

Path of Power

I. Announce:

- A. Slide1-3,4-5 Kelly: Office Closed. REAL. C@R. JM9.
- B. Slide6 Martin Luther King stood before *the great emancipator*, Abraham Lincoln when he shared his iconic speech, *I have a dream*. As *Modern Day Abolitionists*, we also have *a similar dream*, to see our world's *25-40 million slaves* to be able to find *their freedom*.

II. Slide7 Intro: Path of Power

- A. We've all *counted* the seconds between the **lightning** in the **thunder**.
 1. Which do you like better? **But** you can't have **the thunder** without **the lightning**.
 2. **Thunder** is caused by *the heating and expansion of the air* along the line of the lightning flash.
 3. Lloyd Ogilvie said, *the 1st chapter of Acts is the account of what happened between **the lightning** of the incarnation of Christ & **the thunder** of Pentecost*.
- B. Slide8 *I like hot coffee. Very hot coffee*. When a waitress asks, *can I warm your coffee?* I always respond, **Yes**. Because given **time** and **neglect**, it becomes **cold**.
 1. Some of us need *a spiritual warm-up*. Some of us are *almost empty*. We need a refreshing **filling** or **refilling** of Holy Spirit.
- C. How does the Holy Spirit work? It's like a little boy who being down at the beach asked his grandfather, *Grandpa, what is the wind?* *I cannot explain the wind to you*, he replied, Slide9 *but I can teach you to **raise the sails***.
 1. The book of **Acts** shows us how to have *the wind of the Spirit in our sails*.
- D. **Prayer:** The Acts Adventures. [**Outline: Ascension. Prayer Mg. Business Mtg**]

III. Slide10a ASCENSION (9-11)

- A. We now move from Jesus' **last words** to His **last sighting**.
- B. Slide10b (9,10) Luke 24:50-53 *Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up*

to heaven. 52 So they worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy.
53 And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God.

C. A cloud took him Out of their sight - and while they were **gazing** -

1. **Gazing** - This is a PERIPHRASTIC IMPERFECT. They were continuing to strain hard to see Jesus as long as possible. Even after He had been lost from sight, they kept on looking.
2. **Cut-balloon** - (like keeping your eye on a balloon floating away) **you still see Him? Nope. Wait Yep. No. Is that His feet? Nope. He's gone.**

D. A cloud - Clouds were a significant *end-times* marker. Clouds were used **3 ways** in the OT:

1. **Slide10c To show** God's physical presence, the Shekinah cloud of Glory.
2. **To cover** His Holiness so that man would not see God and die.
3. **To transport** Deity. In Daniel 7:13 nlt *As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.*
 - a) This prophecy in Daniel is alluded to over **30 times** in the NT.

E. *The Ascension* officially ended Jesus incarnation & His 1st coming to earth.

1. It allowed eyewitnesses to see **both** the risen Christ on earth & victorious, **and** the eternal Christ returning to heaven to minister at the rt hand of the Father.
2. Contrast how **Jesus** came, *humbling Himself in His move from Heaven to earth. And now* how **Jesus** leaves, exalted & lifted up.
3. *So now Jesus expanded his earthly ministry from its geographically limited earthly dimensions, to its universal heavenly dimensions.*¹
4. It was a moment of remarkable splendor. He **goes** to the Father, **sits** a His right hand, **takes** the seat of cosmic authority, & **enjoys** His coronation & confirmation **as the King of Kings**.
5. He will not appear in person to the world again, **until His 2nd Coming**.

F. (11) They stared into the clouds so long that 2 angels had to come to move them along. This brought the disciples back to their senses, & they went to Jerusalem where they joined history's most powerful prayer meeting.

¹ Shepherd's Notes; pg.8

1. Basically their message was, *Jesus is returning again... So get going!*
 2. Slide11 Our lives can & should be *effervescent* (bubbly, fizzy; vivacious, enthusiastic). *Not like* a day-old glass of coke sitting out. (flat)
 - a) As kids we stared watching the bubbles, wondering *where do they come from?* (HS)
- G. In the same way - when He returns it'll be just as He left, *unexpectedly, surprisingly, as his own decision, and in his own way.* Lloyd Ogilvie

IV. Slide12a PRAYER MEETING (12-14)

- A. Throughout Acts we have some *heart-thumping gatherings*. Here's our 1st. And we see the 1st church was *a praying church*.
1. *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.* (8)
 2. This power is **from the Holy Spirit received** in grace. *Buuut* what did they do for the 10 days between the *promise of power and the power itself?*
 - a) Slide12b It seems *the Path of Power* was through Prayer.
 - (1) Through **Persistence** - 10 days. (50 days/Pent - 40 days/Christ on earth)
 - (2) Through **Obedience** - wait here. (4)
 - (3) Through **Unification** - *one accord*. (14)
 - (a) I would say this was not a *Prerequisite* but the **Atmosphere**.
- B. Slide12c Regarding Power - A.C. Dixon used to say, *When we rely on organization, we get what organization can do. When we rely on education, we get what education can do. When we rely on eloquence, we get what eloquence can do. But... When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we get what God can do.*
1. This is the cry for God's power through **prayer**. And this becomes **History's most Powerful Prayer Mtg.**
- C. Slide13a (12) Mnt of Olives - Bethany (Lk.24:50 *he led them as far as Bethany*).
1. The 2.5 mile ridge is known as the Mnt of Olives (about 3-400' above Temple mnt).
 2. Jesus will return to this very spot says Zech 14:4 *On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, & the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that 1/2 of the Mount shall move northward, & the other 1/2 southward.*

D. (13) **Upper room** - same as last supper upper room, possibly.

1. Possibly John-Marks house upstairs Acts 12:12, *he* (Peter) *went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.*

E. Slide14 (14) **Prayer** - The first church was a *praying* church. Throughout Acts, we'll notice Luke's emphasis on prayer. God shares His **power** with us as we **pray** and *ask him* for His help.

F. All these **with one accord** we are **devoting themselves** to prayer, together with the **women** - lit. *were continually devoting themselves to the prayer.* [*they stuck to praying.* ATRobertson]. They were single-mindedly. W/o dissent.

1. There had been *competition, criticism, denials, doubting, questions over who is the greatest, and what position that have in Jesus his kingdom.*

a) So it was probably a profound time of *reconciling relationships*.

2. The image is almost *musical*. A number of notes are sounded which, *while different, harmonize* in pitch and tone.

3. As the **instruments** of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, *so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives* of members of Christ's church.

4. The one who wants his *sail full of the breeze of the spirit* must have such perseverance in prayer.

5. How important then is this for our prayer meetings CM? **The Spirit** desires a community of believers *united in heart & mind* in order to have **power** in prayer.

a) **Corporate prayer?** I believe the prayer of **1 person** is *beautiful to God*. **And** when **two or more** pray in agreement, *it's even better*. **And** a prayer meeting of **120** in agreement/accord/unity *is better yet*.

G. The mention of **women** reflects his emphasis that all people (*Jew/Gentile, rich/poor, men/women*) are included in *the community and mission of the Church*. The walls between *genders* are already coming down.

V. Slide15a **BUSINESS MEETING (15-26)**

A. Slide15b We note the blessed-blending of *Scripture, the HS, & their prayers*.

- B. (16) Peter **interprets** Judas' betrayal of Jesus as, *though evil*, ultimately used by God for His purposes of saving sinners, since it led to Jesus' sacrificial death. (21) **went in and out among us** - Judas' replacement had to have personally interacted with Jesus during His earthly ministry.
1. This is so that the new apostle can be **a legitimate and effective eyewitness** alongside the other apostles.
- C. (18) **burst open** - I think Luke goes all "*dude*" on us. I think he forgot the ladies are in the room as says guys, *his guts like blew up*. [lit. to crack, to burst. *An accompanying noise is implied*]²
- D. (25) **to go to his own place** - this could refer either to Judas abandoning his role as *Jesus' apostle* to take up his role as *Jesus' traitor*. Or, to Judas departing this life in condemnation and taking his place in **death** or **hell**.
- E. **Slide16** Whether your opinion is that Peter made the *right decision here or not is irrelevant*, because we don't know. I think what is important is they went through the **right process**.
1. Some say it was wrong because **they limited God to these 2 men**.
Some say it was wrong because **you never hear from this guy again**.
Some say it was wrong because **it was Paul that fulfilled this position**.
Some say it was **Peter being impulsive again**.
 2. I like that they take initiative & seek to hear from **the Spirit** on the matter. **And** how they did it by going to the **Scriptures** & thru **prayer**.
 3. **Never hear from Matthias again?** **Nor** do we from Bartholomew or Matthew after this.
 4. **Paul?** – Paul couldn't have fulfilled this position because he didn't meet the criteria of vs.21,22.
 5. **Peter being rash?** – It seems 10 days of "*prayer, praise, worship, & supplication*" was enough for 120 disciples to be in touch with the Father, to have known his will for Matthias.
 6. **Besides** – If the wall of the New Jerusalem has 12 foundations & the names on those are the 12 apostles (Rev.21:14) **whose name would be no the 12th?**

² Linguistic Key to the Greek NT, pg.264

7. **And** – at least if you're Matthias you don't have very big shoes to fill (Judas).
- F. **Matthias** – no previous nor subsequent reference to him, **BUT** he must have accompanied the apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus went in & out among them (21).
- G. **Cast their lots** – This was a recognized way of ascertaining God's will.³
1. Prov. 16:33 says, *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord*, which means that what is attributed to *chance, fate, luck, or coincidence* is determined by **God**.
 - a) As Albert Einstein put it in *objecting to quantum theory's use of probability mathematics*, *God does not play dice with the universe*.
 2. **Note:** This is the **last time** Casting lots were used in the NT. **For** it seemed to be *a lower plane of spirituality*.
 - a) **The HS was not yet given.** **And** the bonds of OT tradition still understandably strong. **After** Pentecost the HS would lead the apostles by *perception & insight*.
 - b) **Curious?** would you like to make decisions by *throwing dice* or *personally learning to listen* to the HS's voice?

³ The Jewish NT Commentary