

Three Foundations for Holy Spirit Empowered Mission **Acts 1:12-26**

This week we will see what happens immediately before the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost, and examine three foundations for Holy Spirit Empowered Mission.

United Community:

Luke gives us a fascinating insight into this community which achieved so much against so many odds:

1. They were united in obedience. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem and they did. Obedience can be hard, especially when waiting is required. We struggle with obedience, because we think we know better – but that is really coming from our pride. But a non-negotiable foundation to Spirit-empowered living and mission is obedience to Jesus.

2. They were united together. Despite their many differences, they were in one place and of one heart. That should give a mixed-bag like us hope! Like them we should always resist the temptation to split off, or not to gather together. Our brothers and sisters need us, and we need them.

3. They were united in prayer. They did not need to twist God's arm, rather it was their hearts that were being prepared through prayer. God's promises – rather than being a reason not to pray, or the very reason to pray.

4. They were united under a leadership, leading by the word of God.

Peter stood up and took a lead. But he led by leading the people to the word of God – spoken by the Holy Spirit. They had an incredibly high view of the Scriptures. But the people were not passive under the leaders – they all prayed for Jesus' guidance. Jesus was the ultimate leader, not Peter.

The Unstoppable Word of God

Betrayal is awful, and Judas' betrayal could have destroyed this mission before it had even started. But Peter shows them that this was always God's plan – that God is never taken by surprise, that even what others mean for our harm, God will work for our good. And Jesus was betrayed that we might know his steadfast, faithful love.

The Unwavering Purpose of the Spirit:

Judas was to be replaced, but by a man who had mixed with the party of disciples from the beginning. He was to become a witness to the resurrection. The unwavering purpose of the Spirit, which nothing can derail, is to glorify and testify to Jesus. And empowered by the Spirit, we are also invited to take part in that mission.