

Acts 1.15-26

1. Right after Jesus' ascension and his followers gathering to wait and pray for the promised Spirit, we see the church having to deal with a tragic reality: moving on after the betrayal and suicide of Judas.

- a. The fact that this was part of God's plan and the fulfillment of Scripture (v. 16) seems to provide Peter with the confidence to move on. Can you relate? Does the reality that God foresaw and is working in and through the tragedies you face provide you with what you need to move on? Why or why not?

2. It is important to notice that both Judas and Peter had failed Jesus—one as a betrayer and one as a denier—and yet, they have very different ends to their lives. In despair, Judas takes his own life, whereas Peter is restored and ends up living and dying for Jesus.

- a. What is the difference between these two men, and what does this teach us about how we need to deal with our own spiritual failures?

- b. In what ways can you identify with either of these two men?

3. In all likelihood, we have or will all have to deal with despair at some point in our lives.

- a. Have you every faced a time of despair of your own life, and if so, what brought you out of it?

- b. What did you learn about God in that time?

- c. What role, if any, did God's people play in helping you to work through your despair?

4. What are some ways that we (as the Church) can get better at supporting those experiencing despair and depression in our midst and helping them work through it?

5. Part of moving forward meant filling the gap that Judas left. Matthias was chosen to play this role. Matthias is someone who had apparently been among the disciples since the beginning, and yet we have never heard of him nor do we hear about him again. In some senses he seems invisible, and yet God saw him and chose him.

- a. Was there ever a time when, despite your faithfulness, you felt overlooked by God and His people? If so, why was that and what ended up happening in that situation?

- b. How did or has God reassured you in these moments when you felt invisible?