

Does the Lord Know Your Heart?

Sunday, June 2 at 9:00 | Monday, June 3 at 7 PM

Seventh Sunday of Easter – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: As the Son of God took an amazing journey **from** heaven **to** earth, **from** His sinless living **to** His sacrificial dying, and **from** His third-day resurrection **to** His fortieth-day ascension, so *His followers back then* and *we today* are on a journey!

- Back then Jesus' followers ✦ marveled at His teaching, ✦ were in awe of His miracles, ✦ were filled with sadness at His death, ✦ were bursting with joy at His resurrection, and ✦ received their instructions to proclaim *repentance and forgiveness to all in Jesus' name!* Jesus knew their hearts, gave them an assignment, and blessed their work!
- And what about us today? We are also on a journey **from** being baptized into Christ **to** growing up in God's Word, **from** faithfully receiving Word and Sacrament **to** living for Christ, and **from** shining the light of Christ **to** finally being with Christ!

Today we focus on a brief part of the journey of Jesus' disciples – *shortly after He was taken up into heaven!*

1. **Right After Jesus Ascended:**

- a. Returning and waiting: ¹² **Then** [the remaining eleven apostles] **returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's**

journey away [a distance of 1,000 double steps or about 2/3 of a mile].¹³ **And 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.** // We cannot know with certainty, *but the upper room location might be the same place* where Jesus and His disciples had celebrated the Passover Meal, where Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, and where they were now staying in Jerusalem – *as they waited to be empowered by the promised Holy Spirit!*

- b. People and things between Jesus' ascension and the Day of Pentecost:¹⁴ **All these** [that is, the 11 apostles] **with one accord** [one mind] **were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.** // Just before Jesus was taken up, He told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem... *and as they waited they prayed!* Also, along with the apostles, *there were various believing women, including Jesus' mother, AND Jesus' own half-brothers, who, probably in connection with Jesus' resurrection, had been made into men who finally believed in Jesus – their own half-brother, as the Promised Messiah!*

2. **We Need to Replace Judas:**

- a. God knew what would happen:¹⁵ **In those days** [between the ascension and the pouring out of the Spirit] **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. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”** // First, “Peter stood up among the brothers...” – so among men *but not women*. Lenski wrote: **“‘brethren’ [or brothers] may include ‘sisters,’ but ἀνδρες [which is the Greek word used in verse 15] could not include [women], just as to this day the address ‘men’ omits ‘women’”** (44). Second, the Bible prophesied that someone would betray Jesus, and God knew – *from His divine foreknowledge* – it would be Judas, *but God did NOT cause Judas to be the betrayer*.

- b. The end of Judas’ life on earth: ¹⁸ **(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong [or swollen] he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And 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.)** // Now Judas did not actually buy the field, *nor was it the place where he died*; instead, he returned the money, which was then used to buy the field. Also, the money was BLOOD MONEY – *since it was given to betray Jesus unto death*; the **“Blood”** was Jesus’ blood!!
- c. Let another take his place: 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.”** // Based on those OT passages, *they sought to replace Judas*.

3. **The Replacement Qualifications:** ²¹ “So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning 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.” ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. // So the candidates had to have been with Jesus during His whole ministry and an eyewitness of His resurrection; only two qualified: Joseph and Matthias.
4. **The Replacement Process:** ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles. // As the Lord Jesus had chosen the other apostles, so, here, *they asked Him to make His choice known – based on what He saw in the hearts of Joseph and Matthias. As He knew their hearts, so He knows ours!!* By the way, Judas – *of his own choosing* – went to his own place, thus to hell : (

This Week’s Challenge: Since the Lord knows our hearts, *and now we know that He does*, how is He calling us to change?

Let Us Pray: Dear Lord Jesus, the Knower of All Hearts, *work in us for our good and God’s glory!* In Your Name!

CONNECT WITH US → Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com
Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230