

Speaker 1:

It is time for a pause in your day. Welcome to a podcast where we press the pause button on our busy lives for a few moments, and we focus on God's word with Sharon and Nicole. We pray this is a time of refreshing for you. The Sweet Selah Moments Podcast is a cooperative production of Word Radio and Sweet Selah Ministries.

Nicole:

Welcome to Sweet Selah Moments. This is episode 126 The Waiting Days. I don't like waiting all that much. How about you? One of the hardest waits in my life was when I was pregnant with my third daughter. I went into preterm labor at 24 weeks, which is way too early, and was put on bedrest and spent some time in the hospital making sure she was doing okay and that she stayed in until she could safely enter the world. I would go into labor for several hours each day, and that was very unpleasant, to say the least. And I, of course was very worried about her. So waiting for the safe time for her to be born as close to 40 weeks as possible was one of the longest waits I have had to date.

Sharon:

Oh my goodness. And you had two other children at the time?

Nicole:

Yes, I did.

Sharon:

And you had to stay in bed?

Nicole:

I did. I taught Olivia how to do laundry. She was three, I think at the time, three or four.

Sharon:

Wow.

Nicole:

Yeah. And then Ellie was 16 months.

Sharon:

Wow. Nicole.

Nicole:

It was rough.

Sharon:

Yes it was. I can see that. Well, I've had some hard waits too. And I think my hardest was waiting for Ray to return from the Persian Gulf War. (Nicole: Oh yeah) When we said goodbye on December 15th, right before Christmas, we thought Ray would be gone for a year. He wasn't, but we thought he was. Oh, Nicole, the ache I felt that first night, especially, I just couldn't face going to bed. (Oh) I cried myself to

sleep on the couch. (Oh, Sharon) And then hearing the news each day and knowing that scud missiles were falling near where Ray was. (Mm-Hmm) It was pretty rough. And even if he did come home again, I wondered if the war would change him or maim him in some way. There was so many things over which I had absolutely no control. So I learned a lot about trusting and waiting and keeping going during that season in our lives. And it was actually good for me. I'd never been on my own. I went from my father's house to Ray's and my house, never by myself. So to be alone in a foreign country. 'cause we were in Germany with two girls and two dogs and a cat. (Oh my goodness) I really had to grow up fast. (Yeah) I found that my walk with God went deeper when I had to rely on him more. And I discovered that I could do more than I thought I could with God helping me than I ever imagined. It was amazing. So the loneliness turned to companionship with the Lord. And I will be forever grateful for the lessons I learned. All because I had to wait. And I'm awful glad it wasn't a year, just five months that he was away.

Nicole:

That's still a long time though. Five months, you're never, you're not used to being away from them. It feels like forever.

Sharon:

It sure does. It's so funny 'cause I talked to somebody later about that and she said, well, I didn't see my husband for five years during some war, World War II it must've been. I'm like, okay, you trumped me.

Nicole:

Five years, a little longer than five months, but it felt like five years.

Sharon:

Yes. So, Well, today we are gonna peek at the eleven disciples and their wait. Nicole, can you remind us what happened in the first part of chapter one of Acts before we read further?

Nicole:

Yes. So this is right after Jesus was risen from the dead. He'd spent some time with his disciples right before he was about to return to heaven. So he had told them to not go to Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, which I don't know if they knew what that was at the time.

Sharon:

I don't know if they did.

Nicole:

It's kind of exciting. That would give them the power that they needed to do what God called them to do. So then Jesus ascends into heaven and the disciples are left there looking a little lost for a minute, looking up at the sky. And then two angels appear and say, what are you doing waiting, looking? What are you doing? Like go.

Sharon:

Go to Jerusalem, wait there.

Nicole:

Go to Jerusalem. Wait. Yeah. So go and wait.

Sharon:

Isn't that the strangest open ended thing?

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

They didn't say wait till next Thursday.

Nicole:

Right. They didn't know how long.

Sharon:

They didn't say Jesus will be back a week from Tuesday. Right? It was open-ended and they were not in control. Any more than you were when you had to fight the labor pains, or I was, when Ray was near scud missiles falling. I mean, sometimes waiting is super hard because you don't have any control over it. And they didn't know how long the wait was gonna be. So, alright, let's read the rest of chapter one, Acts 1:12-26 and see what they did while they waited. So why don't you start with verse twelve and we'll go back and forth.

Nicole:

All right. So twelve, "Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of a half mile."

Sharon:

"When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. Here were the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot) and Judas (son of James)." (As opposed to the other one.).

Nicole:

(Right. There's a lot of James.) "They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, several other women and the brothers of Jesus."

Sharon:

"So during this time, when about 120 believers were together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them."

Nicole:

"Brothers, he said, The scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit speaking through King David."

Sharon:

"Judas was one of us and shared in the ministry with us."

Nicole:

"(Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his treachery falling headfirst. There, his body split open, spilling out all his intestines.)"

Sharon:

"The news of his death spread to all the people of Jerusalem. And they gave the place the Aramaic name, Akeldama, which means Field of Blood."

Nicole:

"Peter continued, this was written in the Book of Psalms, where it says, let his home become desolate with no one living in it. It also says, let someone else take his position."

Sharon:

"So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus."

Nicole:

"From the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus's resurrection."

Sharon:

"So they nominated two men, Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justus." (What?)

Nicole:

He had a lot of names.

Sharon:

He really did. "And Matthias."

Nicole:

"Then they all prayed, oh Lord, you know, every heart, show us which of these men you have chosen"

Sharon:

"As an apostle to replace Judas in this ministry. For he has deserted us and gone where he belongs."

Nicole:

"Then they cast lots. And Mathias was selected to become an apostle with the other eleven."

Sharon:

Wow. Okay. Lots to look at here. And we're gonna do what we normally do. We're gonna look at it in chunks. And you get the first chunk.

Nicole:

Oh, fun.

Sharon:

So talk to us about the first little part of this and what you learned about it.

Nicole:

Yeah. So I'm looking at verses 12 through 14. "The apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of a half mile. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room of a house where they were staying. The names of all the disciples were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the Zealot) and Judas (son of James). They all met together and were constantly united in prayer along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, several other women and the brothers of Jesus." So the first thing that jumps out to me is I love seeing Mary, the mother of Jesus all nestled in with the disciples.

Sharon:

I know. Isn't that lovely?

Nicole:

Oh, that just like warmed my heart to see that. (Sharon: Yes) I remember on the cross, Jesus had looked at John and said, (That's right!) this is your mother now, take care of her. And to see that they did, they kind of all were, you know, loving on Mary.

Sharon:

I love it.

Nicole:

That's great.

Sharon:

And if John was there, she was gonna be there. That's so cool.

Nicole:

Yeah. I just love seeing her, because you don't, I don't remember seeing much of her in scripture after his death. So kind of seeing her here, it's like, oh, she's doing good. She's okay.

Sharon:

There she is.

Nicole:

She's with her boys.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

You know, the rest of the gang. So I love seeing that. And then also, Jesus's brothers were there and that's interesting. I think they didn't believe at the beginning.

Sharon:

No. They did not.

Nicole:

Like you're not the Messiah, you're our brother Jesus and you're a punk, or whatever. But to see them there too, I think that's really cool.

Sharon:

I love that.

Nicole:

They're all together.

Sharon:

I wish I knew their story.

Nicole:

I know. That'd be so fascinating.

Sharon:

How did they turn? But whatever's, yeah.

Nicole:

Another person to ask in heaven.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

So I think that this is really neat that they mention them all praying together constantly.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

I wonder what that would've looked like, 'cause constant is all day.

Sharon:

A lot.

Nicole:

It's not just a portion, like, oh, in the morning and evening they prayed together. They were constantly united in prayer. So they were together. That must have been a really beautiful time of bonding. Were they trying to, excited to talk to Jesus again because they hadn't, you know, they probably were missing him. So, I don't know. It's just very fascinating to me what that would've looked like. You know, and were they just so happy to talk to Jesus?

Sharon:

I think it's wonderful. I do. Yeah. And all the time is a hard thing to even comprehend, but I think they didn't know what else to do. Right. (Nicole: Right) They're waiting. (Yeah) Here we are. God, here we still are. And here we still are.

Nicole:

Right. So well, we'll just keep praying because before, when Jesus was with them, he taught them how to pray. (Sharon: Right) But their prayers were very different before Jesus came and died. (Yes) So this would've been, I think, a fairly new way of communicating with God for them. (I think so) Maybe a more relaxed way, as opposed to more of a proper way to pray in the temple or whatever. (Yes) So this was kind of new, so maybe it was just figuring out and what else are you gonna do while you're waiting for (Right) this Holy Spirit to appear?

Sharon:

Right. Exactly. Exactly.

Nicole:

So, very neat.

Sharon:

Yeah. And in my section it says that there were 120 believers together in one place at one point. So I'm just so curious as to, you know, how were there 120? Who were the 120? And did they all smooch into that house? That's some big house? Was there a big courtyard? Was it just the temple? So.

Nicole:

How was it situated? Yeah. It's an interesting little peek at them.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

Kind of like a quiet, private moment.

Sharon:

But I love that prayer is first and foremost on their hearts. The church was founded in prayer even before the Holy Spirit came.

Nicole:

That's so cool. Oh, that's so good. I didn't think of that.

Sharon:

All right. Well, I've got the next section, which is verses 15-20. And it starts with this 120 believers part. So let me read that again, and then we're gonna kind of break it down. "During this time when about 120 believers were gathered together in one place, Peter stood up and addressed them." (So just stopping here for a minute. Over 500 saw Jesus after his resurrection. So, obviously more were believing at this point than just the disciples and Mary and Jesus' brothers.}).

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

So 120 of them evidently came. So.

Nicole:

That's great.

Sharon:

Alright. So Peter's standing up and he's stopped praying.

Nicole:

Took a break from praying.

Sharon:

Took a break from praying to do something. "Brothers, he said, The scriptures had to be fulfilled concerning Judas who guided those who arrested Jesus. This was predicted long ago by the Holy Spirit speaking through David. Judas was one of us and shared in the ministry with us." So, okay. They'd been studying the scriptures, they saw where Judas actually appeared in some prophecy. And I'm gonna read a little bit about that at the end, which is fascinating. And for some reason, Peter felt like there needed to be the same number again. Maybe there were 12 tribes of Israel. There should be twelve apostles.

Nicole:

Oh, maybe. Yeah.

Sharon:

Right. So anyways, that's what he's decided. And then we have this interesting parentheses that goes from verses 18-19. It says this about Judas. "Judas had bought a field with the money he received for his treachery falling headfirst there, his body split open, spilling out all his intestines. The news of his death spread to all the people of Jerusalem. And they gave the place the Aramaic name Akeldama, which



means Field of Blood." Well, Nicole, I had to really stop here because Matthew tells this story differently.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

So I'm gonna read what Matthew said, and then we're gonna try to figure out how they're both true.

Nicole:

The mystery ---

Sharon:

So Matthew says in Matthew 27:3, "When Judas, who had betrayed him, realized that Jesus had been condemned to die, he was filled with remorse. So he took the 30 pieces of silver back to the leading priests and the elders, I have sinned, he declared, for I have betrayed an innocent man. What do we care? They retorted. That's your problem. Then Judas threw the silver coins down in the temple and went out and hanged himself. So, okay. So Judas didn't have the money. (Nicole: Right) So then verse six, "The leading priest picked up the coins. It wouldn't be right to put this money in the Temple Treasury, they said, since it was payment for murder."

Nicole:

Well, at least they admitted that much.

Sharon:

So they didn't want it either.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

Nobody wanted that money.

Nicole:

Wow.

Sharon:

"After some discussion, they finally decided to buy the Potters Field, and they made it into a cemetery for foreigners." So as I'm like, okay, so who bought the field? Did Judas buy the field, or did the leading priest buy the field? And as I studied it, I realized the priest did not want that money any more than Judas did. So they're like, right, we can't take this money either. So they bought the field in Judas' name, it was his field. They weren't taking that money.

Nicole:

Right. They didn't wanna be associated with it.

Sharon:

Right. So, Judas got a field whether he wanted it or not, and owned it. And then Matthew says he hanged himself. And Luke in Acts says that he fell headfirst with his body splitting open. (Nicole: Right) So, okay. The priests buy this field in Judas' name. Judas doesn't want it. (Right) He hangs himself in it. He's so distraught. And then he falls eventually. And they're very graphic. I don't know that I needed to hear about his intestines, but evidently I did, 'cause it's in scripture. And so the news of that gross, extra worse death, not just hung, but split open, changed the name of that field. (Wow) So everybody knew about Judas. It's so sad.

Nicole:

That is really sad.

Sharon:

It really is. And it's so fascinating to me the guilt that even the priests felt about it 'cause they wouldn't take the money back.

Nicole:

Isn't that funny? I thought that was really odd. Oh, well, we can't put it in the, in the Treasury. We can't, like they knew.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

This was payment for murder.

Sharon:

Yep. Exactly. So, very sad time. So, okay, Peter continues, after we get that aside about what happened to Judas. (Nicole: Right) "This was written in the Book of Psalms where it says, let his home become desolate with no one living in it." That field was just used as a burial place for foreigners. It also says, "Let someone else take his position," which is so interesting. So I looked up the Psalms where it says that. And Psalm 69 talks about the home being desolate and starting at verse 19, it is talking about Jesus here in sort of prophecy, "You know, of my shame, scorn and disgrace. You see all that my enemies are doing, their insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair". (Oh) "But instead they give me poison for food. They offer me sour wine for my thirst", (which they did to Jesus.) And then verse 25 says, "Let their homes become desolate, their tents deserted." So that's that prophecy. And then in Psalm 109, where it says, "Let someone else take his position," that's in verse eight. It says, it's talking about the one that destroyed him, surrounded him with hateful words, slandered and told lies about him. "Let his years be few. Let someone else take his position." So they were as well as constantly praying, I believe, going through the scriptures together, finding now that Jesus has died, risen again. They're looking at scriptures in light of Messiah's death and resurrection. I'm sure they're looking at Isaiah 53 that talks about the Suffering Servant. (Oh yeah). But they're finding all these prophecies that have come true.

Nicole:

That's amazing.

Sharon:

It's so amazing. And they're stunned by them. And a lot of them, when Jesus walked the road to Emmaus, with the disciples after his resurrection, he showed from scripture.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

So a lot of it is going back to that too.

Nicole:

That would've been so fun for them to see.

Sharon:

I know.

Nicole:

Because he, Jesus, spoke of so many things and they didn't understand it. So for them now to have this like 'aha moment' of, oh look, this is it here. Oh, this is him here. Oh, that's Judas. That must have been quite---

Sharon:

Unbelievable. Yeah.

Nicole:

A moment for them.

Sharon:

So this waiting time was a rich time, I think, of studying the word as well, as Peter talks about here, as well as prayer.

Nicole:

Oh, how cool. Bible and prayer, Bible and prayer. Heart of every church.

Nicole:

Yes. Absolutely. Oh, I love that, that's so fascinating. All right, well I'll finish with verses 21-26. And so they say, "So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus, from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus's resurrection. So they nominated two men, Joseph (with all the nicknames) called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Mathias. Then they all prayed, Oh Lord, you know every heart, show us which of these men you have chosen as an apostle to appoint to replace Judas in this ministry. For he has deserted us and gone where he belongs. (Ouch) Then they cast lots. And Matthias was selected to become an apostle with the other eleven."

Sharon:

So Matthias is one of the Twelve.

Nicole:

He is So now he's one of the Twelve. We don't know a lot about him. There's not very much in scripture. And I think there was confusion whether he was Matthew and he wrote the book of Matthew for a while, 'cause their names were similar. So he caused a little bit of confusion with his name. But, other than that, we don't know a terrible lot about him. What was so interesting about this was I looked into the casting of lots, 'cause when you read it before, I think it's always been associated with gambling and kind of like a negative thing.

Sharon:

Yeah, yeah.

Nicole:

But it wasn't though, back before the Holy Spirit, they didn't have God working in them, whispering to them, leading them the right way. Yeah. So what they would do is they would cast lots, which were sometimes stones or rocks or whatever it was. They would pray before and say like they did here, show us Lord what the answer is. And so they put their trust in God to give them an answer in a rather unconventional way to us now, but we have the Holy Spirit.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

So that's just so neat to me that they asked God, Hey, which guy is the right guy?

Sharon:

And we don't know how to hear you so we'll cast lots.

Nicole:

And they wanted to get it right. So that was kind of cool. I liked seeing they were still looking to God for guidance in this.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah.

Nicole:

It's a big decision.

Sharon:

Huge decision. It really was.

Nicole:

Yeah. And they were trying to find someone who had witnessed Jesus's ministry here on earth.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah. And Matthias had. I thought that was fascinating. It had to be someone who was there from the beginning (Nicole: Yes) of his active ministry.

Nicole:

From the Baptism it says, right from the beginning.

Sharon:

From the Baptism. Right. So that they could witness to everything Jesus did publicly. And including of course, seeing him after he rose from the dead. So Mathias must've been one of the ones that saw that.

Nicole:

That's interesting.

Sharon:

That's what they had seen.

Nicole:

I wonder they had a smaller group of, 'cause so many people saw Jesus during his ministry. He had his twelve disciples. (Sharon: Right) But I wonder if there was like another group that we didn't hear much about.

Sharon:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I was reading, I can't even remember where in scripture about large crowds following Jesus. Oh, it was after the Sermon on the Mount. (Nicole: Oh yeah) And large crowds started following him everywhere. And I was really feeling sad for him because can you imagine just trying to have a bite to eat and everybody's staring at you. And you've got this huge crowd going, look, he's eating now or whatever.

Nicole:

What's he gonna do next?

Sharon:

Next. Right. It must've been so disconcerting. So yeah. A lot of people followed him. They were waiting for, you know, more of a show.

Nicole:

Sure.

Sharon:

Some of them. Can I see another miracle, please.

Nicole:  
Oh yeah.

Sharon:  
Oh look, maybe he'll heal that leper. You know?

Nicole:  
Right.

Sharon:  
And then more teaching. Yeah.

Nicole:  
So kind of cool. So I wonder what Matthias was doing. Is he all along watching Jesus and kind of growing in the sidelines?

Sharon:  
Yeah. So, and I wonder how Barsabbas also known as Justus ---

Nicole:  
Oh, I know. I felt really bad for him. He must've been kind of bummed. Like, well how come? I did wonder? Like how was his heart after this? Was he really disappointed or feeling maybe I wasn't good enough, 'cause to be one of the Twelve. That must have been quite a thing.

Sharon:  
Quite the honor. Although seeing they all died Martyr's deaths.

Nicole:  
Well,

Sharon:  
Maybe Joseph called Barsabbas should have been--- okay.

Nicole:  
Avoided that. Because I think even Matthias ended up being martyred.

Sharon:  
Yes.

Nicole:  
They said at the end. So none of them had a terribly delightful, happy ending here on Earth.

Sharon:

No. Yeah. Yeah. Being famous is not always fun. (Nicole: No) Right.

Nicole:

No. So that's a big burden. Yeah. Very interesting.

Sharon:

Yeah. Well, now we're gonna look at the whole passage together and answer some very key questions. And our first one is favorite verse. And I'll go first 'cause it's actually one of the verses in your passages. It's "Then they all prayed, Oh Lord, you know every heart, show us which of these men you have chosen". I just so love that they knew that God cared about that choice. And that they knew that God knew hearts. And you know, even as I'm choosing people for Sweet Selah and don't know what to do, it's so nice to know that God is interested in that. That he actually cares, you know?

Nicole:

Oh, that is sweet.

Sharon:

You know every heart. And I remember a time when Ray was getting out of the military and we were in Germany again. We lived in Germany two separate times. And he had no job. And so he took nine, it took nine months. He started nine months early to try to find a job. And he knew he wanted to teach in a Christian school. He knew he wanted high school, not college even though he'd taught at the college level. He hates writing Nicole. And if you're a college professor, you have to write in order to get your tenure and all the things. (Nicole: Oh wow) He didn't want all those games. He just wanted to talk about history with people. (Right) And he wanted Christians so he could talk about the Lord. (Oh, sure) So he knew it. And he applied. And he applied and he applied. And we prayed. And we prayed and we prayed and I prayed a prayer that he said, thanks a lot for 'cause (Oh no) I prayed, Lord, we really want your will. (Yeah) So shut every door except the one that you want us to walk through. (Right) And Ray's like really? I have been rejected. (Every door?) And rejected. And rejected.

Nicole:

Oh Ray!

Sharon:

So many times. He just, he never got the job. He got interviews overseas, but you know, he's communicating by phone from Germany. (Nicole: Right) Nobody can see him in person. (Oh yeah) He, for nine months never got the job.

Nicole:

Oh, that's so discouraging.

Sharon:

I know.

Nicole:

It's a long wait.

Sharon:

It was my fault. So, but God honored that prayer. He kept shutting doors and so we got to the point where we literally had had to ship our car, but we didn't know where we'd be living.

Nicole:

Oh my.

Sharon:

So we shipped it to New Jersey and at forty we were moving back in with his parents. Oh, that's fun. Two children, pets, and we have no place to go.

Nicole:

Wow.

Sharon:

So we'd shipped the car, we were flying out, you know, to live with his parents. In less than two weeks. When all of a sudden my sister heard that Portsmouth Christian Academy had just opened the high school. They hadn't even had a high school till then. Only one year of it. And they needed a history teacher. (Nicole: Oh my) So she called us in Germany, which was a big deal back then. Ray called Dennis Runey, who was the headmaster and got the job immediately. (Oh my word) And it was close to home. (Yeah) We didn't know it, but his mother had very few years left of life. (Oh) We got to be with her. (Wow) Oh my goodness. It's been the perfect place. We've been there longer than Ray was in the military now. (Oh wow) And God closed every other door.

Nicole:

Except for that one that was wide open.

Sharon:

Right.

Nicole:

And easy to walk through.

Sharon:

Right. So asking him, I mean, it just meant the world to me. God, you know. Show us.

Nicole:

Oh, I love that.

Sharon:

He does.

Nicole:

He does.



Sharon:

That was super long. I'm sorry.

Nicole:

That's so good. Well, I read this morning in my devotions that God loves us too much, let me get this right, to give us what we want when it's not the right time. (Sharon: Yes) I butchered that. But it's something along those lines (Yes) that he won't just give us what we want when we want it (No) 'cause it's not the right time. (Right) And so he loves us enough to make us wait.

Sharon:

And that was another hard wait.

Nicole:

Yes!

Sharon:

Let me tell you.

Nicole:

Oh, I'm sure.

Sharon:

And humbling.

Nicole:

Yeah, 'cause once you're established with your family and your marriage, you just kind of wanna do your thing and to move in with somebody.

Sharon:

Oh my word.

Nicole:

Especially parents.

Sharon:

Yes.

Nicole:

We love you parents, but it's just tough.

Sharon:

It would've been really hard.

Nicole:

Tough for them. Tough for us.

Sharon:

Oh man. So that was my favorite verse.

Nicole:

That's a great verse.

Sharon:

And it has a personal meaning to it.

Nicole:

Oh, I love that.

Sharon:

How about you? What was your favorite verse?

Nicole:

I love that verse. I had already talked a little bit about it, but 14, "They all met together and were constantly united in prayer along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, several other women and the brothers of Jesus." Just the fact that they were all together. (Sharon: Yes) After Jesus had left, they were together. You know, comforting each other, learning together, loving on Mary, the family. Just that picture of restoration. (Yes) You know, like Jesus's brothers were kind of, uh, and now they were all there together.

Sharon:

Together. And men and women.

Nicole:

And the women too. I love that.

Sharon:

Yes. In one place, which is radical.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

'Cause in the synagogues, the men were on one side, women were on the other side.

Nicole:

It's very separate. So just this new, this new thing was starting.

Sharon:

A new thing was starting.

Nicole:

And I love that. And it was just like the intimate core group of Jesus's, you know, his loved ones. I just think that verse is so neat.

Sharon:

I love it. Okay. Second question. You get to start this one. What did we learn about God from this passage of scripture?

Nicole:

Ooh. Oh, I talked about my first part in the first verse. He restores brokenness. They're all together after the loss of Jesus. (Sharon: Yes) And the brothers were together. (Yeah. That's good) And then he works with us where we are at, I put. With the casting of the lots, he worked with them in their little human way trying to understand God. I love that.

Sharon:

Right. He accepted that they didn't know. They just didn't know.

Nicole:

They threw some stones and God spoke through that still. So. I like that.

Sharon:

Oh, that's so good. Well, I loved that God speaks to us through scripture. He spoke to the disciples even about, you know, replacing Judas through Psalms. (Nicole: Oh Yeah). So the Old Testament speaks to us and it helped them too. So God speaks to us through that. We learned that God wants us to look to him in prayer. They prayed and I'm sure that was pleasant to him. And then, enemies of God meet bad ends.

Nicole:

Oh yeah. That's a hard truth.

Sharon:

It's sad but true. Yeah. Judas's was particularly unpleasant. So. So that's what I learned about God.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

From that. And so, but here we go. What did we learn about the early church? And how can we apply that today? Well, what I felt like I learned was the constant seeking. (Nicole: Yes) I don't know that we constantly seek, we get very complacent in our comfy cushy American world. (Oh sure, Mm-Hmm) I think if we were starving or if there were bombs falling on our heads, we would be more constantly seeking. (Right) You know? And that doesn't mean I'm asking for that. But, that being said, they prayed a

ton. (They did) They did. And prayer and looking to God for leading has to be so, so key in any church or ministry. It's too easy for us to assume we just know the answers. (Oh yeah) Prayer keeps us humble and still looking. It's so important. I can remember being a little bit frustrated in another church, not our church, a long time ago in another place, where the business meetings and, and everything would start with just this sort of perfunctory prayer. Okay, let's open in prayer. Lord be with us. Amen. And then right to the meeting, there wasn't--

Nicole:

Right to business.

Sharon:

Right. Right. Or finishing with, oh, we're out of time to pray. Somebody just close us, quick, you know?

Nicole:

Oh yeah.

Sharon:

I don't like that. And that's why in our Sweet Selah Ministries team meetings, we spend a ton of time in prayer.

Nicole:

We pray through the meeting.

Sharon:

We pray through the whole meeting because it's about seeking him. We cannot just think we know it and give a perfunctory nod to God.

Nicole:

Right. Like, oh, hey God, thanks for showing up. Okay, let's get onto the important things.

Sharon:

Yeah. We have to always humble ourselves and remember he's leading. He's leading. He's leading.

Nicole:

Oh, that's so good.

Sharon:

He's leading. So how about you? What did you learn about the early church?

Nicole:

Yeah. Prayer. I put prayer is really important. And their faithfulness in seeking him constantly and asking him for, guidance when selecting a new member. Like there was so much looking to God. Same thing. I think we think we either know it or we just assume, Oh, God knows my needs and he'll supply it. Right?

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

Like you said, I'm not praying for food for my children tonight. (Sharon: No) I'm so blessed. I'm not praying that we'll get over cancer right now. Like right now we're in a really good spot. (Yeah) So my prayers aren't that intense and faithful and long. And this was a good reminder to me, a good challenge. Hey, you should still be praying constantly. (Yes) There's plenty of things to pray constantly about.

Sharon:

There sure is. And his desire is us to abide with him, to be that close.

Nicole:

Right.

Sharon:

Every moment.

Nicole:

And it's not just for the things to give and to receive, it's also that relationship. He just wants to talk to us.

Sharon:

Yes. Yes.

Nicole:

He just wants to hear us.

Sharon:

I love it.

Nicole:

I'm like, oh God. Okay. So you wanna hear about my day even though it went fairly well. Okay, alright then, here goes.

Sharon:

That's right. And then the gratitude thing comes from that too.

Nicole:

Oh yes. That changes our whole being, you know? And then finally, church is family. Just seeing them all together with loving on Mary and the brothers like taking care of each other, praying together, worshipping together. It's so important to build that community, that closeness, with our church.

Sharon:

It is. Absolutely, with our, with our blood family when we can. I love looking at the choir with half the choir being your extended family and also we're family, Nicole.

Nicole:

Yes.

Sharon:

Even though we're not related.

Nicole:

I know.

Sharon:

'Cause we're sisters in Christ.

Nicole:

And I love that.

Sharon:

It's so good. I do. Well, okay. Well let us close in prayer. How's that for a thought? Father, thank you. Thank you for this peek at the very, very beginning of the church for those who loved you, being faithful to pray and pray and pray. And just wait for your perfect timing for what was gonna come next. Lord, may we do likewise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Nicole:

Amen. It must have been so hard for the disciples to just wait and also hard to replace Judas and feel the sorrow of one of their own falling away from Jesus and then dying. We're leaving them this week still waiting. How about you? Are you waiting with no end in sight? Sharon and I would be honored to pray for you as you try to wait. Well, you can email us at Sharon's email address at [sharon@sweetselah.org](mailto:sharon@sweetselah.org). You can also reach us through the Sweet Selah Ministries website, [SweetSelah.org](http://SweetSelah.org). We offer all kinds of encouragement to our followers. You can join online bible studies, watch our YouTube videos, read our weekly blog called Musings, and follow us on social media. Check us out and do come back next week as we study the event that changed our guys forever. We're calling episode 127, Upended by the Holy Spirit. Have a great week.

Speaker 1:

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