



LC STUDY GUIDE

Done in Sync with the "MORE" Series

The Passage: Acts 1:15-26

For Life Community usage the week of 5/11/15

Intro: Welcome back. Throughout May, we as a church have been in a posture of expectancy, asking God for more of His leading. Which brings us to the book of Acts—a narrative that begins with Jesus' followers prayerfully seeking what to do now.

Today's Big Idea: Despite a terrible transgression by those in your community, God can bring victory and help us move forward.

Acts 1:15-26

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) **16** and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. **17** He was one of our number and shared in our ministry."

18 (With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. **19** Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 "For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in it,'

and,

"May another take his place of leadership.'

21 Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, **22** beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

23 So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen **25** to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

O – In essence, this passage is a behind-the-scenes look at how the disciples decided to replace Judas. What strikes you as interesting, concerning, and encouraging in these 11 verses?

I – V. 16 repeats what Gospel writers like John have stated—the Scriptures were fulfilled when Judas betrayed Jesus. The passage is from Ps. 41:9, "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me." Why did the disciples feel they needed to replace Judas? Why not continue on with 11? And since there were two strong candidates, why not have 13?

(They desired 12 for at least two reasons: 1) to restore the model Jesus had started and 2) for the meaning of 12 symbolizing God's chosen twelve tribes of Israel. Continuing with 11 would have felt incomplete and adding both Barsabbas and Matthias would have felt contrary).

I – It might strike us as odd to see the disciples casting lots to determine the 12th disciple. Are there any modern-day casting of lots (or "fleeces") you have seen? What separates this from being superstition?

(In short, Peter and the disciples rooted this time in prayer (v. 24) and believed this was how the Holy Spirit was leading them. While this may not be a universal prescription for decision-making, they believed God was leading them in this moment.)

O – The field where Judas was buried was called, "Akeldama." The idea was that the field was cursed by Judas's actions. No one could use it for anything noble or profitable; thus it is abandoned. Metaphorically speaking, what similar "Fields of Blood" do we have today? *(Haunted houses, the homes of murderers, like the home of Adam Lanza, the murderer in the Newtown tragedy. The home was never moved into and the neighbors had been trying to have it demolished. It was demolished recently.)*

A – Despite Judas's betrayal that led to Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus was resurrected and then ascended into heaven. Acts 1 is answering the "Now what do we do?" question. How have you felt God's deliverance from something seemingly hopeless?

A – Imagine being Matthias and having been given the honor to be the 12th disciple. Describe how you might have felt if you were him.

A – Imagine being Barsabbas. How would you have felt not being selected? Everyone has a time when they are turned down for something good and noble but here in Acts, we see that God is always at work in those who are seeking His will. In many ways, we are all Barsabbas. How have we sensed God leading us? How does His calling/will inform our next steps?

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
- b. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- c. Complement these questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- d. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- e. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- f. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- g. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into "teaching," rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.