

# Acts 5

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 February 2020

[ 0 : 0 0 ] All right, good evening. Good to see you all. Good to be here with you. And when we're at Man Church, there's no better color for an iPad than, all right, so I was preaching on the south side of Atlanta this morning. I feel like I need to get that clear. And I called my wife because I came straight from there, from that church here to the church. And I said, Lori, bring my iPad tonight. And she said, sure, no problem. And, you know, two days from leaving the country, everything packed up, living out of suitcases in the beloved Gibby Inn, which is where our current residence is there at Joe and Rhonda's house. And we appreciate them. So I get here to church. And after the deacon's meeting, I said, all right, Lori, my iPad. And she said, oh, I forgot, but here's mine. And so thankfully, we back everything up on Dropbox. So I was able to find some things there. So praise the Lord for that. Well, the first service that we were back, back in, it would have been about this time last year or the 18th of December, I believe is the day we landed. We ended up doing two Christmases on this first furlough that we did for a year, that one of those early services. I gave a bit of an update about all that the

Lord's been doing in Chile. And since then, I haven't been back to a Sunday service, if some of you that are Sunday tenders here at Vision probably have noticed. But my wife and kids have been on a faithful, faithful basis. I don't know how many people have told me since I walked in tonight, we're really going to miss your wife and your kids. I didn't take it personal, just in case you were wondering. But we came back and I want to share a bit of testimony before we get into God's word. We're going to go into Acts chapter five here in just a few minutes. But I really want you all to know about what God's doing in the ministry there in Chile and a bit about our family and things like that. But we came back on this furlough, our first one year furlough, which is not the recommended route to take.

And because of that, had two principal goals. And one of the goals was for our children to have the opportunity to adapt back to America, back to the U.S. Katie was 28 days old when we left for the field. Josh and Andrew were both born on the field. And if you add up all the months that Katie had been in the States since she was born, it would have been about 18 or 19 months total. A lot of those broken into smaller sections. And the boys even much less.

And so we got to get back to the States and have this opportunity, you know, to become bilingual, bicultural, which is the goal of missionary children. And the Chile side's already strong. And so let's get the American side strong. And so I left Lori and the kids back here to be a part of this church, which has been one of the greatest opportunities for them.

And I'm so thankful for many of you that are sitting here that have invested in them, especially in our boys. I'm very thankful for that. It's been a great blessing and encouragement for me to have a church like that, that's taken the boys out, to spend time with them, that's invested in them. And we really, really appreciate that. As well, the second goal was to spend a significant period of time raising financial support for the ministry that's growing in Chile.

[ 3 : 0 6 ] Many of you know the story and those that were in the deacon's meeting, I shared a bit of the testimony of the things that are going on there. But we left for the field. And the reason why Brother Gardner says one of the older missionaries, it's not really that I'm that old.

I might look old. Today, a guy, I was talking with him down on the south side of Atlanta. And he said, you know, we're talking about different things. And before the service started, and he looks over at me and he said, we're about the same age, right? And I asked him, I said, how old are you? He said, I'm 50.

A lot of things I thought I wanted to say to him, but I didn't. But I will be 39 in a couple of months. So I'm still on the younger side. But it started pretty early. Back when Pastor Gardner was still in Peru in the year 2000, I spent six months with him, doing an internship with him, much like many of the missionaries do today, going six months overseas. And then we came back, or I came back, got married, raised support. And all of 2003 and 2004, we spent there in Peru working along his side as well. My pastor from my sending church was my dad. And he went home to be with the Lord, had a massive heart attack during that stage of life of us going to the mission field.

So when Vision was started up, you know, Vision was already like our home away from home. And Pastor Gardner, through our time there in Peru, had been such a great mentor and spiritual father.

And in many aspects, after my dad passed away, a physical father in the sense of giving advice and helping out and being there for us. And so we are so thankful to be part of the pre-Vision and post-Vision family. And, you know, part of all that's going on here at this church.

[ 4 : 42 ] But we left for the field back in 2005 to Chile, started the first church there of our ministry, Iglesia Bautista of Faith, Faith Baptist Church. We started that church with a lady and her two children. And things began to grow. Three years into that church plant, we had a few guys that wanted to prepare for ministry. And so we started preparing those guys for ministry, started the Chile Training Center. And we're excited to see what God's been doing through that. God began as we prayed and we tried to encourage others about going to Chile. He began to work in the hearts of others as well.

And the church here, Vision, supports several of the other missionaries that are there in Chile that have come in these subsequent years. And we're very thankful for that as well. Through the team, we saw the 10th church started last year. Our family's been involved in about seven of those church plants up through this time. And we've got about 50 young men and young women that are now preparing for ministry there at the Chile Training Center. And so we're really excited about this next stage of ministry. And one of the reasons that the fundraising side was important because the ministry has been growing and God is blessed and there's more opportunities to help guys start churches. And I am thankful that I can report that this year God has answered our prayers.

And so we're going back with the budget that we need to go into these new projects. And so we're very excited about that. The two big goals we had helped the kids get readjusted and serving here in the church and all those kinds of things. And also to see finances to continue on with some of these projects.

And the Lord has answered our prayers. And so we are very excited about that. We're leaving on Tuesday and we'll be landing there in Santiago. We think we have a house because we've done a significant remodel while we've been gone on the house that we own there in Chile. It should be ready by Wednesday when we get there. We might have a car picked out. Daniel Sparks has been working on that for us as well. And so we might actually fly out on Tuesday. We're on buddy passes with Delta. So there's a lot of things in the air, but we should fly out Tuesday night. We should have a house and we should have a car and all of that will be a blessing. And my wife, I'm just, I'm helping her to be flexible, right? And she's learning to be flexible even more so. Oftentimes the things that she tells me. So Acts 5, Acts chapter number 5. Be praying for us as we go back. Katie, she'll be 18 in December of next year. At that time, she should be finished with high school. And I say should, you know, we're in the homeschool plan.

And so we're going back into this and she'll be finishing up and she should be back here at the church and the training center at the end of this year. I was about to say next year, but the end of this year, 2020. And that will be, that will be somewhere between exciting to see the first one taking off. I wish it was a boy taking off first because it's a lot, I think it'd be a lot easier to see those guys go out. But Katie will be, will be coming here. It really feels like God's led her to missions. And so I'm thankful that she had this year to build relationships here. And her leaving Chile coming back here will really just be like going to extended family. And that is, that's a very encouraging thing for us as well. So we, we appreciate that and we appreciate your help. I want to share with you some of the things that I've been thinking about as I go back to Chile and especially working with some of the men, some of the things that we're going to be working on and talking about over the next, next few weeks as we settle in. You know, a lot of churches will start a year and they might have a, a, some kind of theme for the year or, or something like that. And we don't necessarily do that in the churches. Some of them might do it in, in Chile, but I do want to have among some of the guys that I'm training a focus, a focus for, for this year, a focus for the next few years and, and this, this next term on the field. And as I've been thinking through this and praying through this and pastor Gardner asked me to speak here to the men, I think some of the, the truths that God's been working on my heart and some of the plans that we have going back might encourage you as well, because the same ministry that we're doing in Chile is the same ministry that you all are doing here, right? We're following the same plan and trying to reach the world with the gospel. Acts five, we'll start reading in verse number 28, Acts five, 28.

[ 8 : 57 ] The Bible says here, saying here, here, the, the men are confronting the disciples there about their preaching the gospel there in Jerusalem. We'll kind of pick up there in midstream saying, did not we straightly command you that ye should not teach in this name and behold, notice the next phrase, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other disciples or apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than man. You know, as I think here at the accusation that was thrown toward Peter and the other apostles, this accusation of you all have filled the city with your doctrine. You filled the city with your doctrine. And I think as we go back to our city, our city is a city of about six, seven million people. It's a pretty large city. A lot of people living in a small area. A lot of people that, that are not Christians. They're not believers. Many of which have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel. You know, the hustle and bustle of city life and all the things that are going on and even some of the unrest that have been going on recently. There's a lot of distractions.

There's a lot of things that, that are occupying men's hearts, even the Christian men's hearts in our, in our day. And it's not much different than what it would be like here, right? We all struggle with different distractions and things that come in and fill our minds and our hearts and our attention. But I wonder, and I evaluate my own life and ministry and some of the things that we're doing there. Could the accusation be made that we have filled Santiago with God's doctrine, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the gospel? Have we filled the city? Have we filled it? Have we worked on an intentional, specific plan of trying to saturate the city so that everyone has the opportunity to hear the gospel? So that everyone has the opportunity not only to hear the gospel, because we're not called just to evangelize. We're called to, to plant churches. And in order to plant churches, we train men and send those men out. And he's given us the commission to reach the world with the gospel.

But if we bring up the world down to a small view and think about our city, have we filled this city? And can we focus in this year 2020 and the next few years, as I go back to Chile, on an intentional plan of assuming the responsibility of filling the pressure on our shoulders, of accepting the challenge and accepting the responsibility of not just going through the motions of being a part of what we've seen God do and seen churches planted. And it's so easy to start getting wrapped up in just inner church ministry and work that's going on. But here, these, these apostles, they're in the city of Jerusalem, where they started, Acts 1-8, they're supposed to start in Jerusalem and both in Jerusalem and the other areas. They didn't do so good at getting out as quick as they should have. And persecution came in in Acts 8-1 to help them to go out. But here, an accusation, accusation is, is put toward them that they had filled the city with their doctrine. And this idea of filling the city is a theme that, in my own heart, I want to think about and meditate on and pray about and work with the men about as we go back into Chile. Another passage that kind of goes along the same lines.

Look what the Bible says in Acts 19. Acts 19. A parallel thought that we see again. Because last time, it was an accusation being made toward them. But here is a, a text that we found, find in the scripture that is speaking about work that was done for the Lord. And we'll start reading in verse number eight of Acts 19. The Bible says, and he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. He's in the synagogue.

He's with the Jews. He's with unbelievers. He's preaching the gospel to them. He's persuading them so that they can understand how Jesus is the fulfillment there of the Old Testament of the prophets. And in verse number nine, but when divers were hardened and believed not, but spoke evil of that way before the multitude. Notice the multitude. He departed from them. So he's departing there from the synagogue. He's departing from the multitude and separated the disciples. So the ones that had believed in Christ, the ones that were now followers of Christ are separated. And they're disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years. And the last part of this text is so important because it says, so that all they which dwelled in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. So here you find Paul that's doing ministry and he's focusing on some of those evangelistic type outreaches there on the early part. Three months, every Saturday, he's going into the synagogue. He's disputing. He's sharing the gospel. And they didn't want it anymore. And they were becoming a bit frustrated at his attempts to go against their Jewish traditions. And so Paul separates the disciples, all those that are now disciples, followers of Jesus, those that have placed their faith in Christ. Let's go over here. And he began to teach them. And over a period of two years, he set up the best example we could find of the Bible of some kind of Bible institute, of some kind of school, or at least it was a school that they borrowed, some kind of room where they were meeting together and they're going through the Bible and they're disputing things. But the interesting thing and what challenges my heart, especially as we're trying to lead a bit of a ministry there in Chile, is that while they're doing that, the Bible says in verse number 10, that it went on for two years, so that all they which dwelled in Asia, it's talking about Asia

[ 14 : 46 ] Minor. What is modern day Turkey? The missionary, I guess, of the week is Turkey. And we were talking about Turkey. Well, in that area, all of that area, the Bible says, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. So they're being trained. But as they're being trained, it's not some kind of academic approach where we're going to bring you in and we're going to have classes and we're going to fill your minds full of knowledge and we're going to debate theory. And then at the end of your training, once you're done with your training, then you can move into some kind of actual practical ministry. That's the way the world works, right? You go to college and then maybe in that latter part of college or maybe even in post-grad studies, they start getting you involved in actually doing what you've been studying to do. That's the way Bible colleges typically work. I know when I was in Bible college, they assigned us some ministry and that ministry might be something like helping out in Awanas once a week or maybe going down to the local jail and preaching a message, which none of that's wrong. None of that's bad. It's good to be involved in local church ministries.

But if we go to the biblical approach, is they're being trained for ministry. By the time it's done, all of Asia had heard the gospel. The ministry had expanded from there. There's this relationship that you can't separate between learning about the one and true God and learning Bible doctrine and doing the ministry and reaching people with the gospel and discipling others. You can't separate the two. You can't divorce the two. And so many times I think in Chilean church culture, to not say American church culture, it's easy for men to understand, okay, I need to be saved. And once I'm saved, I want to learn more about the Bible and there's some things that I need to straighten up in my life and the way that I think and the way that I act. And I want to get my family in line and following biblical principles. And once we kind of check a few boxes, then we can kind of just get involved in the flow of ministry of a local church that might not produce filling the city with the doctrine of Christ. What could be changed? What should be changed in my own life, in our ministry there in Chile? What could be changed? What should be changed in your own heart, in your own life, in your own ministry, so that we're not satisfied with just sending missionaries to the field and having great ministries in a local church, but that we're honestly accepting the responsibility to fill our city with the doctrine of Christ. It's an important thing to think about. And I don't speak this as someone that, all right, I'm speaking down to because we've accomplished. No, I'm speaking as I'm quite challenged about the matter. And we're a decade and a half or so into church planning there in Chile.

And I think the guys that we're working with are much like the missionary that has gone to work with them. They can easily get head down and focused on things that are important. But when I read this in the Bible, while we've been back on furlough and I've been praying about it, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine so that all they which dwelled in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks, all. Well, I think there's a few applications that we can think about and I would like to challenge you with. The first one is keep training men for ministry. Keep training men for ministry. If we go back to the time of Jesus, what did Jesus do? What was the most effective way to fill Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ? Well, he did meet with the masses on occasions and he preached to the masses. Jesus did. But it wasn't that often. His main focus was preparing the apostles, preparing the disciples, preparing those men, mentoring them, discipling them, investing his life in them.

You've heard it so many times here. He spent time. He called them to himself. He spent time with them. And then after spending time, he sent them out. And we start reading the first few chapters of Acts and the authorities recognized you men, you've been with Jesus. And the practical application of that mentor relationship with Christ was that the ministry was done. And I think that we need to keep strong mentoring others, preparing others, training others, and not just the missionaries that go out. And not just the ones that are deacons, but men that have a heart for Jesus and a heart to see people reach with the gospel. We all must keep training men. So we go back to Chile. What's one of our primary goals going back? To train more men for ministry. To do everything we can to follow that example that we see with Jesus, we see with Paul, we see through the New Testament. Training more, training more men that can go out and do the ministry as we're seeing Paul and we're seeing Peter do here in the text that we've read this evening. But the second thing is, I think we need to be committed to the

Great Commission. And not just the Great Commission, because when we hear that, we think missions, right? We think missions. But if we go back and read texts that we're all very familiar with, for example, in Matthew 28, verse number 19, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing 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 way, even unto the end of the world. Amen. What starts off there is talking about teaching all nations. We go and we teach all nations. And the idea there is that we teach them. We share the gospel with them. We make disciples. We help those that are unbelievers to become believers. How can we apply this when we think about being committed to the Great Commission? Well, we should all be evangelizing, right? If we're going to fill the city with the doctrine of Christ, then it's the responsibility of all of us to share the gospel with others. To share the gospel with others. Every Christian is called by God to share the gospel with others. And as we think about that and we evaluate our own hearts, how often are we sharing the gospel with others? How often are we taking the simple plan of salvation and entering into those conversations where they call it sometimes confrontational evangelism? Because sometimes evangelism is more of a social thing where I'm going to try to be a good neighbor and maybe they'll kind of catch on and maybe they'll ask me why I am the way I am and I can point them to Jesus. But the confrontational approach that you see in the book of

[ 21 : 10 ] Acts, they're going face to face. They're going into groups of people and they're proclaiming the truth. And it is oftentimes confrontational. It's not something that they were really expecting to hear or wanting to hear, but they needed to hear it. They needed to hear it. I remember the first person that I led to the Lord. I was so nervous. I grew up in church. I wasn't saved till I was 16. When I was a child, a young child, I made a profession of faith. Didn't really understand things too well. And as a teenager, had zero heart for God or for anything spiritual. As an unbeliever, doesn't have any heart for that. And I realized that I was unsaved and I put my faith in Christ and things changed dramatically.

Praise the Lord for that. And I remember maybe a year or so went by and I was talking with a good friend of mine that was here on Bethelview, not too far from where we're at today. And we were both 16 at the time, maybe 17. And we had met up at a certain place. He had parked his car. We went somewhere and we were coming back and I was going to drop him off. And we began to talk about important things in life. And he started sharing a bit of things that were on his heart. It was, I don't know, 1130 or so at night.

I'm pretty sure I was past my curfew. I'm not sure how all that worked out. But here he was opening up. And I asked him if he was saved. If he knew if he were to die, he would go to heaven. If he had placed his faith in Christ and he hadn't. And there in that moment, I thought, all right, now is the opportunity. I need to share my faith. Show this guy what the Bible says and how he can be saved. But I was so nervous. I didn't know what to say or where to start. And all the things that I had learned, you know, as a child, memorizing different verses, it just all went completely away. But I had a track that was close by there in the car. And I pulled out the track, opened it up, and I read the track out loud to my friend. And at the end, he bowed his head and put his faith in Christ. And he's a member today at Lighthouse Baptist in Dawsonville and helping out and serving there in that church.

What a blessing. I don't think that everyone that I've shared the gospel with is still in church serving Jesus. But the first one is praise the Lord. But I remember after doing that, just being encouraged that, all right, I think I can do this. All right, I need to go back and refresh up a bit. Took my Bible and I noted down in the first text that I was going to look at to go through the plan of salvation. And all right, I know where I'm going to start. I can memorize one text and then I'm going to write beside it the next text. And then I'll go to that next one. And then I'm going to write down the next one. So I had a roadmap. Don't give me another Bible. I'll I can only lead somebody to the Lord with my Bible. But that's that's the way it was in those those early days. And, you know, oftentimes I'm there in Chile and I'm working with a young Christian and and maybe sometimes someone that's not a young Christian but has never had the the boldness or maybe the training or the help. I say training is probably a bad word because you don't need that much. Just get a track and read it. You're you've got the baseline level of what you need to share the gospel with someone else. But I wouldn't it be a great thing if you were to decide that I want to be involved in sharing the gospel with others. And even though it might be a bit uncomfortable or a bit awkward or a bit difficult, I want to do that on a regular basis. I want to plan on sharing the gospel with friends, with family, with neighbors through ministries of the local church. I encourage you to do that as we think about evangelizing. We can we can learn how and get a bit of a refresher on on how to do that. Many of you already is something that you already know. So I encourage you to pray for those opportunities. Pray for those opportunities. Are you praying daily for the opportunity to share the gospel with someone? Are you praying daily for God to prepare hearts of people that you'll interact with so you can share the gospel with them? If we're not praying, we're probably not expecting. And if we're not expecting and praying, then those moments that come about, we might pass over quickly. But if we're praying and we're expecting the Holy Spirit that nudges us a bit as we're interacting with people, we can share the gospel with others. And these are things that I want to encourage our people about.

As we go back into Chile, let's have a heart to fill the city with the gospel. Let's have a heart to train more men, a heart to evangelize those that are lost, praying for opportunities, sharing the gospel each week, even daily if someone is able. You know, wouldn't it be neat thinking about the Chilean churches if we were to set up a plan, a strategic plan, think about every idea possible, have a brainstorming session of how can we fill the city with men that know the truth? We're not responsible to convert them, but we're responsible to reach them, right? So how can we reach them? How can we reach the men? How can we reach the women? How can we reach the teenagers and the schools and the kids? And how can we use whatever social media or tool that we have close at hand? What can we do? If our sole responsibility was to fill this city and as a byproduct, filling the whole world as people are saved and trained and send out, what would I do differently? As I evaluate my own heart, I think small and sometimes large adjustments would be made. But not only do we need to think about training people and think about evangelizing others, we're committed to the Great Commission, but also discipleship. Discipleship is such an important thing. We read in the Bible people being saved, they're never being saved, separated from becoming a follower of Christ. The natural conclusion there is following Jesus. And you've heard it many times, discipleship is not a series of lessons. A series of lessons is a tool that can help us to guide the process a bit and hit a few milestones that are important, but it's life on life. It's spending time with someone. It's getting together with another man on a regular basis that has set time, set place and asking them, how are things going in your life? And what questions do you have from the Bible? And how can I help you? And let's talk about some things. What are your struggles? And let's just write those down. If you don't know the answer, you got, we'll look at this next week. And you have a week to try to brush up and ask questions from others. But are we engaging others? Are we teaching others the Word of God? Are we discipling other men? So I go back to Chile. I keep bringing this back to Chile so you don't think that we got it all figured out. There's so many men in our local churches that God's done amazing things in their life. And so many men that have grown and we've seen them come from so far from Jesus to being saved. And now they have that sweet spirit. But are they investing their time in others? Are they now taking what they've learned and pouring that into someone else? The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, and ye became followers of us. Paul says there with Titus, and I'm sorry, there with Silas and Timothy says, and you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction. The next verse or the next chapter in verse number 14, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, for ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews. And it talks about how these people went through trials and tribulations, and you all are kind of following in that same line of activity, and you're learning from another church. But in that first part there, Paul talks about how they had invested in the young believers, and the young believers followed them as they followed Jesus. This idea of having a young Christian that you're mentoring, that you're encouraging, that you're helping, is not only a good idea and a novel approach, it's a biblical commandment that we're called to make disciples. We're called to make disciples.



[ 28 : 58 ] You know, in our churches in Chile, I want to create, and some of the churches, they already have this culture, but whenever a man comes to the church for the first time, a visitor, which shouldn't be our only fishing spot for disciples, but in those cases when somebody new comes in, it's so encouraging when three or four men are hitting me up after the service saying, all right, I've been waiting for somebody, can I get them? We don't, all three want to attack them and say, hey, let's meet together and study the Bible, and I want to get to know you, but one of them does, and they're just itching and waiting for that opportunity, for any opportunity possible. The greatest opportunities outside the church when you're reaching people with the gospel and then bringing them along in that process, but wouldn't it be a great thing if you were to decide, 2020, I don't want to waste any time. I'm going to start sharing the gospel on a regular basis. I want to find somebody that I can disciple, somebody that I can pour my life into, and if you don't know how to do it well, find one of the guys that feels real comfortable with it, and ask him if you can go along with him for three or four or five weeks and just kind of watch it to strengthen a bit your understanding of the whole thing, and then jump out and help somebody.

Invest your life in others. This church in Jerusalem had a lot of faults, a lot of things that didn't go real well. Peter struggling with racism every now and then and not doing what he's supposed to do, but they filled their city with the gospel. Paul, a little bit later on, working with a group of people, teaching them and training them, before you know it, a large area had heard the gospel, had heard the gospel, and what could God do through you? As a group of men, if we were to take ownership of, yeah, we're supposed to reach the world, yeah, we're going to send missionaries, yeah, we're going to partner together, yeah, we're going to do crazy things to make a difference, but on a micro level, I'm going to do everything possible to make a difference and win some people to Jesus this year and disciple some people in the basics of the Word of God. Maybe you've already started discipling the people and you're doing that faithfully. Maybe you could add a second one this year. Wouldn't it be good?

Just add an extra schedule, an extra day when you're going to meet with somebody in the morning before you go off to work or whatever you might do. Be encouraged to lean into the Great Commission, being committed to it, and asking God how He can use you.

Thank you.