

IT'S TIME
ACTS 1:15-26

Introduction:

1. How do you make decisions?

A man once wanted to make a decision so he decided to look into the Bible. He took the Bible and just opened it randomly. The first verse he saw said, "And Judas went and hanged himself." He let the Bible fall open to another verse that said, "Go and do likewise." Then he let it fall to see another verse that said, "And what you do, do quickly."

2. I don't think this was a wise way to make a decision.

3. In our text we see that the disciples need to choose someone to replace Judas. Two names were put forth that met the qualifications, Barsabas and Matthias. **vv. 21-22** **Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.**

4. So how did they choose which one was to take Judas' place?

I. FIRST, THEY PRAYED FOR GOD'S DIRECTION. **v. 24** **And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen..."**

A. No great decision should ever be made unless much prayer has asked God for direction.

B. Paul gives us godly direction in the letter to the church at Philippi. **4:6** **Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;**

C. Jesus wants us to ask Him in everything. **Matthew 7:7** **Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.**

II. SECONDLY, THEY CAST LOTS. **v. 26** **And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.**

A. There were different ways to cast lots. Small slivers of wood were put in a bottle. Sometimes arrows would have the names of towns written on them and shaken in the quiver and drawn out to see which would be attacked first. Sometimes colored rocks were placed in a bottle and shaken out.

B. Is this really a good way to determine the will of God? Flipping a coin, rolling dice, drawing cards?

C. I think the point God wants us to get is that, sometimes in life, it is important that we simply go ahead and make a decision after we have prayed about it.

A Notre Dame graduate had many decisions to make about his future. Should he go into banking in Boston, or should he go into the oil business in Houston? He chose the oil business right before the bottom dropped out and he lost all his money. He rebounded by hard work and decided to get out of the oil business. He then had opportunity to either invest in a computer company with a funny name called Apple, or a savings and loan company. He chose the savings and loan company that eventually collapsed. Discouraged, he decided to go back to Indiana. Two airlines flew into South Bend: United and Eastern. He chose Eastern and when he arrived at the airport he found out that Eastern had declared bankruptcy that morning and his ticket was useless. He chartered a single engine plane and ran into a terrible storm. The engine conked out. There were two parachutes on the plane and he chose the one that didn't open. As he was falling he cried out "St. Francis save me." A voice spoke from heaven and said, "Is that St. Francis Xavier or St. Francis of Assisi?"

D. Life is full of decisions. Many would prefer to let others make decisions for them, but sometimes a decision must be made - any decision.

III. THERE ARE THREE REASONS WHY CASTING LOTS WAS BETTER FOR THE DISCIPLES THAN STANDING AROUND AND DOING NOTHING.

A. First of all, Jesus had given them a command and it was not getting done.

Matthew 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

B. Second, they really could not make a bad decision.

1. Both men met the qualifications - both were men of character.

2. Many times we argue between two decisions when in reality both are nearly equal in merits.

3. We might as well go ahead and make decisions and get on with our lives.

C. Third, and most important of all, is that a life of faith demands action.

Deuteronomy 2:1-3 *Then we turned and journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, as the LORD spoke to me, and we skirted Mount Seir for many days. And the LORD spoke to me, saying: 'You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward.*

1. There is no faith in constant analysis of the situation.

2. Faith demands a decision - it demands that we get moving.

Conclusion:

1. Maybe you have been putting off making an important decision. You've prayed about it, you've agonized over it, now it's time to act.
2. How do we know if we'll make the right decision? Sometimes we have no way of knowing, but if we ask ourselves if our decision seeks to exalt Jesus and puts Him first, and if we have prayed about it, then we need to trust God that He will be with us and use our decision for our good and for His honor and glory.
3. You see, this text is not about decision making at all, but about trust. God probably grinned and shook His head when the disciples cast lots, but they were His people and He wasn't going to let their decision turn out bad regardless of how they made it.
4. Were they right to cast lots? They were right to make a decision.
5. If you need to make a decision, quit skirting the mountain and move forward, and God will bless you for it.