

Matthias Replaces Judas

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[0 : 00] If you've got a Bible, you can turn to the book of Acts. Acts chapter 1, and we're going to be in verse 12 through to verse 26. Luke who writes Acts records these events, verse 12.

Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying.

Those present were Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James, son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas, son of James. They all joined together constantly in prayer along with the woman and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

In those days, Peter stood up among the believers, a group numbering about 120, 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 a guide for those who arrested Jesus.

He was one of our number and shared in our ministry. With the payment he received for his wickedness, Judas bought a field, and there he fell headlong. His body burst open, and all his intestines spilled out.

[1 : 28] Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akkaldama, that is, field of blood. For, said Peter, it's written in the book of Psalms, 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, 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. And so they nominated two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justice, and Matthias.

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

And then they cast lots, and a lot fell to Matthias, and so he was added to the eleven apostles. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray, let's ask for God's help as we study this, this morning.

Gracious God, your word is truth. Your word is more than truth, it is life. And so we need it this morning. We need your Holy Spirit to take the truth out of the pages of Scripture and embed it in our hearts, so that we are transformed by what we see and what we hear.

[2 : 55] And we are made more like your Son, Jesus. So won't you help us in this task this morning, Lord, we pray. For Christ's sake and his glory. Amen. So we continue in our study in the book of Acts, the series we're going.

Still in chapter one, still early, early days in the series. But as we continue our study in the book of Acts, I'm also, I'm very conscious of two other things. Number one, that Wednesday coming is our national elections, and so a lot of people are thinking about that.

It's all over the media, and people are thinking about, well, what do we, how are we to think about this, particularly how are we to think Christianly about it. And then number two, it is Dave's final Sunday on the staff team here, and we are spending some time recognizing that.

So I'm going to be super, super ambitious this morning. I'm going to try and preach our passage in Acts that I just read about Matthias replacing Judas. But I'm somehow going to work Dave and the elections into that.

And I'm going to try and do this without doing violence to the text, so you actually learn what's really in the text and not just my ideas. And you can come and tell me afterwards how well I did or didn't do in this task. But I've got three simple points for you this morning, very, very lazy.

[4 : 04] I normally try and spend a lot of time trying to come up with creative points, but they're very lazy today. They are what, what's going on in this text, why, why is it going on, and why is it there, and then so what. So what does it mean for you and me?

So what, why, and so what. Let's start with the what. After Jesus' ascension that we looked at a couple of weeks ago, the apostles returned to Jerusalem.

And we get a snapshot of what life was like for them in the 10 days or so between the ascension and the Pentecost encounter, when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the day of Pentecost.

So have a look down, verse 12. Here's the, here's the snapshot. The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives. Sabbath days walk away from the city. That's just over a kilometer as far as we know.

When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. And those present were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judah, son of James.

[5 : 02] Lots of Jameses in there, or James adjacent people. They all joined together constantly in prayer along with the woman and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

So the 11 remaining apostles are there. Some of the women who followed Jesus, presumably people like Mary Magdalene, are there. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is there.

And even some of Jesus' brothers are there, which is quite astounding if you think about it, because they did not believe he was the Messiah. And I've always kind of thought it must be quite an astounding thing to go from believing that the sibling you grew up with is now, well, not believing that he's anything special, and then all of a sudden believing that he is the Son of God incarnate.

They must have seen something pretty significant for that to happen. They're all united, consistently praying for this outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But it looks like there's something that needs to be rectified.

So verse 15, Peter stood up among the believers, and he says there's a group of about 120. And he says, So Peter says, Well, there's something about Judas that needs to be sorted out.

[6 : 25] The disciple who betrayed Jesus. There's something about him and his place in our collective apostolic ministry that has us actually in breach of Scripture. We're out of step with Scripture, he says.

And you'll see there, and I'm not going to go into the detail there, but Luke adds in parentheses some background context about how Judas met his end. But Peter goes on, verse 20, and here he explains himself now.

He says, For it's 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. Therefore, he says, It's necessary for us to choose one of the men who's been with us this whole time the Lord was living among us, 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. So the issue for Peter is that no one up until this point has taken Judas' place.

And he's pretty adamant back in verse 16. He says, Scripture had to be fulfilled. This is not just so we can have a nice even number of, biblical number of 12 apostles. There's something deeply theological and significant about replacing Judas at this moment.

[7 : 42] And so in response to Peter, the group then select two men who fit the criteria that were set out. And then they pray. And then they cast lots. And the lot falls to Matthias.

Now just as an aside, if you are unsure about who to vote for on Wednesday, the Bible actually gives you a great way to solve your problem. Just flip a coin.

Do you see that? You'll probably need to flip it about a hundred times or so because there are a lot of parties on that ballot sheet. But just cast a lot and let the Lord decide who you're going to vote for.

That's the biblical way to vote. It's here. It's in Acts chapter 1. Now just in case you're not sure if I'm being serious or not, let me be crystal, crystal clear.

I'm not being serious. Please don't cast a lot to determine who you're going to vote for on Wednesday. In fact, please don't ever cast lots for any really important decision in your life unless you're playing a board game.

[8 : 44] The casting of lots was largely, if you read the Bible, the casting of lots was largely an Old Testament method used to discern the Lord's will. But it disappears from the biblical landscape actually after the day of Pentecost, after the pouring out of the Spirit.

And so I do not think it is a normative way for Christians to discern the Lord's will. In fact, even in this passage in Acts chapter 1, you'll notice that both of these men fit the bill completely.

That is, they are both equally credentialed before the lot gets cast. It's not like, hey Lord, who should we pick? It doesn't work like that. So please, please don't cast lots to find God's will in your life.

Now coming back from that to the text, what we have here is we have Matthias in the end replaces Judas. So he takes up this vacant spot among the apostles and he brings the number back up to 12.

So that's the what. That's what's going on. Why though? Why insert the story here? Why tell us this? Peter says it's something to do with Scripture being fulfilled.

[9 : 52] You might say, why and in what way? And it's an intriguing question because if you read forward in the book of Acts, you're going to find something interesting. You're going to get to chapter 12 and you're going to find there that James, the brother of John, one of the 12, he gets executed by King Herod and they don't replace him.

So why this special focus on Matthias replacing Judas here at this point in the history of the early church? Two things I want you to consider. Number one, we need to dig into the Old Testament.

So look at the two quotes from the Old Testament that Peter uses there. He quotes in verse 20, he quotes two different Psalms, Psalm 69, Psalm 109. Both of the Psalms are Psalms that are written by King David and they both envision a period in his life where he is being ruthlessly pursued and attacked by enemies and he's pouring out his heart to God in this situation.

He has the sense of being surrounded, being overwhelmed, being overcome and so he calls out to the Lord to save him and to vindicate him against these wicked men. The two particular verses that Peter quotes are verses that directly address the fate of these enemies, of David.

And so Peter takes these verses and he then applies these verses to Judas, the traitor who betrayed our Lord.

[11 : 17] Now if you're a keen reader of the Bible and you want to be careful in how you interpret passages and that, you might look at this and go, hmm, Peter seems to be quite creative, maybe even a little bit speculative in the way that he's applying the Old Testament here in this situation.

Those Psalms are about David's struggles against his enemies. What do they have to do with Judas? And here it's really helpful to understand one of Luke's, the author, Luke's key themes in writing both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.

And it's this. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. So if you've got a Bible in front of you or on your phone, you can flip back to the Gospel of Luke in chapter 24.

Luke 24. This is where Luke records one of the early resurrection appearances of Jesus. Jesus appears to these two men who are walking down a street on the road to a place called Emmaus.

They don't recognize him at first. They're kept from recognizing him. But they're all miserable and downcast. Their lips are on the floor. They're very sad because they were followers of Jesus. They'd vested in Jesus. And now he was dead.

[12 : 34] And they don't know what to do. They think he's dead. They're also really confused as well because some woman reported that day that the tomb was empty and his body was gone. And they didn't know what to make of all of this.

And so Jesus, down in verse 25, says this to them. He says, Jesus basically says to them, how daft are you guys?

Isn't this what was taught in the Old Testament? In the prophets? In Moses? That's shorthand for the Old Testament? And then he does, what he does next is he gives them what must have been the greatest Bible study of all time because he covers the entire Old Testament here.

Old Testament 101 with Jesus here. And he teaches them from the Old Testament about himself from the whole Old Testament. As if to kind of say, look, if you are reading your Bible correctly, if you're reading your Old Testament correctly, you will see that it is basically about me.

Now later, just in case you think that's kind of a one-off, later in exactly that same chapter he appears to all the apostles, possibly in that same upper room that we find them in, in Acts chapter 1.

[14 : 02] And they all stand there, as you can imagine, amazed to see the person they thought was dead standing in the flesh, alive in front of them, resurrected. And then he says this to them, in verse 44. This is what I told you while I was still with you.

Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. And then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. So again, basically the same thing.

It's like, why are you guys surprised? Why are you surprised? This was all in your Bible. The Old Testament Scriptures they had at the time. It's all about me. The books of Moses are about me. The prophets are about me.

The Psalms are about me. Now when you see what Jesus is teaching his disciples, it makes, I think, complete sense of how Peter is interpreting Psalm 69 and Psalm 109.

These Psalms are about a Davidic king being overwhelmed by his enemies. Peter is saying those Psalms are not just about King David and his particular struggles with his enemies at the time.

[15 : 10] Those Psalms, they point forward to the ultimate king in the line of David, our Lord Jesus Christ. And those enemies that David faced are a sampling, they are a foreshadowing of the kind of enemies who would strip our Lord and nail him to a cross, including the most evil of the lot, the one who betrayed him, Judas.

See what Peter's doing? He's applying Jesus' way of reading the Old Testament to these Old Testament Psalms. So why is Luke paying so much attention to Matthias replacing Judas?

Well, because it fulfills Old Testament Scripture. It's the first thing to see. Second thing, there's more to it. Think about it maybe this way. Why 12? Why do they need 12?

Why not 11 apostles? Now, the longer I thought about this, the more it kind of confused me initially, particularly because they don't replace James later on when he dies. They don't feel a need to keep the number 12 up there.

I think most people kind of understand why Jesus appointed 12 apostles in the first place all the way back in the Gospels when he called the 12 to himself. It was in direct correlation to the 12 tribes of Israel, the nation of Israel.

[16 : 26] If you've never seen that before and you've been a Christian for a long time, you need to read your Bible more. If you're a new Christian, then no problem. That's a freebie for you, but 12 apostles, 12 tribes in the Old Testament.

Jesus was, I think, in effect saying, look, I am the long-awaited Messiah of Israel. I'm the true Messiah, the true King. And so that's why he appointed 12 at the very beginning, but then why here in Acts 1 does the number need to be brought back up to 12?

Now again, I think it's another theme of Luke's that's coming through here. You see, Luke seems really intent on making the point that the church will be built upon the foundation of the testimony of the original apostles.

It's one of his main themes. This church that he's going to tell you the story about now is built upon the foundation of the testimony of the apostles. So again, if you go back into the Gospel of Luke, Luke chapter 22, the Last Supper, Jesus appears to hand over some sort of authority to his apostles at the Last Supper.

It's not a worldly authority. He actually, in that moment, says to them, and I'm paraphrasing here with a lot of liberties, but he basically says, look, I don't want you to exercise authority like unbelieving CEOs or people with megalomaniac tendencies.

[17 : 43] Don't do that. If you exercise authority, it should be as a servant. And why should it be as a servant? He says, well, because that's how I came to you. I came, the king of the world, though, as a servant to you.

And so he radically recasts how they should think about power and authority, but then he confers some authority on them. So verse 29, he says, I confer on you a kingdom, just as my father conferred one on me so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now there, when you hear that word judging or you read that word judging, don't think about a judge in a court. Think rather about a judge in the Old Testament book of Judges.

So they were rulers, kings, chieftains, rulers, but they were rulers who liberated. God used these leaders to liberate his people from oppression in the Old Testament over and over again.

There's this constant cycle in the book of Judges. And so these twelve apostles really, what Jesus is really saying to these twelve apostles, listen, I'm giving you a special kingdom authority.

[18 : 59] And if you exercise this authority as servants, like I've just said, then one day at the end of human history you'll sit at the table with me as the ones who I used to liberate my people Israel.

and he's using Israel in a very broad sense. There are more people who are going to come to know him. See, these twelve apostles are the foundation of the liberation that comes through Jesus.

Apostle Paul has the same basic idea in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 19 and 20 he says to Gentile believers there who have now come into the faith that they are, and I quote, fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone built at the foundation of the apostles.

That's exactly what we see when we get to the very end of the Bible as well. You go to Revelation 21 the vision of the new Jerusalem the new city of God coming down to earth where all those who've been redeemed and liberated by Jesus Christ will live together in the presence of God forever.

Look at how the city is described. Apostle John describes the vision of the city in very stylistic apocalyptic language but this is what he sees. He says an angel carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God it shone with the glory of God and its brilliance was like that of a precious jewel like jasper like the clearest crystal had a great high wall with twelve gates with twelve angels at the gates on the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel there were three gates on the east three and the north three and the south and three and the west the wall of the city had twelve foundations and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb so that that final city of redemption of liberation has the names of the twelve apostles embedded into the foundation all through the new testament particularly in

[21 : 10] Luke's writings the twelve apostles are to be the foundation through the saving message they preach saving message of Jesus remember what Jesus had said to them earlier in the same chapter we're in in Acts 1 we looked at this two weeks ago three weeks ago Acts 1 verse 8 you he's talking to the apostles you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth so you see what's happening in our passage in our passage the eleven along with all the other believers are sitting there they're earnestly praying for this power to come from on high so that they might be witnesses to the resurrected Lord Jesus and all of a sudden Peter goes hey wait hey wait the foundation's incomplete we need one more apostle to complete the foundation we need one more apostle to be witness to the resurrected Lord that's why the requirements are so precise

Peter says verse 21 it's necessary to choose one of the men who has been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us beginning from John's baptism that's the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the time when Jesus was taken up from us for one of these must become a witness with us to the resurrection so Peter what he's doing he's making sure the foundation's intact he's making sure the foundation is back together we're about to go out into the world and spread this gospel let's make sure the foundation is intact that's why we need to replace Judas at this important part of the beginning of the early church so that's the why now the so what you've got you've got the theology you can maybe hopefully see outfits in the rest of the Bible what does it have to do with us 2000 years later well I think this I think it tells us what the foundation of our Christianity is and by implication it tells us what it's not

Judas being replaced by Matthias underlines the critical critical critical critical importance of the apostolic witness the gospel that they preached about Jesus who died for sins and was raised to life the Jesus they walked with the Jesus they learned from the Jesus they saw crucified and the Jesus they saw standing in front of them saying look I'm alive it's me touch me I'm really resurrected the apostolic witness that apostolic witness is the foundation of our faith because that apostolic witness provides the platform that you and I who didn't get to walk with Jesus while he was here on earth get to stand on and see him clearly now that's the reason for example you can trust the bible because the new testament is fundamentally the apostolic witness the writing down of that apostolic witness it's the reason we know that Christianity is not primarily an ethical system or a set of religious rules or ten kind of steps to a happy life or a social transformation program

Christianity is primarily about Jesus his life his death his work not ours that's what they bore witness to they didn't come peddling some sort of self-help programs telling you to look deep inside of yourself they came saying look at Jesus this is what we saw look at Jesus I've been listening to a podcast series entitled The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God by a British guy by the name of Justin Briley the back story to the podcast series is that Briley has spent the last 15 years as a radio show host interviewing while holding debates between Christians and atheists skeptics and atheists of different sorts he's a really good interviewer and he has these fascinating discussions his 15 years of backlog of those debates and discussions throughout that period though and he's written a book about it now sort of this podcast throughout that period he thinks he's seen a surprising move back towards God at least in kind of western culture that he inhabits so the early noughties and 2010s were marked by quite a rabid anti-theist movement known as new atheism you might have heard about this key figures like

Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris Christopher Hitchens wrote all these books God is not great the God delusion they had mass conferences where people would come if you watch some of the videos it was almost like Beatlemania where people would come to these conferences to hear them speak in many parts of the world and their basic mantra was God is dead there's no real evidence for his existence we don't need him to build a good society we just need reason and science and besides religion is bad for the world anyway now what Briley points out in his podcast series and in his book is he points out that this vitriolic form of atheism seems to have quite dramatically softened in recent years and all of a sudden there's this new chorus of voices in the public domain talking relatively positively about religion and about God in a way that didn't seem possible when the new atheism was at its height so probably the most prominent of these for example is a man by the name of Jordan Peterson the popular psychology professor and all the stuff that he does online but you've got others like Douglas

[26 : 39] Murray the journalist Tom Holland the historian alongside that you've got people like Joe Rogan and Piers Morgan who have these huge online followings with their YouTube shows and they're increasingly having more and more Christian thinkers and leaders on their shows to present the case for Christianity conservative Christian leaders even Dawkins himself seems to be softening a little bit in his old age so in a recent video interview he recently described himself as a cultural Christian not quite willing to believe in the existence of God but he actually in that same interview goes on to say that Christianity is and I quote a fundamentally decent religion now that if you've read the God delusion you will know that that is really strange to come out of his lips that's a huge shift so Briley seems to be on to something there seems to be something of a shift afoot but as I've been listening to this podcast series

I couldn't help but think this and Briley does mention this I want to say this to his credit but I couldn't help but think this this new chorus of voices that seem to be relatively positive towards Christianity they seem to want the fruit of Christianity the values the ethics the sense of meaning and purpose that Christianity brings they seem to want all the fruit without really embracing the root the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in history for the salvation of souls that it actually happened that is that they want a form of cultural Christianity without its foundation the apostolic witness to Jesus and here's the thing they're never actually ever going to get the fruit if they don't have the root they're never actually going to have the power the motivation to pursue consistent Christian ethics and morality to have an unshakable sense of purpose an unshakable meaning and identity you're never really going to get that if you don't have the foundation laid by the witnesses of the apostles with Christ

Jesus as the cornerstone as Paul says so let me apply this to politics for a second I told you I'll get there all of us are going into this election holding I think some level of hope hope that things might get better that the government that comes out of the other end might be less corrupt will have more integrity will uphold the rule of law and justice better will deliver on its promises with lots of consistency that they will work hard to fix broken systems like education the economy state owned enterprises transport infrastructure all the like there's hope there's hope that we can have movement on those things at least but do you know what we're actually all really hoping for in one sense we're all really hoping for the fruit of the Christian worldview even if we don't articulate that we consciously say that we're hoping for the fruit of the Christian worldview justice equity truth integrity hard work discipline that's the fruit of the

Christian worldview it's all in the Bible and so my big fear is this for us as individuals and for us as a society my big fear is that we will confuse the fruit for the root in a time like election season that we will in our heart of hearts believe that the thing that's really going to change our lives the thing that's really going to transform our city that's going to transform our country the thing that's really going to make the world a better place is having a government free from corruption full of integrity justice and hard work friends listen to me I want that sort of a government so so so very much for myself and for everybody else in this country but I don't want it at the expense of the foundation where the apostolic witness is subtly sometimes even pushed to the periphery where we functionally say things like yes yes yes Jesus died for sins and rose again and that's really important but what's really important is that we eradicate poverty that we achieve racial unity that we build a just economy

I think that without the root without the apostolic testimony of Jesus Christ living living the life we have failed to live dying the death that our sins deserve in this broken world marred by human sinfulness that we all have to deal with without that root we will not have the stomach we will not have the fight we will not have the stamina to so consistently apply our Christian convictions about what a good world actually looks like in such a way that it will actually make a real difference we won't without the root we'll never be able to do that life is too broken we are too sinful think about the new Jerusalem that heavenly city in Revelation 21 that's the perfect society new creation there are no tears there's no suffering there's no poverty there's no injustice but

[32 : 01] John tells us all of that is built upon a foundation he says did you see that all of it is built upon a foundation the witness of the twelve apostles and notice how they're described in Revelation 21 they're the apostles of the Lamb did you see that not the tyrant not the despot not even the king although Jesus rightfully is the king even though he's the king they describe the apostles as the apostles of the Lamb a humble innocent creature who sheds its blood to make atonement for human sinfulness friends we need to be crystal clear about what the foundation of our faith is lest we place our ultimate hope in things that will never deliver the change and the transformation we need and so I want to tell you who to vote for and tell you how to navigate our political party systems but I will tell you what order of priority to put things in because the bible tells us that and this is also why I wanted to speak about

Dave see I told you I get there as well the lord has an incredible sense of humor if you did not believe that then this is case in point in putting Dave and I together on the same staff team we are so so so so very very different from each other we have some minor theological differences but that's not really where the main differences lie the differences lie much more in how we are wired as people one of the first meetings I ever had with Dave was at a coffee shop in a busy street corner in an observatory during the course of that meeting Dave tried to rather publicly and quite loudly evangelize one of the people passing by now if you know me you know that I wanted to crawl under the table and just disappear in that moment so Dave wears his heart in his sleeve I am a cowardly people pleaser Dave is never afraid to speak his mind on his convictions and he's not particularly concerned if you're offended by his position although deep down I think he is a little bit but it takes me ages on the other hand to build up the courage to have a difficult conversation that I perceive might cause offence

Dave drinks tea I drink coffee Dave finds too much order and structure in worship constricting he'd rather just kind of be extemporaneous all the time he was really hoping that the members were going to do an item and dance or something like that I on the other hand I need a safety blanket of like my order of service my notes the same repeated pattern over and over again every Sunday makes me feel safe Dave preaches with power point I do not I never will there are so many differences between us and with all that difference you might kind of think that the last few years of us working together would have been really really hard going for both of us really tough to kind of stay on the same page to stay on mission now I can't speak for Dave maybe he's like look I can't wait to see the back of Stephen but I can speak for myself and that is I will forever be thankful to God for the season of ministry with my brother Dave because there's one area where there is absolute agreement between us and it's the area that drives Dave and everything that Dave says and does and that is his commitment to the foundation we've been speaking about his commitment to the centrality of the apostolic witness that Christ lived the perfect law keeping

God honoring life that you and I are incapable of living that he died the sin bearing atonement making substitutionary death that we sitting here this morning deserve to die and that he rose from the grave bringing with him life transforming new world creating power that power of the resurrection that's Dave's DNA that's the foundation of our faith humanly speaking and I'll say more about this at the coffee afterwards but humanly speaking the merger between our churches would never have taken place without Dave but I hope that it's actually not his biggest legacy here in this church I hope that his biggest and his longest lasting legacy here in this church will be his how this commitment his commitment to the apostolic foundation of the gospel is reproduced in me and is reproduced in each one of you so friends this morning we honor

Dave's ministry to us not by going wow Dave's such a great guy he doesn't want that we honor him by keeping the apostolic witness central to our faith central to your life priorities what you do with your time what you do with your money what you do with your hopes what you do with your dreams and then ensuring that we as a church keep preaching Christ that apostolic witness sounding that that same testimony over and over and over again as long as the Lord gives us breath and so I ask you to honor Dave in that way this morning by obedience to God's word let's pray together gracious God and heavenly father we look at a passage like this and face value it looks quite obscure in some ways and yet when we peel back the layers we see that this is the foundation of our faith that we would repeatedly listen to the testimony of those original 12 who lived with your son who learned from your son who proclaimed your son's saving death and powerful resurrection

[38 : 10] Lord may you help us to order our entire lives in light of that witness as it echoes down through the centuries may we personally be conformed to it by repenting from sin and trusting in Christ as our savior and may we proclaim it day in and day out in the way we behave and to the people we encounter make us that congregation Lord we pray and father I pray for any person who's sitting here this morning who has never responded to that original apostolic witness who's never said hey I believe in Jesus he really is the son of God come to save us I pray that you would you would bring about that salvation in their hearts this morning be merciful to them oh God as you have been merciful to so many of us we ask we ask this all for Christ's sake in his glory amen Festival pour■■ people can want