



The Gathering message notes

re | ACTS - Week 2 - September 16, 2012 / Phil Baucom

THE BIG IDEA: Learning to _____ on and
_____ in God is excruciatingly fantastic.

2 Questions...

1. Are you willing to _____ on God?

2. Are you willing to _____ in God?

Apple is great at not only making us wait, but making us **excited** about the wait. For the past year the world has contemplated the new iPhone; what it would look like, feel like and do. A month ago they released an image acknowledging the iPhone 5 would be unveiled on Wednesday, September 12th during their keynote address, showing the video you just watched. Friday the 14th stores were allowed to begin pre-orders for the iPhone 5. Saturday the 21st millions of iPhones will stroll out of stores across the globe to very happy customers. The event will come to a close...until the new, smaller iPad, and the updated iMac rumored for next year, and, the iPhone 6. Lather...Rinse...Repeat.

We hate waiting for new products, but we love waiting for new products, and are 100% willing to do so. Why doesn't it work this way with Jesus? With Jesus it seems excruciating to wait. This week we look at the second half of Acts chapter 1. We left off with Jesus telling His followers to WAIT and He would send a Helper (see also [John 14:16-31](#)). Then He blasted off into outer space! er, umm, Heaven.

Gazing up to the sky, the first batch of Christians are left wondering; wondering what to do next; wondering when Jesus is coming back, and where exactly He went; wondering if they missed the bus and should have been going with Him. Jesus gave a keynote address about the next big thing and then vanished. In response to this, they did two things: Wait and Trust.

1. Are you willing to WAIT on God? //Acts 1:12-14

“Then.” It's the first word Luke gives us after Jesus leaves. Then. It's a word that prefaces what happens next. We have no reason to believe that the disciples did anything else between Jesus' ascension into Heaven and “Then” in [verse 12](#) but start **waiting**.

They just **waited** on Him to deliver. When God asks people to wait, some times it goes well for those waiting ([Noah, Genesis 6-7](#)) and sometimes it goes reeeally bad ([golden calf, Exodus 32](#)). We probably all know friends and family members who have waited on the Lord and seen amazing results, and some who have given up on Jesus. The difference is probably **actively waiting** versus **passively waiting**. Waiting passively means sitting back on your rear and waiting for good things to happen. Waiting actively means passionately pursuing God through prayer, spiritual disciplines and loving people like crazy, while waiting on Him to fulfill the promises He's made.

Jesus' keynote address ended, “Then” they walked 5 miles home, went upstairs where they were staying, and prayed like crazy while they waited on Jesus' promise.

Luke *words things very carefully when writing. His words often have much more depth than you casually realize. They're like Transformers: “More than meets the eye.” In [verse 14](#) he says,

- “**They all**” (meaning all of them...)
- “**joined together**” (meaning as one big ol’ group, not individuals or huddles)
- “**constantly**” (hours on end, for an extended period of time *see **verse 15**)
- “**in prayer**” (not brainstorming, creative thinking, etc.)

*For example, keep track of how many times Luke uses some form of the phrase “*Gazed intently*” or “*Fixed their gaze*” (Greek-*Antanitzo*) in Acts while you read through. Professors of mine called this literary usage a “**Leiwort**” (German) or catchwords of particular importance in a narrative, used for prefacing an important message.

It would be crazy to just give this passage a nod and move on without following after the footsteps of the first Church. 120 of them **gathered** together and prayed. Why not do the same in this room? Let’s go ahead and put it out there: we’re not used to this and it will be uncomfortable, especially for anyone here who doesn’t really do church, and doesn’t claim to follow Jesus. Regardless of where you’re at this morning, stick with us, and let’s pray as one.

If you get stuck praying now and/or later, that’s ok, we all do. Think about what you’ve been waiting on the Lord for. Here are some things you can be praying through that may help:

- employment / finances -health -salvation of a loved one
- children -wisdom to make a decision -clarity / answers
- direction through life’s next step -family / friend restoration
- marriage -your personal ministry -The Gathering’s future / building

2. Are you willing to TRUST in God? //Acts 1:15-26

Judas, one of the original 12 Apostles, betrayed Jesus (**John 26:14-16; 47-50**), turning Him over to the authorities. Overflowing with shame after doing this, he hanged himself.

The next step, in Peter’s eyes, as they **waited** on what Jesus promised, was to replace Judas. There are lots of speculations why he suggested this, but I don’t think it’s just a random thought. They had been praying for days on end, and I can’t think of any good reason NOT to believe this decision was a result of that prayer. A result of prayer is godly wisdom and guidance, and I think it’s safe to say Peter was lead to make this call.

Let’s look at the process of replacing Judas:

1. There was a **pre-requisite**: the man to replace Judas must have been a follower of Jesus from the start, all the way to the present. It’s possible that Joseph and Matthias were the only two men that met the criteria. (**verse 21-22**)

2. They prayed some more! After days of constant prayer they prayed EVEN MORE for God's wisdom to be given to them for this decision. (verse 24)

3. They put the weight of the **decision on God, not themselves. As Americans, we're great at saying "In God we trust," but pretty awful at practicing that. Peter and the first Church said "We trust you to pick the right man, God, and we're willing to put our words into action. (verse 26)

**It's important to note how big of a deal this decision is to them. In their minds, Jesus was coming back shortly to create a literal Kingdom where the 12 of them would be literal rulers. The guy they were about to vote in wasn't going to be hall monitor...)

The way they made their decision was, right? ***Drawing lots? I think we can all agree on this. This was Jewish tradition. It isn't American tradition, so it seems really strange. For those Jewish individuals it was simply a way of physically putting the decision in God's hands and taking it out of theirs. It's how they said "God we trust you, and here's how we're going to prove it." Their trust in God was so massive, they could make a decision of the utmost importance based on it and nothing else.

***There are 24 references to lot casting in the Old Testament and 8 in the New Testament. We don't know for sure what the "lots" were, but it was likely similar to drawing straws or flipping a coin. It was a regular thing and clearly an avenue through which God revealed His will. See [Joshua 14:2](#), [1 Samuel 14:42](#), [Proverbs 16:33](#), [Proverbs 18:18](#), [Nehemiah 10:34](#), [Jonah 1:7](#), [Matthew 27:35](#), [Luke 1:9](#). It's also interesting to note that there wasn't any voting going on in the Bible...)

To be honest, I'm not 100% sure what to do with this. I'm not sure I'm ready to tell you to go snatch the dice out of your Star Wars Monopoly game and start rolling them the next time you have to decide about taking a different job, or what college you should attend. I'm not sure flipping a coin in Jesus' name over what hospital to have your baby in or which size hard drive to choose in your iPhone 5 is what God's looking for.

Here's what I am 100% confident about though: **God wants us to start proving we really trust Him!** Have you ever done a trust fall? I did the king of all trust falls in Scotland...

The person doing the catching is never going to believe you trust him **until you actually fall**, and the person doing the falling is never going to believe you're actually trustworthy **until you catch him**. [James 2:14-26](#) tells us we must have faith, BUT "faith without works is dead."

You won't prove to God you honestly trust Him with your (insert noun here) until you let go. And you will never fully believe God is trustworthy until you let go and He takes over. Are you ready to fully trust God with the things we prayed about earlier or are you holding onto them for dear life? Are you ready to let go? **Waiting on and trusting in**

God can be excruciatingly painful and long, but the reward is great! “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord God goes with you; He will NEVER leave you or forsake you!” -Deuteronomy 31:6