

Exaudi (HEAR) Easter 7 – June 2, 2019
Text: Acts 1:12-26
Theme: Holy Decisiveness

There was a day for me when time looked long and slow. In grammar school, I would get to this point of the year and time all but came to a beautiful, blessed halt. School was out, and the summer stretched out before me as though it were a whole lifetime and at 9 years old, three months was much closer to a lifetime than it is now. But we learn that, in reality, time moves quickly and that life is short. One minute you're learning your ABC's and the next you're finishing High School. Then you're dating your sweetheart and wondering if this is the one, and all of a sudden, you blink and you have a mortgage, kids, a dog and a couple of cars. Then you're helping your kids learn their ABC's and teaching them about respect and responsibility and faith in God, and, whammo, suddenly, they're gone and you're alone again just like life started out. Life moves so very quickly. We just don't have time to be indecisive. We have to be able to make decisions quickly and efficiently.

In the reading from Acts today we hear what the disciple did when they had a really important decision to make. The disciples found themselves in no-man's land when Judas betrayed Christ and then killed himself. This had never happened before. It's not that he betrayed Christ, we have all betrayed Christ over and over again. That's not the big deal. The big deal is that he killed himself. Why

did he kill himself? We'll never know. That's the cruelest part of committing suicide. If you ever contemplate suicide understand that you would be doing the cruelest, most self-centered, nastiest thing you could ever do to the people who know you. The people who know you will be devastated in a way that nothing else can do and they will have endless questions unanswered and often endless guilt to bear. Likewise the disciples were left at a loss as one of their own took his own life instead of just repenting and being forgiven.

But, left with no answers from Judas, the disciples pushed forward as we all must because life is too short for indecisiveness. You and I are the beneficiaries of Jesus' death and resurrection. We are saved. Our sins are forgiven and we have inherited paradise. Our new body is on its way and the new heaven and new earth will be created. However, having said all of that, we walk through this life, the valley of the shadow of death, before our new sinless existence begins. During this life, we are often faced with decisions to make; what job to pursue, when to retire, how to discipline children, how to best use our gifts. These are all realistic decisions that saved people living in a fallen world have to make.

So the disciples needed to select a replacement, and in so doing, St. Peter left us with a great model for making important decisions so that they are holy decisions. They considered several

men who had followed Jesus with them and identified traits and characteristics that would be important in an Apostle. St. Peter says,

“So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 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.’ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.’ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

The disciples give us an easy process. As I have said many times before, things are really much simpler than we like to make them. Life is not all that complicated. So what do you do if you have a decision to make? Identify several options that are all Godly solutions. Narrow it down to two options, pray and cast lots.

It sounds silly, too easy, but that is because Satan tries to confuse us with the idea that there is only one right path that we must follow or everything will fall apart. The truth is that God offers us many good and righteous paths to follow. In fact, there are more

paths than we can comprehend or ever have time to pursue while on this earth, and all of them contain His blessings. All we have to do is know that whatever path we have chosen is Godly; that it is a holy decision and that is easy to do.

- 1. Does the path conform to God's will as revealed in Scripture?**
- 2. Does the path glorify God?**

If the answer is yes, then roll the dice, cast the lots, play Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe. Do whatever you like and know that God is with you. Whatever path you choose, He is with you and blessing you.

Today is Exaudi Sunday and exaudi means "hear." It is from the Introit today which says to God,

"Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer; for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy." We say that not as a request that may or may not be answered but as a proclamation of what God has already promised. He does hear us. He does listen to our prayers and he is our refuge, our strong tower against the enemy. Know that whatever holy decisions you make, he is with you and he will bless you.