



Easter Sunday

April 12, 2020

Speaker: Pastor Steven Thomas

Title: *The Essence of the Christian Message*

Text: Acts 1:21–25 (ESV)

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. 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.

Introduction: The first chapter of Acts chronicles the final days of Jesus’ earthly ministry and adjustments made by his followers immediately after his departure. Verse 3 says that Jesus “presented himself alive” during a 40-day period. Verse 8, a famous restatement of the church’s Great Commission, summarizes the mission of Christ’s followers: “You shall be my witnesses.” In the last section of the chapter, the Lord chooses a replacement for Judas. From Luke’s description of that event, we learn that the resurrection is the central and indispensable element of the “witness” we bear regarding Jesus Christ.

I. Judas left a leadership vacuum that had to be filled. 22

- A. Implication 1: The Twelve disciples fulfilled an essential role.
- B. Implication 2: The Twelve disciples fulfilled a unique role.

II. The Lord himself chose a replacement. 24-26

- A. He chose in answer to prayer. 24-25
- B. He chose by providential oversight. 26

III. Matthias was fully qualified for this special ministry. 21-22

- A. His qualifications: 21-22a
 - 1. He was thoroughly acquainted with the ministry of Jesus.
 - 2. He had a heart of true faith.
- B. His ministry: He was called as a witness to the resurrection of Christ. 22b

Today's take-home truth: The resurrection of Christ is not an addendum to the Christian message; it is the substance.

Conclusion: Why is the resurrection so important? Here is a representative list reasons:

1. It demonstrates the truthfulness of God's Word. 1 Cor. 15:4
2. It verifies the identity and claims of Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:1-4
3. It achieves our justification. Rom. 4:24-25
4. It establishes our spiritual life in union with Christ. Eph. 2:4-6
5. It secures our hope of life eternal. 1 Cor. 15:22-23
6. It frees us to serve Him without reservation. 1 Cor. 15:31-32
7. It guarantees Christ's eternal reign in a new Eden. Rev. 21:1-4