



### **WEEKLY STUDY May 12-18, 2024**

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

**Our sermon series is: The Disciples: Leading Like Jesus. In this ten-week series, we will get to know the Disciples Jesus appointed to follow him, lead like him, and then take over his mission after his resurrection and ascension. We will learn together what Thomas, John, Peter, Judas, Matthias, Thaddeus, Matthew, Andrew, and James have to teach us about ourselves and what it means to lead like Jesus.**

**Our Scripture this week is: Acts 1:15-17, 20-26**

**"In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) 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 arrested Jesus. He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.'" (Acts 1:15-17)**

**"'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.'**

**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.'**

**So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over the apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.' Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles."**

- 1) In this season of Easter, we move to our fifth week on the Disciples. In addition we were privileged to hear the children's musical as part of our 10:30 worship service. And it was Mother's Day. Plenty to think about from Sunday's worship! Pastor Sam reminded us that with each of these studies we are invited to see ourselves in these disciples – to recognize our strengths as leaders, and to move forward in carrying out Jesus' mission. And the songs the children sang were exactly on this theme. Consider some of the words from each song they sang:**

**"I will live a life worthy of the calling I have received."**

**"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."**

“Help us to know in all things that your love will carry us through.”

**Question: Think both of what we have heard in the past weeks about Thomas, John, Peter, and Judas – as well as what we heard this week about Matthias. What traits are beginning to emerge for you regarding the apostles? What similarities are you noticing and what differences stand out?**

- 2) I have to confess I have never thought much about Matthias. As far as scripture is concerned, he is selected to replace Judas then then we never hear about him again. Read again the scripture from Sunday and you will notice that we are reassured that Matthias was indeed a follower of Jesus from the time of John the Baptizer through all of Jesus’ ministry. Pastor Sam emphasized that with Matthias we have a disciple who was in the background all along, learning from Jesus, being sent out to heal and to teach. And when the time came that he was needed, Matthias stepped up. She said, “there is something to be said about being willing to be in the background with no name recognition and being willing to step up when needed.”

**Question: How do you see yourself related to being a witness to Jesus? Do you see yourself more as those currently in leadership or one in the background who is willing to step up when needed?**

- 3) Pastor Sam likened the moment when Matthias was selected to replace Judas as what might happen in a relay race. A person’s time to run begins parallel with one who is already running carrying the baton. And the baton is passed to them as they run. They then continue running their part of a race until it is time to pass the baton on to someone else. Sam compared discipleship to this – the preparing, the waiting, the readiness to start before we have the baton, the continuing to run until another appears to pass on the baton.

**Question: Consider the images Sam presented to us regarding running a race. Where are you in the lineup? At what stage do you find yourself? Preparing? Beginning your run? Receiving the baton? Running with the baton? Handing it off? Finishing your run?**

- 4) In her sermon, Pastor Sam reminded us of the verse in Hebrews encouraging us to run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Here is the quote: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2) I am always struck by this verse because of this image, “...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...” It reminds me that we are not alone – we have people who have gone before us and those who are around us. Certainly, the apostles are part of that cloud. And on this Mother’s Day Sunday, we also remember the many women, our biological mothers, our adoptive mothers, our mothers-in-faith who make up that cloud as well.

***Question: Who do you see when you imagine the cloud of witnesses surrounding you as you run your race?***

**Prayer: (With this last Sunday of Easter, it seems appropriate to pray this simple prayer from *The Lutheran Books of Worship* found in *The United Methodist Hymnal*. #321)**

Almighty God,

You give us the joy of celebrating our Lord's resurrection.

Give us also the joys of life in your service,

And bring us at last to the full joy of life eternal;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

**Weekly Challenge: Take time to meditate this week on the cloud of witnesses surrounding you. Give thanks for those who encourage you and give your strength to run the race. For the final week of the Easter season, pray these words of hope: "Christ is Risen. Christ is Risen Indeed."**

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*