

# ACTS OF HEAVEN

## ACTS OF HEAVEN: EKKLESIA

### Introduction

Aloha everyone! I'm Mark, and I'd like to welcome you to our service. Today we are going to kickoff a brand new mini-series called, *Acts of Heaven* where we will be learning about the reality of heaven in the local Church. When you look at the state of the Church in the world today, would you say we are living in the Golden Age of the Church?

Imagine being a fan of the Boston Celtics in the late 1950's through 60s. Led by Coach Red Auerbach and center Bill Russell, the Celtics won an unlikely 11 championships in 13 years. That was undeniably the golden age of the Celtics.

As a kid it was the Chicago Bulls in the 90s. (Yes kids, Pastor Mark was born in the late 1900's). Under the direction of Coach Phil Jackson and superstar Michael Jordan, the Bulls won six NBA Championships. "If I could be like Mike!" What a time to be alive!

In the world of football no one can deny the dynasty of the New England Patriots. Bill Belichick and Tom Brady led the team to 10 trips to the Super Bowl as well as many AFC championships.

Some teams have reigned in a number of different eras making it hard to determine their golden age. When was the golden age of the Lakers? Was it the 1972 team led by Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West? How about the Lakers of the 80s led by Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul Jabbar? Then there was the Phil Jackson era with Kobe and Shaq.

When would you say was the golden age of the Church? It's easier when talking about sports because the measurements of success are clear – points scored, championships won, etc. But how do we measure the success of the Church in any given era? There were definitely several dark periods where we were at an all-time low (Crusades, Inquisitions, endorsement of slavery). But when were we at our best? Like the Lakers, maybe there are several eras we could point to (The Reformation, the Great Awakening, the Azusa Street Revival, the Jesus Revolution).

**OG DISCUSSION QUESTION:** *When would you say was the Golden Age of the Church? What metrics should we use to measure the success of the Church?*

### The Church of Acts

In the minds of many Christians, the golden age of the Church was at its inception. We read about this in the book of Acts. At Pentecost Peter delivered a message to onlookers,

*"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day," (Acts 2:41 NIV).*