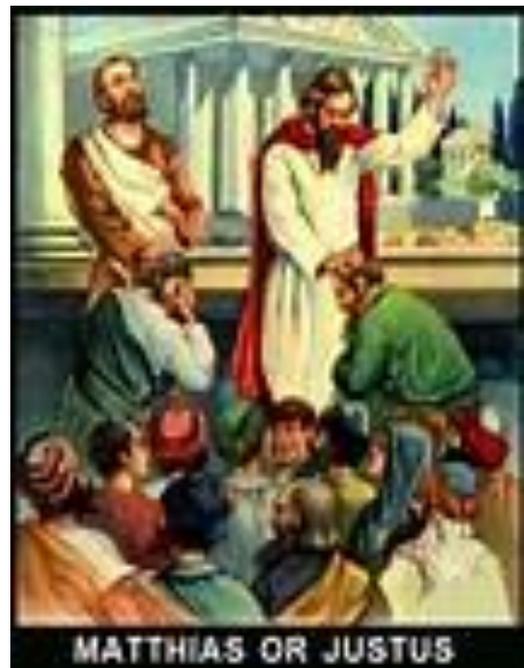
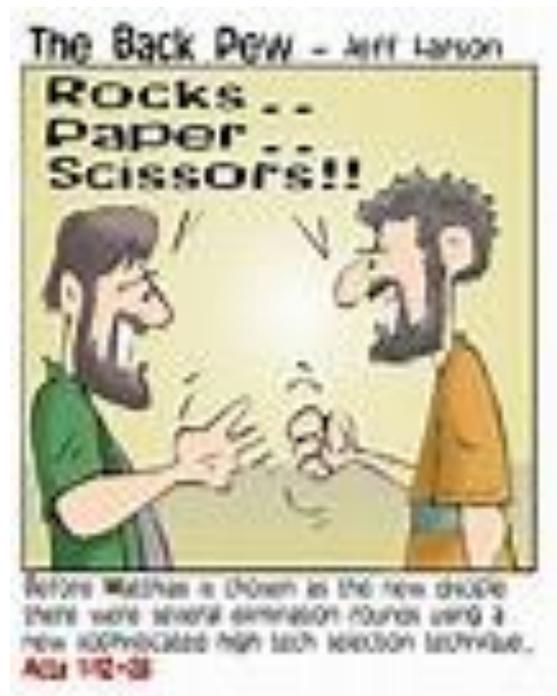


Reflection for Tuesday 2nd June 2020

We read in Acts chapter 1 how, under the Apostle Peter's leadership, 'lots' were drawn to find a replacement for the disciple, Judas Iscariot. Judas had taken his own life, when he realised he'd done the wrong thing by betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver to the authorities. The drawing of lots took place amongst the 120 believers who'd been, following Jesus. It says in verse 21: **'it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us, of his resurrection'**.

Joseph Barsabbas Justus and Matthias were proposed. Then the believers prayed. They cast lots. In these times, this could have been by some procedure such as putting stones with the two names on them in a vessel and shaking it until one fell out. Not quite in the way Jeff Larson depicts in his cartoon below (sorry I can't make the words discernible, which he's written below the image).



The outcome of drawing lots and praying was to appoint Matthias to join the eleven, original group of disciples.

At that time, how did everyone feel, both those who had proposed Matthias and those who had proposed Joseph Barsabbas Justus?

Did they all feel relieved that they could put the whole 'Judas Iscariot tragedy' behind them?

Did any feel the 'if only's' and the 'what if's things had happened differently' questions we often have running through our minds, following our own experiences?

How did the group dynamics change once Matthias was numbered amongst the original eleven?

What gifts did Matthias bring, which were to make a significant difference for this next stage of taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the end of the world? (Matthew 28: 19).

When a Sub is brought on to the pitch in a football match, he or she has fresh 'legs' and eyes and energy. Those who are already playing must make way for the adjustments and perhaps the triumphs the new player will bring. There needs to be an open minded and open hearted acceptance; a generous and gracious pulling together going forwards in a different way, hopefully for the changed dynamic to turn it into a winning match.

As we come out of lockdown, we'll need to go forward with change, managing whatever the consequent feelings we hold. The most positive we can be, is to work together, even if we wouldn't have gone about things in the way that is being advised. We need to play our part in our family, neighbourhood and community, for the good of all, as safely as possible.

Nothing more is said about Matthias, although church tradition identifies him as one of the 70 whom Jesus had previously sent out "two by two" (Luke 10: 1), to prepare the way for Jesus to follow later. Matthias is also said to have preached in Judea and to have been martyred.

Jesus Christ the Son of God pointed us towards having a relationship with God the Father. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God lays his hands on us to commission us to be his disciples today, whatever our circumstances.

In this picture Matthias's eyes are closed. He is praying as three disciples lay their hands on his head. His arms are folded. Was the artist depicting Matthias as accepting the weight and the privilege of this commissioning, for whatever is to come? Is this the sense of 'Amen', let it be so, which we always utter at the end of our prayers, before 'going out to love and to serve the Lord'?

