teachers to help him fulfill that role.
  + We have elected (by vote) Trustees under the leadership and guidance of that pastor.
* Until the vote takes place there is room for disagreement and discussion and opinion.
* After the vote there is only room for ascent or withdrawal. (no room for causing strife)
* Where Scripture speaks clear, there is no room for a vote!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Dates and Locations Delivered*** | |  |
|  |  | |
|  |  | |
|  |  | |
|  |  | |

Extra:(time permitting or use the following week to provoke thought) Because this is no moral or doctrinal issue there is room for speculation, and discussion.

Who was the disciple that replaced Judas?

The word apostle has two applications, one official and the other general.

In the official sense it applies to the twelve.

In the general sense it applies to anyone “sent out for a specific task or purpose.”

Barnabas is referred to in this sense as an apostle as well as Timothy and Silvanus.

But Judas was an apostle in the official sense and since there are only twelve tribes and twelve thrones from which they will be judged, only one person can take his place…who was it?

Was it Matthias or was it Paul and why? (not interested in an argument but some healthy debate and discussion won’t hurt and might do some good)

Open the floor and allow the class to discuss before giving the sources and other opinions.

Weirsbe’s Opinion:

“…Paul could not have filled up the ranks because he could never have met the divine qualifications laid down in Acts 1:21-22. Paul was not baptized by John the Baptist; he did not travel with the apostles when Jesus was with them on earth; and, though he saw the glorified Christ, Paul was not witness of the resurrection as were the original apostles.

Paul made it clear that he was not to be classified with the twelve (1 Cor. 15:8; Gal. 1:15-24), and the twelve knew it. If the twelve thought that Paul was supposed to be one of them, they certainly did not show it! In fact, they refused to admit Paul into the Jerusalem fellowship until Barnabas came to his rescue (Acts 9:26-27)! The twelve apostles ministered primarily to the twelve tribes of Israel, while Paul was sent to the Gentiles.”

Arguments put forth by Walvoord and Zuck (not necessarily opinions held by them):

“Those who believe Matthias was a proper selection argue that Matthew 19:28 is Jewish in its orientation and Paul was to minister to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). Furthermore Luke, Paul’s friend and companion, acknowledged the Twelve as an official group (Acts 2:14; 6:2). Finally, there is no sense or spirit of censure in the Acts account on the selection of Matthias.”

My Opinion:

They acted prematurely, and that God already was ready to take care of the situation with Paul, and he still did take care of it with Paul, but none the less as far as the church was concerned the decision seemed acceptable and so they moved forward and once the lot was cast the decision was made.

1. Weirsbe says, “…Paul could not have filled up the ranks because he could never have met the divine qualifications laid down in Acts 1:21-22.”

A: The book of Acts is just as much a record of events, being a narrative, as it is an example to emulate. Not all of the events recorded would God condone as acts to emulate. We don’t make decisions by casting lots for example. Also the qualifications can’t necessarily be regarded as divine. They came from Peter for all we know, and again the events were recorded. Inspiration would have protected the accuracy of the record, but the Holy Spirit may have had nothing to do with the action being recorded. Does that make sense? These qualifications are not found anywhere else in Scripture so we really don’t have grounds to call them divine.

1. Weirsbe says, “Paul made it clear that he was not to be classified with the twelve (1 Cor. 15:8; Gal. 1:15-24).”

A: I Cor. 15:-11 would be more fitting to consider. In this light while there are a few questions raised they are easily answered. First off this sounds more like a humble acknowledgment of his apostleship rather than a denial of it. Secondly the term apostle, as mentioned before has both the official and general applications. Thirdly there is mention of the twelve, then there is mention of all of the apostles and then there is mention of himself. The twelve could very well include Matthias (and probably does), but is probably nothing more than an acknowledgment of the decision made there by the leadership to include Matthias in the leadership and is merely an acknowledgment of the leadership there in Jerusalem which consisted of the 11 official apostles and Matthias making twelve.

As for the account in Galatians 1:15-24, it has really no bearing on the issue other than it lists another apostle in the general sense, James the Lord’s brother. James did not even convert until after the ascension of Christ and thus was not found there in Matthew and Mark’s accounts where Jesus personally picked twelve. The one thing to take note of is Paul’s mention, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of being picked by God from the womb…handpicked much like the eleven.

1. Weirsbe says, “If the twelve thought that Paul was supposed to be one of them, they certainly did not show it! In fact, they refused to admit Paul into the Jerusalem fellowship until Barnabas came to his rescue (Acts 9:26-27)!”

A: There would be no reason for the eleven to suspect Paul as an apostle. They knew nothing of him outside of his being a persecutor of the churches. However, consider how they regarded him, later in his ministry. He rebuked Peter, at one point, and was responsible for setting the majority of NT churches during that time right with regard to practice.

1. W. & Z. said, “Those who believe Matthias was a proper selection argue that Matthew 19:28 is Jewish in its orientation and Paul was to minister to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9).”

A: While this is an accurate statement it is only that. Any implications drawn from it with regard to Paul’s apostleship are speculative at best.

1. W. & Z. said, “Furthermore Luke, Paul’s friend and companion, acknowledged the Twelve as an official group (Acts 2:14; 6:2).”

A: Luke’s account is just that, an account. It is an accurate record of events. Also it should be noted that the twelve could also be a reference to the panel of leaders that abode in Jerusalem which would have included Matthias. On earth, in other words, due to the limited visibility of eternal events Matthias would have been regarded as an apostle, but that doesn’t mean it was so in Heaven.

1. W. & Z. said, “Finally, there is no sense or spirit of censure in the Acts account on the selection of Matthias.”

A: There would be no reason for censure because those present would have had no reason to doubt. Paul had not come yet, and as far as they were concerned there would be no others to come. None could have foreseen the miraculous nature of Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:1-16, key 16) nor could they have foreseen the miraculous nature of his training (Galatians 1:11-18, Key is V12 & V16-17), both of which are worth considering with regard to the qualifications put forth by Peter, if they even matter. Again, Luke’s account is a record for events, and therefore wouldn’t necessarily include after each decision or action perpetrated by the apostles an evaluation of the action whether it were right or wrong.