

They continued in prayer in the Upper Room

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- [0 : 0 0] I can sing now some verses from Psalm 62. Psalm 62, verse 5. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.
- On him depended all my hope and expectation. He only my salvation is, he and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defense.
- I shall not move it be. In God my glory placed is and my salvation sure. In God the rock is of my strength, my refuge most secure.
- Ye people, place your confidence in him continually. Before him pour ye out your heart. God is of refuge high. So on these verses.
- My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God. Adore. My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.
- [1 : 1 8] On him dependeth all my hope. Him Bod Neptune.
- Am and hell City of■■■■.
- I hope you will know Moses who has a great great great great great great King. O believe, in your me is my sure divine.
- I shall not love it be. And God my glory plesed it.
- I must have been true. And God the rogues of my strength.
- [2 : 4 3] My refuge more secure. Give him a measure confident.
- In heaven conceded I lay. For him pour me a dear heart.
- What is our refuge high? I can turn to the passage read.
- The book of the Acts of the Apostles. We can read again at verse 12. Acts of the Apostles chapter 1 at verse 12.
- And when they were coming.
- [4 : 3 3] And when they were coming.
- And when they were coming. They went up into another room. The events that we find recorded for us. Throughout the book of Acts.
- The book of Acts are truly inspiring words. And inspiring works that are recorded for us. And not only can we think of the word inspiration as being derived from the activity of the Holy Spirit.
- But it also stimulates an interest in us. And from us in the way that God works in the world.
- God working in the world then and now as ever. As ever. Can I first of all remind you of the words that the writer of this book.
- [5 : 5 2] Which we believe to be Luke. States in verse 7. And he said unto them. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.
- But ye shall receive power. After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea.

And in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And the author of these words also.

Concludes the gospel that bears his name. And he is referring to the events that are the focus of his Eucharist here.

In chapter 24 of Luke. We read there. It came to pass while he blessed them. He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

[6 : 54] And they worshipped him. And returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Jesus instructs his disciples before he leaves them.

And he encourages them to wait on the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Jesus arranged beforehand the place where he was going to depart from the world.

He had made that prior arrangement. It wasn't just a random event. It wasn't a random location. He specifically told them to come to this place.

And there he was going to ascend into heaven. Matthew also lays emphasis on the commissioning of the disciples.

You remember these words. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew. You're familiar with them. We read them very often. On the occasion of a baptism.

[8 : 13] Where we find these words referred to. To go ye therefore and teach all nations. Baptising them in the name of the Father.

And of the Son. And of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things. Whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you all the way.

Even unto the end of the world. And, Amen. And, it's an interesting study for you. To reference the different account that we have.

The same events. But, slight differences in the way the account is delivered or remembered.

And that's the way it should be. Even though we believe the Holy Spirit to be responsible for the life. The whole of Scripture. And, it is in that sense.

[9 : 15] A word from God to us. And yet, He uses the vehicle of men. And at times women. To speak His truth.

And, He uses the faculty of speech. And memory. And, recollection. And, allows them to deliver the word.

The word that is God's word to us. And, here in this passage. We have Luke.

And, some accuse them of having two different stories. Or, two different accounts. What we have in Luke's Gospel. And, what we have at the beginning of this passage.

But, there are no real discrepancies in what He has to say. Merely a different emphasis. And, when we read of the time that is brought to our attention here.

[10 : 14] When Jesus takes His leave of the world. Takes His leave of the disciples. And, ascends into heaven. The disciples respond to that.

The, we are told by Luke. That they, they, they return to. Jerusalem. They, elected. They are full of joy.

And, you would imagine that. That, the spirit that would prevail amongst them. Amongst them would be one. Where they, are very much downcast.

And, depressed. Because, of the fact that Jesus. Has left the world. And, gone back to heaven. Left them. Behind.

But, that's not what we read. We read. That they, that they. Came back to Jerusalem. And, they were filled. With great joy.

[11 : 14] And, not only that. We are told. They were continually. In the temple. Praising and blessing God. Big difference. Between the way they were. At that moment.

And, the way they were. Following. The resurrection of Christ. But, they had the privilege. For 40 days. In the company. Of the.

Post resurrection. Christ. 40 days. 40 days. Whatever. These 40 days. Contained. For them. Clearly.

It impacted. Upon them. And, when Jesus. Went to heaven. And, left them. They were. In one sense.

At least. Prepared. For it. So, we read here. That. When they return. To Jerusalem. They travel. A Sabbath. One Day's Journey.

[12 : 10] Which, according to. The scholars. Is approximately. Three quarters of a mile. In distance. And. They walked. From.

Where Jesus. Ascended. Back to. Where they themselves. Were staying. And. That's. The thing. That is. Of interest.

to us that we read here that they when they were coming into Jerusalem they went into another room where they abode and in our version, the version that you have before you, if you've got the authorised version before you the word that is there they came to another room and that allows you to think of this place that they came to as being just another room that was like any other there was nothing significant about it there was nothing that marked it out as a place other than a random place that they came to perhaps for that occasion alone but in the original Greek the word that is there is they came to the the upper room and that causes the scholars and theologians to consider several things about this place that they were going to come together they were going to come to the upper room and while it is not identified there is plenty of speculation and plenty of of conjecture concerning it you know some people say this room was the room that was given to the disciples by Mary and Martha some other figure from that particular time that they they were in the position of possessing property property and they gave the property to the disciples to meet in but I think allowing for conjecture there is probably sufficient evidence for us to suppose that the place that they came to was that very same place that they were that they were familiar with that was significant to themselves and that was the place that the Lord

Jesus met with them the place that he directed them to as disciples where they kept or held the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the first Lord's Supper and it was this place in particular that they met together at this time and also it's probably although again I'm saying it's conjecture there's no there's no physical evidence to say one way or the other whether this is right or wrong and it is it's equal in merit with with identifying it as the upper room where they met as disciples to to commemorate the death of the Lord or to be instructed in it the place that they met together following the death of the Lord where they were gathered for fear of the Jews and they were there in a very much different state of mind waiting upon whatever it was they expected to come again they were afraid and they were they were much perplexed and filled with consternation so

I find it reasonably easy to suggest to you that this room which according to the Greek is a specific room not just any room but the upper room and because it is the upper room there is a suggestion more than a strong suggestion that it is a room that they were familiar with a room that they frequented a room that they were at ease in and they went there as disciples now we also notice from our reading here is that what is incontrovertible you may say well any person can suggest a room choose their own and your guess is as good as mine but here we are given specific information as to at least some of those who were met in the upper room we are told first of all that the disciples were there and we are told who they were not just that they were gathered there but that they abode there

[17 : 53] Peter James John Andrew Philip Thomas Bartholomew Matthew James the son of Alphaeus and Simon Salotis and Judas the brother of James three times in the gospels we are given that list with one exception the name of that person who's mentioned later on in this chapter Judas Iscariot is missing from this list elsewhere in the three occasions where we have albeit in different order a list of the disciples all twelve are listed including Judas here there's eleven with the exception with Judas missing and this is what you would expect this is them having returned from receiving their instructions from the

Lord he took them to a place he spoke to them in that place he commissioned them as those who would go out in his name and preach the gospel and there they are gathered together in that place and it's not surprising then when you look at that and think of that that here we have in seed foreign the beginnings of the New Testament church the church as a physical entity the church is not a building it's not individuals but individuals who form part of the body of Christ here in this world and here we have the beginnings of the New Testament church and identified with it are the persons of the disciples in the first instance Professor

Lindsay calls it the church of the upper chamber because that is where they were met and we have a list of the disciples and we have their number we are also told that certain women were there and again while you would expect maybe some names to be given to us we're not given these names but when you look at the way Luke writes his gospel he makes reference to the women sometimes he names them sometimes he identifies who they are but without doing so here almost inevitably your thoughts go to who these women might be and you can think that there were these women who were present at the cross and who were present when

Christ rose from the dead when they went to the empty grave there are some names that stand out to us and you would expect them to be wherever the church was going to be and if this is the beginning of the church you would expect these women I'm not saying that it's limited to these women but these names you'll recognize Mary Madeline Joanna Susanna Salome Mary and Martha are just a few women that you associate with the death of Christ they were present they were witness to it they were witness to the grave being empty and it was through them that the message of the resurrection first came to the disciples so while the women are not named you can readily understand that this church of the upper chamber would have these women present we're also told that

Mary the mother of Jesus was present again if you were a Roman Catholic you would expect more to be made of that fact and that she would have a place of priority in the way that Luke records the Acts of the Apostles too but it is simply reference that she was present along with the church and that again you would expect strangely enough this is the last mention that you find of Mary in the New Testament she has never spoken of again whatever the Roman Catholic Church teaches concerning her the Bible that you and I read makes no further mention of her for whatever reason because while she had this elevated position as the mother of her Lord that is her place nothing more nothing less and she should be given her place but not as the mother of

[23 : 20] God not as any other picture that you might find conveyed in certain writings she is not the constant virgin because in the same breath we are told that the brethren of the Lord were present we are not told who they were but again the gospels tells us that he did have brothers probably the brethren are named we know that they are and that maybe that they were sisters as well but the sisters are not named we are told that James and Joseph or Joseph Simon and Judas half brothers of the Lord and while we think of these figures we think of these names and we are entitled to do so we know that this is the beginning of the church verse 15 speaks of 120 people now it's not clear as far as I can make out from what is written there whether you know when Peter began to speak whether he was speaking instantly at that moment in those days we are told

Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said the following whether that means that at that moment within that upper room there were 120 persons present or was he referring to another occasion where there were 120 persons some of the commentators speak of that figure being important in the eyes of the Jews because that was the kind of number that you would expect to be present sufficient to allow a synagogue or a worshipping group of people to have the right to stand on their own as a recognisable place of worship now whether that has anything to do with it or not the fact is that we are given this gathering we are given detail of this gathering and it is a gathering that is mixed mixed in men and women mixed in talent mixed in the relationship that they had with the

Lord Jesus some of his brothers for example did not come to faith in Jesus until very late on in the life of Jesus and probably following his resurrection from the dead some of them at least they did not believe in Christ and we have that stated quite clearly but they did come to faith and they are listed here as those who were present in the upper room so there's a mixed bag there's a mixed collection of people and I think that is significant if for no other reason than that the church is always made up of mixed people all kinds of people different skills different backgrounds different personalities disciples alone tell you that and show you that that God did not see fit to select the intellectual and to ring fence those who had a powerful memory a powerful mind and who had academic skills

Peter alone stands out as someone who was probably very gifted academically in the sense that he had the prowess of mind which he demonstrates in the way that he conveys the gospel in his epistles but it wasn't a trained intellect it wasn't somebody who went through the scholastic environment that some would have gone through like Luke himself who is thought to have been a doctor a medical doctor so there is a mixture of people there all kinds having come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ at different stages in their life at different stages in their experience now you might think that's not important but it is important because if you're looking at here is the beginnings of the church of Christ that God has seen fit to identify this occasion to us and to demonstrate that this crew of people mortly crew if you want to call them that that they were gathered together in his name and remember that's what they were there for we are told by

Luke that they went to the temple and they worshipped God there with joy but they also went to the upper room and there they were engaged we are told in prayer and supplication they continued in one accord with one accord in prayer and supplication and I think there's two things there that you need to take on board and that is that following on from the ascension of Christ they did not neglect their duty as believers and to not attend the temple you could have excused them for doing that you could have excused them and said well you know better the temple is no longer relevant to you but no they were in the temple as a place of worship where they met with

[29 : 43] God's people in God's name but they also met in the context of the fellowship of the New Testament church which is what we have in seat form if you like in the upper room and they are there not clueless or without any thought about why they were there or what they were expecting to achieve they are there waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise because they are quite confident that the promise of God to them will be fulfilled and Christ instructed them that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until the Spirit would come and there are ten days from the time of the resurrection to the time of the ascension and then there are further eight days to the time of the pouring out of the

Spirit at Pentecost I further I'm sure it's ten days between the two times where the promises of God are fulfilled now they could have just sat there and you get that kind of attitude if you like that if God has promised to do something then he will do it he doesn't need you and he doesn't need me to do it but that's not the way they looked at it they were perfectly persuaded that God was going to fulfill his promise and that there would be the pouring out of his spirit as the prophets of old had proclaimed but what did they do well they went and they came together with the vision before

God that he would fulfill his words men and brethren in verse 16 where this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David the scripture fills their heart and mind even when it comes to dealing with this problem that they have and it is a problem you know go back again to there if we believe that where they are met is the upper room where they met with Christ where Christ ministered to them physically spiritually reminded them taught them and did so much for them that they could not forget it if they wanted to but one thing was clearly obvious and that is that Judas Iscariot was there and Peter when he preaches he won't get away from that he knows he deals with this very thorny issue of the absence of

Judas and he says that he says this is the fulfillment of scripture this is the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas which was a guide to them that took Jesus he referred to the scriptures as the psalmist speaks of what Judas was going to do so he doesn't avoid the issue nor could they you know you can't just sit there and say well we were here before we enjoyed great blessing here before the Lord was with us here before they knew fine well who was there with them and what had happened and that would have been a burden to them but it didn't deflect them from what they really needed to do and they filled their time waiting for the promises of God to be fulfilled with prayer and supplication and the scripture points the scripture paints a picture of corporate prayer for all the church and unanimity in their prayer if you read forward the beginning of the next chapter it's it's emphasized for us when the day of

Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place in other words you know when you when you think about the way the disciples are at times do you remember when they were praying as a church for the release of Peter and their prayers were answered it almost caught them on the hop they didn't expect their prayers to answer and I think that exposes our own humanity and the weakness that we have as human beings and even the church that they can find themselves and their weakness exposed in that way do you ask yourself the question well who do I pray to and you have an answer you pray to God in the name of Christ through the spirit what do you pray for and then you know what you're praying for but how specific are your prayers how patient are you in waiting for your prayer to be answered how consistent are you they were there with prayer and supplication waiting for the word to be fulfilled with one accord now there you have it there you have a something that that we have to work come we at we begin with ourselves no pointing the finger at anyone else but we want to find well where is this unanimity going to come from is it going to be proscribed is it going to be something that we insist upon

[36 : 15] I stand up in front of you and I pray meeting and I say to you now tonight you're going to pray for this exclude everything else this is what you're going to pray for and I insist on it you pray for this and this alone this is your topic for the evening well how effective would that be how useful would that be if you know for yourself what your burden for prayer is then that is the burden you take to the Lord but you want the Lord to bring the same burden to bear upon the hearts and minds of others now you didn't have that in this occasion there was unanimity there was corporate prayer there was the desire for God to fulfill his promise as he did one spirit and one accord it's not easily achieved and it's not easily preserved but it is greatly desirable and maybe that's where we need to begin to seek from God this spirit of unanimity and desire for the things that are glorifying to his name first and forth not what

I want or even what you want but what God wants and that's where we must begin that's where they were they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication one of the commentators made mention of this we look going to have a national day of prayer I think it's the last Wednesday of the year the church has annually for the last number of years had a national day of prayer which is good and we should hope to join with the rest of the church in praying along with others there was one of the commentators who remembered in America in the 1850s I think it was and he talked about the revival a great revival breaking out over there but according to him

I'm not sure where this comes from or where this record is derived from but according to him that that revival began with six people praying six people praying and within six months he said there were 10,000 businessmen in New York who were converted I can't verify these figures and I can't say how they came to find them but 10,000 converts genuine converts to the Christian faith businessmen who had better things to do with their life prior to that all of them converted beginning with small things and then after that millions came out on the name of

God there is a record of that national revival in America there's records of such revival in our own island and elsewhere but it doesn't begin with huge numbers it begins with small insignificant seemingly insignificant numbers because it's not who's praying that's important it's who they're praying to and what they're praying for and when they pray as one then the God who is the only living and through God he responds in a way that only he can and you know it is a question I have in my own mind is it because of my prayer that anything is going to happen well if it is then God made it so when you look at this what do you read you read on that the prayers of God's people was answered and the spirit of

God was poured out now was it the spirit of God that responded to the prayer was it dependent on the prayer in order for him to come clearly not because it was promised it was prophesied God said this is how it's going to be but within what God has said he uses even the small corks of his own people to bring it about not for his own glory because he has ordained whatsoever comes to pass this week sometime I was reading about I'm not sure in what context I think it was Sinclair Ferguson who was who was talking about the the need that the

[42 : 05] Christian has to grow in grace and he wondered about how could the Christian grow in grace if they were isolated if they were cut off from the body of Christ and you know the difficulty that God has ordained support mechanisms you and I can support one another if we're struggling if we're failing if we're losing the impetus of our faith we're meant to support one another we're meant to encourage one another but what happens when you're alone what happens if there are no other members anywhere close to you and he made reference to a crafter up in the North Islands and he said how can you survive in your faith and he was more or less very much alone as a witness to

Christ well he said the only thing that kept me going at times was this that I remember in my youth when the church was what it's not and I would go out and if you looked out on the field he said they were black and he asked what do you mean he said well in every corner of the field you saw men and women prostrate in prayer at the same time men and women prostrate in prayer that's not what it was like for him then because he was alone but he knew that there was a different day he knew that there was another time when God's people were much more in evidence than they are then and that's what we need to remind ourselves of as well it may not be the way that we wanted to be but that doesn't mean that God is not God and that what he is doing will in any way be frustrated the New

Testament church began with very small insignificant steps as far as eye can see the eye of man can see but God was at work and he began with a church that was in the first steps hiding fearful and it grew from that grew to a church that exists today very much all over the world with members all over the world believers all over the world praying people all over the world young and old all over the world when God will be satisfied with his work that it is completed he hasn't told us but he tells us that it will go on until the day of Christ Jesus without telling us when that day will come what can we do we can do what the first members of the church did we can meet together we can pray together we can seek the spirit of unanimity and we seek help to overcome our complacency whatever it is that deters us from doing what Christ would have us do let us pray oh lord oh lord oh god there are obstacles every which way we look and often times there are obstacles of our own making but we give thanks that if we look at your word you tell us that very often you begin small and when you begin small you mean to finish great and that's the way it is at times you do great things because you're a great

God help us to understand them to believe that and to seek that spirit where we would collectively plead the measures of the most high God that you may pour out your spirit rend the heavens and come down cleanse from every sin in Jesus name Amen I'm going to sing in conclusions and verses from Psalm 122 in garble the last two verses the last two verses Psalm Psalm Psalm Psalm

Psalm Thank you.

[47 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[50 : 27] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.