**Sermon:**

“What are we waiting for?”
[Acts 1:12-26](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Acts-1.asp?passage=Acts%201%3A12-26&ScrptureHover=sermon-31102-Preparing%20to%20Recieve%20the%20Holy%20Spirit)

Last week we began a study of the Book of Acts by seeing, like wise owls (ha ha!) 3 principles on which Christ wanted to build his church. 1.) The Believers Message – *Christ is Risen,* 2.) The Believers Might – the *power/Dunamis* of the Holy Spirit, 3.) The Believer’s Mission –*To witness.*

All that follows in the book of Acts, right through to this sermon right now, stems from this core message;

1. Christ is our rock that defeated death…this is our Gospel Good News, our **message** We stand confidently on this supra-natural rock.
2. To grow and journey closer with Christ we need His Holy Spirit **power inside** of us.**.**
3. We are to **live** and breathe this **out** to all around us authentically & constantly as a witness.

The issue with **this** periscope (chunk) of Scripture is the promised Holy Spirit power **has not yet arrived**, and the Believers are obediently having to **Wait.** So we are going to look at this pericope, (chunk!), see what happened then, and what this means for us today.

There appears to be 5 aspects to their waiting…

Obedience, Fellowship, Prayer, Scripture and Leadership.

I believe that these 5 methods can be utilized in our lives **today** *regarding a refreshing of the Spirit or personal revival.*

#1) THE DISCIPLES PREPARED TO RECEIVE
THE HOLY SPIRIT BY PRACTICING
SIMPLE **OBEDIENCE** vv. 12-14

*“Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey. (13) And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. (14)*

*These* ***all*** *continued with* ***one*** *accord in* ***prayer*** *and supplication,*

*with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”*

[We only have 3 out of 50 odd in our prayer engine]

[This reminds me of Margaret Clark with Jessie Roberts]

There are few things in this life harder to do than to have to wait. We are people of action. So we expect action – immediately!

|  |
| --- |
| Source: National Centre for Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine, The Associated Press |
| Research Date: April 2nd, 2015 |
| Attention span is the amount of concentrated time on a task without becoming distracted. Most educators and psychologists agree that the ability to focus attention on a task is crucial for the achievement of one's goals. It's no surprise attention spans have been decreasing over the past decade with the increase in external stimulation. Questions: What is the average human attention span? How long in seconds is the average attention span? |
| Share This    |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Attention Span Statistics** | **Data** |
| 2. The average attention span in 2015 | 8.25 seconds |
| 1. The average attention span in 2000 | 12 seconds |
| 3. The average attention span of a gold fish | 9 seconds |
| Percent of teens who forget major details of close friends and relatives | 25 % |
| Percent of people who forget their own birthdays from time to time | 7 % |
| Average number of times per hour an office worker checks their email inbox | 30 |
| Average length watched of a single internet video | 2.7 minutes |

The Spirit should come at once….Instead we find delay.

Sometimes we have periods like this in our lives, and they make tough going for us. These are often the hardest periods for us to live through. We want to do something.

Or, what is even more significant, we want God to do something.

When God does not do anything, we think, things have gone wrong. Things should be happening if I really am a Christian and really am on track with God.

That is not necessarily the case.

This period of waiting was not, however, a period of utter inactivity. It was a time of preparation, which is what waiting times are for. Sometimes in periods of waiting we can see the preparation. At other times we cannot. God is doing things in our lives that we cannot see or at least of which are unaware. Perhaps he is developing our character. We seldom see that, either in others or ourselves.

OBEDIENCE MAY REQUIRE THAT WE WAIT; NOT THAT WE DO SOMETHING

I spoke last week about BE-ing (relational) Vs DO-ing, (tasks).

In his final charge to the disciples before he ascended into heaven, Jesus had commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for Him, Jesus, to provide the ‘dynamite’ power to witness to the world.

The apostles obeyed.

Act 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

Act 1:12 Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

They obeyed their Lord’s command. There is an unusual overlap with the end of Luke, with the beginning of Acts. Anyway, we can read that not only did the obey, but they returned to Jerusalem, “*with great joy*” ([Luke 24:52](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Luke-24.asp?passage=Luke%2024%3A52&ScrptureHover=sermon-31102-Preparing%20to%20Recieve%20the%20Holy%20Spirit)). There they again met in the Upper room.

Though it is only speculation I believe that this was the same Upper room in which the Lord ate the last supper with the disciples. The Greek text says, “The Upper room (Not just any upper room). If this is correct, it is beautifully fitting that the Holy Spirit was given in the very same room in which Jesus promised he would come. There is even a tradition that suggests that it may have been the home owned by Mary, the mother of John Mark, (The Mark who wrote the sayings of Peter in ‘Mark’) where Luke tells us the church met later on.

During this period of waiting, what amazing memories of the last few weeks must have flooded their hearts: the Resurrection of Lazarus, the Triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the last supper with Jesus, Jesus arrest, the unjust trial and agonizing death on the cross, the Earthquake, the terrible darkness, the temple curtain torn, hearts full of mourning, the disciples fleeing for their lives, the amazing news of Jesus’ resurrection, his talk with disciples on the Road to Emmaus, 40 days of wonder, his last words to witness (*to-wit*!) the world, and then seeing the Lord ascend into heaven! Wow! So much had happened in those two months that your head would be spinning. What was next? What would God do, and what should they expect with this coming of the promised Holy Spirit?

They did not know how long they would have to wait, but wait is what they would do for as long as it took for the Lord to fulfil his promise. So they waited, day after day.

The situations in which we learn most about obedience are those in which we **cannot see why** we are called to do what we are doing….If we are going through a period like that in your life, when you know what you should do but do not know why you need to do it, or if you are experiencing delay in God’s dealings with you and it seems that you are stuck in one spot and can’t quite get off it, learn that there is valuable preparation for future work just in remaining where God has put you. The action will come later.

#2) THE DISCIPLES PREPARED FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT BY CONTINUING IN **FELLOWSHIP**

What a variety of people made up this first assembly of believers, whom Luke tells totalled about 120. There were men and women, the 11 surviving apostles, ordinary people and even members of Christ our Lord’s earthly family, Mary the mother of Jesus is mentioned along with “his brothers.”

Anyway…It would have been extremely easy to allow division to come into their midst at this particular moment. The members of the Lord’s earthly family could have claimed some special recognition, or Peter could have been criticized for his denial. Or Perhaps John could have reminded others of how he had stood faithfully at the foot of the cross and had been chosen to care for Mary the mother of Jesus. But they understood that it was not a time to ask, “*Who is the greatest*?” or “*Who had done the most wrong during this time of testing*?” It was a time for praying and standing together in the Lord. Luke tells us “*these all continued with one accord*.”

I have always felt that this Pentecost happened not according to a date on a calendar but in response to *reconciliation* among the disciples. There were deep tensions among them during and after Jesus’ ministry…Until they were together on their knees, fully open to God and each other, the Holy Spirit would not be given.

The word translated “with one accord” *homothymadon*, implied a togetherness that seems to go beyond mere assembly and activity to agreement about what they were praying for. There was among these believers a wonderful unity that bound them together in Christ.

What was the basis of their harmony?

1st , they loved Jesus – they were stood on the rock of solid faith

2nd, they loved each other –[sounds similar to Mk.12:29], siblings under perfect Father

3rd, they had a great story to tell [witness] –

We know from here they were willing to give their lives for the Gospel, to be martyred. I believe they wanted to see Jesus again.

Oh, that we might have that accord in all our churches today!

The disciples knew that without the spiritual power promised from the Lord that it would be impossible to fulfil the Lord’s command to **witness** to the world. So they stayed together and they waited, but they were not idle.

#3) THE DISCIPLES PREPARED FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT BY **CONSTANT PRAYER** v. 14

“*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication*,”
The narrative in Acts states that they continued in united prayer in the upper room. Let’s take a look at the word "Continued". The verb translated “continued” (proskartereo) means *to be busy or persistent in* ***all*** *activity*. Their prayer was persevering. Persistent. As one.

He had commanded them to wait for his to come and then to begin their witness. We learn, therefore, that God’s promises do not render prayer unnecessary. On the contrary, it is only his promises which give us the warrant to pray and the confidence that he will hear us and answer.
I think that it can be assumed that they prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Those who have studied the history of revivals in the church point out that they have always been preceded by times of great prayer by Christian people. It has not necessarily been a large number who have prayed, at least at the beginning. But there was always prayer as the people of God came together to ask for an outpouring of God’s blessings.

Almost all of you are familiar with the children’s book, entitled "*The Little Engine That Could*". You know the story I’m sure, how when the circus train broke down they asked all the passing trains to help them over the mountain. Each engine had an excuse. I’m too busy to help, I’m too important to help, I’m too old to help, but finally the little blue engine volunteered. But the blue engine looked too small, too weak, to get the circus over the mountain. The most famous part of this story is when the little blue train says, as he struggles up the hill, "*I think I can, I think I can*", until he makes it up to the top. This is what the Bible means when it says that they "*continued*" in prayer.

There will always be an excuse not to pray. There will always be an excuse to give up praying too soon. Don’t give up, be like the little train. I will let you in on a secret for prayer. Don’t stop praying when it is hard to pray. You need to persevere until it is easy to pray! Like the little train, it is not until you feel the wheels start to roll easily down the hill and the wind blowing on your face that you should stop. The disciples didn’t stop until they heard a sound as a mighty rushing wind.

#4). THE DISCIPLES PREPARED FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT BY **STUDYING THE WORD** vv 16-19

A. STUDYING THE SCRIPTURE FOR **CURRENT** NEEDS

As they waited the apostles undoubtedly had some questions about what God was doing in their lives. The joy of those gathered together was tempered by one sad reflection, the tragic defection and suicide of Judas. Perhaps they grappled with the question, “*If Jesus knew everything from the beginning, why would he choose a man who would betray Him?”* Knowing that everything Jesus did was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, they would naturally turn to Scripture for answers to the problems that confronted him.

When Peter spoke about the need to replace Judas, (v. 16) **Act 1:16** 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 who arrested Jesus.

Later Peter quoted two specific O.T. passages [Psalm 69:25](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Psalm-69.asp?passage=Psalm%2069%3A25&ScrptureHover=sermon-31102-Preparing%20to%20Recieve%20the%20Holy%20Spirit) and [Psalm 109:8](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Psalm-109.asp?passage=Psalm%20109%3A8&ScrptureHover=sermon-31102-Preparing%20to%20Recieve%20the%20Holy%20Spirit). This would indicate that Peter and perhaps the other apostles as well were studying the Scriptures in those days of waiting looking for answers to the problems that confronted them.

Luke gives us an account of the fate of Judas in verses 17 through and 19. “For *he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”* (18) (*Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. (19) And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)*

Some people are tempted to sympathize with Judas because they feel that he role was predicted and therefore (it is thought) foreordained. John Calvin, for all his emphasis on the sovereignty of God, declared, “*Judas may not be excused on the ground that what befell him was prophesied, since he fell away not through the compulsion of the prophecy but through the wickedness of his own heart*.” God did not force Judas into his betrayal against his will. Judas represents perhaps the greatest example of wasted opportunity in all of history.

B. STUDYING SCRIPTURE PREPARING FOR THE **PROMISE**

It would appear that during this time of waiting that the disciples also used the time to research what the Old Testament prophesies had to say about the Holy Spirit. This seems obvious for when the Holy Spirit did come and Peter got up to preach his first great sermon, he began with the most important text concerning the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, [Joel 2:28-32](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Joel-2.asp?passage=Joel%202%3A28-32&ScrptureHover=sermon-31102-Preparing%20to%20Recieve%20the%20Holy%20Spirit).

Joe 2:28 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Joe 2:29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Joe 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Joe 2:31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Joe 2:32 And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls

Sometimes as Christians we say, “*We want God to bless our church*” or “*We want God to bring revival to our church*.” But if we are serious about wanting the blessing of God, if we are serious about wanting revival, we need to understand that the way that God blesses is through a study of his Word. [Yearn/**learn**/discern/turn]

People must understand what God has written, believe it, respond to it and witness it to the lost of this world. If we find ourselves in a time of waiting or inactivity, we need to redeem the time, as the disciples did. We need to become better students of the Word.

Two things go together in the Christian life; **prayer,** in which we talk to God and **Bible study**, in which God talks to us.

#5). THE DISCIPLES PREPARED FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE **SELECTION OF GODLY LEADERS** vv.21-26

Peter then lists the qualifications necessary for a replacement vv. 21-22. “*Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, (22) 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.”*

1st, they must "*have been with us from the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us [a Jewish figure of speech for an unhindered association], beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us*." (vv. 21-22) Thus, to be chosen one must have been a follower of Christ **from the days** **of John the Baptist until Christ’s ascension.**

2nd, an apostle must have been an **eyewitness** to Christ’s **resurrection.**

They saw in the defection and death of Judas the need for the appointment of another apostle, they found the justification for it in the fulfilment of Scripture and they made their choice of Matthias by the casting of lots vv. 23-26. “*And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen (25) to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” (26) And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”*

The text says that after praying “*they drew lots”* to determine between the two candidates that met the qualifications. Two things should be remembered about this practice. First, the drawing of lots was an accepted Old Testament practice. Secondly, this is the last occurrence in Scripture of this practice, since the coming of the Holy Spirit rendered it unnecessary.

“*You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen*” (v 24). Even in the casting of the lots, the disciples were recognizing that Christ was still in control of the establishment of His church. Peter calls Jesus the “*kardiognosta*” in verse 24, which means, the heart-knower! What is more, that description is modified by the Greek word “*pas*” which means both ‘*individually’* and “*of all*”. Jesus knew the hearts of every one of them.

Waiting does not mean that we should be inactive, doing anything at all. It does mean that when we are actively seeking a revival we wait for God’s timing, and if we are serious about wanting a revival, we must get ready for it. We must prepare. We must use the days of waiting wisely, believing that if we do, God will send the blessing that we so desperately need.

Conclusion
The disciples obeyed God. Even though they did not have a clue about the explosion, dunamis, that was imminently going to spread the church. They could gather in fellowship, they could pray, they act in unity, they could make decisions to affect the corporate life of the body, they could reminisce about the events of the recent past, they could encourage one another. But they needed the power of the Holy Spirit to impact the world for Christ. For that they had to wait. END