**A CHURCH THAT CHANGES THE WORLD**

**Acts 1:12-26**

**THE BIG IDEA: Being a church that changes the world involves a commitment to prayer, a commitment to the authority of the Bible, and a commitment to seeking God’s will.**

**A CHURCH THAT CHANGES THE WORLD IS COMMITTED TO PRAYER**

* *“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a Sabbath day’s journey away. 13 When they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. 14 They all were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”* (Acts 1:12-14)
* **Prayer is the key that unlocks the power of God in our lives.**
* *“This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked of him.”* (1 John 5:14-15)
* **A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian.**
* *“Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument.”* (1 Timothy 2:8)
* **A Church that is united in prayer is an unstoppable Church!**

**A CHURCH THAT CHANGES THE WORLD IS COMMITTED TO THE BIBLE’S AUTHORITY**

* *“In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters—the number of people who were together was about a hundred twenty—and said, 16 ‘Brothers and sisters, it was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David foretold about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. 17 For he was one of our number and shared in this ministry.’ 18 Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages. He fell headfirst, his body burst open and his intestines spilled out. 19 This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called Hakeldama (that is, “Field of Blood”). 20 ‘For it is written in the Book of Psalms: Let his dwelling become desolate; let no one live in it; and Let someone else take his position.”* (Acts 1:15-20)
* **Like the early Christians, we must stand on the Truth and authority of the Scriptures in spite of cultural pressures.**
* *“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
* *“For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures.”* (Romans 15:4)
* **A person who rejects the authority of the Bible, regardless of personal preferences or feelings, will never know the power of the Holy Spirit in his/her life.**

**A CHURCH THAT CHANGES THE WORLD IS COMMITTED TO SEEKING GOD’S DIRECTION**

* *“‘Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us—from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection.’ 23 So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed, ‘You, Lord, know everyone’s hearts; show which of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this apostolic ministry that Judas left to go where he belongs.’ 26 Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to the eleven apostles.”* (Acts 1:21-26)
* **Like the early Church, we must be committed to seeking the Lord’s direction over our preferences and desires.**
* *“The lot is cast into the lap, but every decision is from the Lord.”* (Proverbs 16:33)
* **Because of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we have the benefit of being able to know God’s will when we genuinely seek His direction.**
* *“Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God—who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly—and it will be given to him.”* (James 1:5)
* **The Lord has called us to be a Church that makes a difference, but it will take each one of us being committed to prayer, the authority of the Bible, and seeking God’s direction.**
* **Are you ready to do your part in making Renew Church a Church that is Unstoppable in advancing accomplishing God’s Kingdom agenda?**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Ice-Breaker: Who was the most influential authority figure in your life growing up and why?**

**START THINKING:**

* **What do we learn about God/Jesus in Acts 1:12-26?**
* **What did the disciples do to be prepared for what was to come? (vs. 14)**
* **How do we know from Acts 1:15-20 that the early Church believed the Scriptures to be authoritative?**
* **What was “casting lots” and how did that involve seeking God’s direction? (vss. 21-26)**

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

* **Why is being “united in prayer” so important for the Church? What are some things that hinder unity in prayer? How can we overcome those hindrances?**
* **Why is it important that Luke mentions the women being present and involved in the corporate gathering for prayer?**
* **What does it look like in your life to embrace the Bible as the final authority on all matters of faith (what you believe) and practice (what you do)? How are you doing at allowing the Bible to determine your life ethics and beliefs?**
* **What is your typical process for decision-making? How can you prioritize seeking the Lord’s direction daily, especially on “big” decisions?**
* **What is your big takeaway from this message?**
* **Who are you inviting to Church next Sunday?**