

Church Planting Conference Thursday Night

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[0 : 00] These sessions were recorded at the Church Planned Conference hosted by the Our Generation Training Center and Vision Baptist Church. It is our desire that you'll be able to learn from these great speakers as they talk about the topic of church planting.

Well, thank you very much for that number. Can I move this mic out of the way, Pastor? Is that okay? Great. Good. It makes it a little easier for me. Take your Bibles and turn with me to Acts chapter 1. It is a joy to be here. I want to thank Pastor Gardner for having me, allowing me to come.

I, you know, didn't expect an invitation. I don't get many invitations any longer. Even some of my good friends do not invite me to come and speak.

They're afraid that I'm too ill to do that because of the cancer and so on. But I'm thankful that your pastor has allowed me to come. And every meeting, and I told him this when we booked the meeting, that, you know, I could get right down to the very last few days and not be able to come.

I knew that that was the case, but thankful the Lord has allowed me to do this. I had, for those of you that do not know, I had radiation for cancer. I have a tumor that is, it's bladder cancer in my lung.

[1 : 16] It's metastatic bladder cancer, stage four. That is the third tumor now is around the bronchial area. And I had 15 days of radiation in August, September, all the way through the middle of September.

And so I canceled really all of my meetings, but two this fall. And it was this meeting and one, our national meeting in Canada, I attended that meeting.

And really those were the only two meetings other than some just Sunday meetings that were at home that I could get to some of the Canadian churches. We live in Barrie, Ontario. But I really felt like it was important that I come here.

I wanted to come here. Heard about this ministry. And I want to sit down with the pastor and talk about things other than doctrine. You know, just the two of us where, you know, us old guys can talk instead of you, but you're young guys around.

But, but about how he's put this together. I am intrigued. I really am. And I'm very thankful that the Lord has allowed me to be here. And we want to, we want to do all we can to help.

[2 : 26] I am impressed with what the Lord is doing here. Pastor, thank you so much for having us. Thank you for the accommodations, for all that you've done to the Canfield. I don't know where you are, but you have just been, oh, he's not here.

Okay. No, he's back there in the back. But thank you so much for your help. You've been very good to us and very kind to us and looking after us. We appreciate that so, so very much. I want to introduce my wife, honey, if you'd stance.

My wife, Beth. My wife of 41, two, something like that years. And she's been a real trooper, real trooper over the last four years.

Since June of 2007, I have really, really put her through a, through trial after trial after trial. Not of my own making, really, but three different times.

This is the third time that my life has been in jeopardy during that period of time. In 2007, I fell off a ladder. I remained in very critical condition for a number of days.

- [3 : 26] Then in 2009, my heart stopped after a stress test. I did great on the stress test. I just failed the bonus question. We were getting ready to plant the church for Harley Snow.
- One of the Snow boys is here. And Harley, we were up in Worchester, Ohio, and working on that church plant. And I was having this chest pain.
- And I had to leave and go home. I brought in one of my staff and worked with Pastor Adkins to reproduce the church and get everything done. Go home. And to see the doctor, thinking this was a heart problem.
- You know, it was really an inflamed breastbone from the fall off the ladder two years before. And so I'm there on a Wednesday night. And the pastor said, Brother Jess, if you need to come up and tell folks why you're here.
- You know, why are you home? You're not supposed to be home for four weeks. You're out planting churches. What are you doing home? And so I got in the pulpit. And my, you know, being the kind of person that I am, I sort of made light of it.
- [4 : 26] I said, well, you know, I've got a little bit of chest pain. I've got to go see the doctor. And so I went to see the doctor yesterday. And he said, I have to have a stress test tomorrow. And so I'm going to stay up tonight and study. I've never had one of these.
- So I'm going to study for it. And I really made light of it. I shouldn't have, but I did. And so I go in for the stress test the next day and get on the treadmill. And I was on 11 minutes before I could get my heart rate up to 150.
- I just, the lady, the doctor, she said, my wife's sitting just outside this room that I'm in. And she said, you've done extremely well. I mean, for 59 years old, you're in excellent, excellent condition.
- And so she said, I'm going to stop it. I said, well, you're going to let me have a cool down. She said, no, we're just going to cut it off. And you'll sit down in the cool down chair. So I sat down in the chair. And immediately my heart rate went from 150 to 60 in one minute.
- And then 60 to 30 the second minute increased a little bit. And at three minutes, my heart stopped. And so my wife is sitting just outside. This doctor was her doctor, really, a Christian lady.
- [5 : 29] She called for the crash cart that wasn't in the room. And after 35 seconds, my heart started before they, you know, hit those paddles on me.
- I guess I was afraid of that and decided I better get out of this thing. You know, so my heart started again. And they put me in intensive care, put a pacemaker in. And one of the ladies who was a nurse in our church, she got into intensive care.
- She wasn't supposed to. It was just supposed to be family. So she gets in there and she's a black lady from the islands. She gets in. She said, Brother Jessup, I have a question. Her daughter was with her.
- She said, I have a question. Did you see Jesus? I said, Deanna, you know, when I came out of that, my gown was soaking wet. So it must have been pretty warm wherever I was. Oh, Brother Jessup, did you see that?
- But the Lord spared me that time. And then it was because of that that they did a CT scan where they found the, well, it was a problem with blood flow that they did a CT scan and found the tumor that eventually showed up the cancer that is in my lung.
- [6 : 39] And but the Lord has been so good to us. Just so good to us. But this dear lady has been a trooper through it all. And I just praise the Lord for her. Her mother lives in South Carolina and she was planning on staying over there with her mother during this time.
- I was going to come over here. And when she found out that I was doing six sessions in two days, she said, oh, no, no, no, no. I'm going with you. I did not. So so I am on a leash and it is a very short leash most of the time.

But it is a joy to be here. And I did not know that this was the home of World Vision. I, you know, I didn't notice that until the I just saw this thing down here says World Vision.

You know, I've seen it on TV all these years. I did not know this was the place. That's good to know. That's really good to know. Maybe we should not put that out on the Internet because that might be copyrighted.

That name. Just a thought. But it's I just thoroughly enjoyed this. I love being around you young men and and and the excitement that you have.

[7 : 45] It's great to see what the Lord is doing here. And I'm just thrilled with it. The Lord has blessed us, my wife and I, with the ministry to help churches start churches. We've given our lives to this.

We've spent 40 years at church planting. We have a display. There's some literature out there. If you'd like to pick up some of those things that explain some of the things that we've been talking about. And over the years, God has allowed us to be involved in a lot of churches being planted.

We don't plant churches. We help churches plant churches. We help churches start churches. And so really, my wife and I have only started two churches. That was when we pioneered churches back in the 1970s and 1980s.

From that time on, all we've done is just work with local churches. And every church has been started out of a local church. And we're thankful for that. And I tell you, we need to get back to it.

We need to get back to it. Tonight, I want to speak on the Jerusalem church and church planting. So take your Bibles. We'll begin reading in verse 3 of this passage. And read down through verse 9 of Acts chapter 1.

[8 : 46] If you'd stand, please, with me. As I like to do. I don't know what the practice is here. But if you'd stand, we'll begin reading in verse 3 in Acts chapter 1. And read down through verse 9.

The Bible says, I would make a comment there, but I'm going to go on.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times of 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 ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, into the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.

So this is the last time the Lord Jesus spoke to the church. The last time he spoke to them before he went back to heaven. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Pray for your blessing tonight. We thank you for the wonderful time we've had together.

[10 : 03] We thank you for the Holy Spirit and his leading. We thank you, Lord, for strength. I pray for strength again tonight, that you would give me the strength that I need.

Give me clarity of thought and speech as I try to minister the word of God. And, Lord, may the word of God be used in a great and unique way in each life. We thank you for the men here that are going to various places around the world.

We thank you for their burden, their concern, their dedication. We thank you for this church and their concern and dedication for that. We thank you for the school that they have here, training these men.

And, Lord, we know that there's still much to do. We thank you for this pastor who has a great burden to see churches planted. And, Lord, we pray for this church. May this church go forward with a great church planting ministry as the church of Jerusalem had, not just to reach this area, but to reach this county, this metropolitan area, this state, this country, to reach a world with the gospel.

Bless our time now in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you. You may be seated. In 1900, there was a Bible-preaching church for every 500 Americans.

[11 : 21] Now, they were not all Baptist churches. As you already know, I'm a strong Baptist. But these churches were not all Baptist churches. But they were churches that used the King James Bible, that preached the gospel, and regularly gave an invitation.

One for 1900, one for every 500 Americans. Today, it is estimated that there's a church that uses the King James Bible, that preaches the gospel, that gives an invitation for every 50,000 Americans.

The vast majority of those, I guess I'm guessing when I say this, but I'd say 95% of those are Baptist churches. It may be higher.

But one for every 50,000 Americans. Every year, we lose 4,000 churches.

They die. Close their doors. Now, in one way, that's good because we can get some buildings in some of those situations. Every year, more independent Baptist churches embrace a contemporary church philosophy than we start.

[12 : 35] We're losing more than we are gaining. Dr. David Gibbs says that the United States has dropped to 18th in sending missionaries around the world from number one.

Who would have thought, 10 years ago, who would have thought there would have been a controversy on saying Merry Christmas in the United States?

Look where we are today. Look what's going on in our nation today. Look at what is being tolerated. Look at what is being voted on and accepted in states today.

There are six states that have legalized sodomite marriages. Six states. Who would have dreamed that would happen in this country?

A young lady in Las Vegas years ago, a number of years ago, had her graduation speech censored with the name of Jesus Christ taken out. It is not uncommon any week you listen to the news, Fox News probably particularly, to hear of something like this happening in our nation today.

[13 : 47] In Canada, it is worse. One third of all Canadians live within six hours of the greater Toronto area with only one soul winning independent Baptist church for every 200,000 people.

Each year it gets worse. How did we end up like this? What happened? What happened to us? I honestly believe it's because we have not followed a pattern found in the scripture for church planning.

Our problem is not in the White House. Our problem is in the church house. That's where our problem is. It's right here. Look, it's not going to be solved either next November or sometime down the road.

It's not going to be solved by the Tea Party, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party. It's only going to be solved by local churches that get a hold and go back to a grassroots effort of planting churches.

And I can prove that. We must develop a biblical philosophy of ministry in this area if we're going to make a difference in reaching the world with the gospel. And listen, I've been saying this for years and years and years.

[15 : 10] We've got to get back to the place where church planting is a vital part of our ministry. You know, we went through these phases. We went through the bus ministry phase.

You'd go to these fellowship meetings and they'd say, Well, how many buses are you running and how many people are you bringing in on your bus? We went through the Christian school phase and that phase. And we'll go through another phase.

I'd like to see us get back to a church planting phase. I was out at a leadership conference this past July in California. We'd gone out there for two reasons, not only to go to the leadership conference but to go back down to Mexico.

We've gone there several times for treatment for the cancer and so on. And as I was attending the church planting meeting with Brother Calvert, Brother Calvert had a meeting this past, in fact, it ended today, started on Monday through today.

I was supposed to be there at that meeting and I did not go this year to that meeting. I went last year. But Brother Calvert said, You know, there seems to be a resurgence of church planting in the last few years.

[16 : 14] And I believe that's true. And I'm glad we've been able to have a part in it. But we're going to have to have a great deal.

We talk about it. We talk a great deal about church planting. But we do little to change our practice in our churches to get anything accomplished. And here's the reason.

The reason is because let's have all those missionaries stand. All of them stand. The reason is because we think it's their job to plant churches.

And it's not their job. Thank you. You may be seated. Now, if you did not stand, stand. If you did not stand with those guys, now stand.

Okay. It's your job to plant churches. It's not their job. It's your job. You say, What? My job? I already got a job.

[17 : 16] Thank you. You may be seated. Before we leave tonight, and listen, I've just met your pastor. But I know enough already about him today and these young men that are training here to know that he believes the Bible and that he's taught you to believe the Bible.

And I believe you believe the Bible. Do you believe the Bible? Okay. If I can prove this to you from the Bible, will you do it? That's the thing. If I can show you what the Bible says.

Now, these guys have grilled me today on some issues. And one of them, they say, Well, is that the only verse? Well, I said, I got one. How many do you have? One to none beats you. Oh, all the time.

If I got one verse and you got none, I win. You know? And I do. That's just the way it is. I got one verse.

They got none. I come out on top on that one. Don't tell me what the Baptists believe. Just tell me what the Bible says. Okay? Because it's what does the Bible say.

[18 : 21] Here's what the Bible says. I've been in, I've been, you know, and I've been on this thing with the guy. And he finally said, Well, you know, well, you know, I don't have an answer for that one.

Well, that means I win. Okay? Now, if I can prove to you. If I can prove to you that it's your job to plant churches, will you do it? If the Bible says it.

That's all I'm asking you tonight. If I can prove it to you. Okay, let's look and see what the Bible says. See how church planning got started. All right. First of all, let's look at the charge given to the church.

In verse, and we can look at verse 8, but let's go back, first of all, to the direction of the church in Matthew chapter 28. We looked at this this morning, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time here because I have other things to say.

But in Matthew chapter 28, you'll see the great commission that is found here. And this is the direction that was given to the church. I'm looking for something here to put in a note, but I don't see it there.

[19 : 22] So I'll just hold my finger there in Acts because we're going to go back there. But in Matthew chapter 28, notice the direction that he gave the church. Throughout the Gospels, the Lord taught the church what they were supposed to do.

In Matthew 16, 18, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 18, what is it, verse 15, he talks about the church and the discipline of the church.

Listen, that's not talking about some universal thing that's way out there in the sky someplace. That's talking about a group of believers. You've got to tell it to the church. He taught the disciples.

He taught the Christians in the gospel about the church. This group of believers that were gathered here, these 120 or so that were gathered just before he goes back to heaven, he had taught them what the church was about.

And one of the things he gave them was what we call the great commission. It's found in Matthew 28. He gave them this charge. They were to evangelize, teach all nations. Look at verse 18. Go ye therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you in law and with you all the way, even unto the end of the world.

[20 : 34] Amen. This is the direction he gave them. He said, look, I want you to go out and I want you to evangelize. I want you to go out and teach all nations, win folks to Christ. I want you to baptize them.

They are to follow the Lord and believers in baptism. Thirdly, you are to mobilize them. You are to disciple them and train them. Now, how do you do that?

You do that by planting a church. You can't do that outside the local church. You've got to have a church to have baptism. And so this is the direction. The completion of the great commission is church planting.

That's what he told them to do. Now, notice the desire of the church. On your way back to Acts, stop by Luke, if you would. Luke 24. Luke 24. And, honey, I'll leave that water down there.

Would you bring it up here, please? Thank you. Luke 24. Please look at verse 49.

[21 : 40] I want you to notice the desire of the church. And, behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you. But tarry. Now, notice this. He says, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.

So what did he tell them? He said, look, I'm going to send the Holy Spirit. Now, wait a second. Don't you leave Jerusalem until you get the Holy Spirit. He tells them that there in Luke.

Well, I go over to Acts chapter 1, verse 4, and notice what he says here. And being assembled together with them, this is the Lord being assembled with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, you have heard of me.

He said, look, now just hang on a second. Don't rush out of here. You wait until the Holy Spirit comes. Don't leave Jerusalem yet.

You wait until the Holy Spirit comes. All right? Now, there are a lot of young guys here. I don't know how many of them just got married or, you know, or planning on getting married.

[22 : 44] But let me give you some advice. It's not a good idea to go out, sit in the car, and blow the horn. It's not a good idea. I was down in Tennessee with this preacher, and we were in the car.

The children were in the car. His wife was still in the house. We were sitting in the car. It was running. And I reached over and blew the horn. Oh, man, you should have seen her when she came out that door. When she came out the door, she closed that door.

She looked at him, and he said, I didn't do it. He did it. I looked at her and said, I didn't do it. Man, she was too. What are you buying a horn at me for, you know?

Guys, listen. We bring this upon ourselves. It's our fault this happens. Here's how. Look. Never buy your wife a nice gift. You buy, look.

If you buy her shoes, and I violated the only thing. I took my wife out just before coming here and paid for a pair of shoes. She has a new pair of shoes. That's going to make me late for church one day. Because she has to match a dress with the shoes and a purse.

[23 : 50] And I'm telling you, every time you have to match something, it just takes another few minutes. Has your wife ever done this to you guys? This shoe or this shoe? You know? Make a choice so you can get to church.

You know? But have you ever stood at the door, Bible in one hand, keys in the other, and she says, not that my wife has ever done this, because she gives me shots every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, so I have to be careful what I say.

Don't you dare walk out that door until I am ready to go. You're standing there, Bible in one hand, keys in the other. Let's go.

We're going to be late for church. Don't you leave until I'm ready to go. That's what the Lord Jesus was saying to the church. They're standing there saying, come on, let us out of here.

We want to go plant churches. And Jesus said, no, wait a second. Don't depart yet. You've got to get the Holy Spirit. What was their desire? Their desire was to get out of Jerusalem and go plant churches.

[24 : 47] Twice he told them, hey, just hang on here. Just hang on. We're going to go do this, but you've got to get the Holy Spirit. They had the desire.

Thirdly, notice the dedication. Look at verse 8, again, of chapter 1. And you shall receive power. After that, the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me.

Now, that word witness doesn't mean to hand out gospel tracts. You know, I just picked some up tonight. I should have had some earlier. But it doesn't mean to take a gospel tract and give it to somebody and say, oh, let me tell you about the Lord.

That's not what that word witness means. We get our English word martyr from that Greek word. And it means one who is willing to sacrifice everything. And the sad fact is, most of our believers today in our churches are not willing to sacrifice very much to see churches planted.

But these people were. They were willing to sacrifice everything to plant churches.

[25 : 53] Now, I pastored a church like that. We started five churches in four years. They spent thousands and thousands of dollars to start new churches.

They spent thousands of hours knocking on doors, going to other communities, holding meetings. We held two 13-day meetings in 1990, back-to-back, 26 days, with one Saturday night in between that we broke the two meetings up, where they went to church every night.

Now, not everybody went every night. Only a few of us did. They spent over eight grand. That was back in 1990. We had one other church to help us. And we started two churches on the same Sunday.

They knew what sacrifice was all about. Are you willing to do that? I don't know too many people that are willing to do that anymore. And I don't even know that I would recommend that we do it again.

But what are we willing to do? These people, Jesus said to them, But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses. You're going to make some sacrifices in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth.

[27 : 14] Yeah, we're willing to reach our Jerusalem. Oh yeah, let's get out, knock on doors, bring people in, have a big crowd on Sunday. We're willing to have a faith promise offering where we take a big offering and send our missionaries out.

But what about our Judea and Samaria? What about those people that live 35 or 40 minutes away from our church? That don't have what we have. Where there are two or three families that live out there that drive to our churches, so they have good preaching.

And the pastors end up saying, Oh yeah, we're reaching that area, we've got three families that come from over there. Oh yeah, they come because they believe like we believe. But nobody who gets, you can't reach anybody out there.

I was up north, and this church I was in, they were questioning this philosophy. And one of their deacons was taking the class I was taking.

I asked him, I said, so you're a deacon here? He said, yes. I said, how long have you been a part of this church? He said, 20 years. I said, how far do you live from this church? He said, 25 minutes. I said, let me ask a question.

[28 : 16] Do you go soul winning? He said, every week I go soul winning. I said, how many of your neighbors in 20 years have you won to Christ and got them to come to church with you? He said, not one. Not one.

No, they won't drive that far to go to church. You've got to put a church where they live. In that Judea. Put a church where they live so they can go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night and be disciplined like they're supposed to in a local church.

That's what the Lord Jesus is teaching. That's the charge he gave to the church. Now notice the comforter fills the church. Beginning in chapter 2, we don't have time to look at this in detail, but the early church experiences revival.

I mean, the Holy Spirit comes and revival breaks through on the church. It resulted in great things. This is what the church had been waiting for. People are saved.

People are healed in chapter 3. We see that and I mean, it's just unbelievable what takes place. As revival comes on this church in Jerusalem.

[29 : 22] And they also experience great results. 3,000 people are saved on one day. And by chapter 4 and verse 4, within weeks or months, there are 5,000 men. I mean, the church is growing by leaps and bounds.

It is growing. The church is. And they had a great reputation. The Bible says in chapter 5, verse 11, And great fear came upon all the church, and as many as heard these things.

And word began to circulate. Hey, you've got to watch out for that First Baptist Church in Jerusalem, man. Those people. Things are happening over there. And the leadership in the church, they were saying, you know, we're the talk of the town.

Man, this is the place to be. We want to make sure we keep this going. Can you imagine? Think about it. Can you imagine next Sunday coming to church and your seat is taken?

I'm just looking around for folks that I think are here on a regular basis. And I don't really know, but this young man in the maroon shirt, is that your regular seat? No?

[30 : 29] No. It's right back there. Somebody's sitting in your regular seat. You should have kicked them out. But anyway, it comes to church and somebody's sitting in his seat, you know. Or you come and somebody's sitting in your seat.

And you say, what in the world is going on? Man, they're bringing in new chairs. And so you bring a chair in and find a place to sit. And the preacher preaches, gives the invitation, 50 people get saved. Man, Sunday night you come back, 50 more get saved.

Place is packed out, starting to fill up over here. Preacher immediately says, tomorrow night we'll have meetings. You start Monday night. Another 100 people are saved. This building is packed. They're up along the edge.

And by the end of the week, you can't meet in this building. You find another facility here in Atlanta. You know, maybe, I don't know, that Stanley guy's church or something. You get that or whatever. And the next issue in the Sword of the Lord, revival at World Vision Baptist Church.

Your pastor's picture on the front page of the Sword of the Lord. Wow. Would you all of a sudden want to be leaving to go out and plant a church?

[31 : 42] No. You'd want to be right there because that's where the action is. In fact, there would be people coming from all over the South, from all over the United States.

If that happened here, there would be people coming here to get in on what God was doing. Right? I mean, that's just the way it is. We can't blame this church. But in Jerusalem, the very people who were excited about leaving now are not leaving.

They didn't leave Jerusalem. And I understand that. I mean, who would want to leave? Sunday morning service? The offering is taken. Ananias comes.

Peter says, is this how much you sold your land for, Ananias? Yes, sir. That's what we sold it for. And he drops dead. And Peter says to the congregation, folks, listen, Ananias is dead.

He lied to the Holy Spirit. He actually sold the land for more than that. And God killed him. And ushers, I want you to come carry him out. Now, our service this evening is at 6 o'clock. His wife is going to be here.

[32 : 52] I mean, who's going to want to go anywhere else to church? I mean, you're going to go home and say to your wife, man, you've got to go back with me tonight. You're not going to believe what happened this morning. Who's going to run off to Judea and Samaria and start a church?

Not me, man. I want to be in church that night. See what happens. She comes. She drops dead. I mean, you're not going to want to miss a service. I can understand their thinking here.

I mean, this church had a huge reputation. And there are churches today in America that will not plant churches because they're afraid some of their people may go.

I've had pastors say that to me. And it is sad, but it's true. I've helped churches start churches, and pastors have said to me, no, our people can't go on Sunday night.

They've got to be here on Sunday night for church. We're like, who died and made you the queen? I mean, what's so special about you? I mean, come on.

[33 : 55] There's a world that needs to be reached. And is it so important that we have a certain number that come and hear us preach instead of getting out there and doing what they're supposed to do?

Give me a break, will you? Yeah. And this church sadly fell into that as God. And I can't blame them. I really can't blame them because, listen, things were happening there at that church.

They got caught up in the excitement. And all of a sudden, they don't leave. So what does God do? What does God do? Well, look, please, at the correction God brings to the church.

In chapter 5 and 6, there are problems within the church. First of all, there's the problem of deceit. In chapter 5, verses 3 to 5, the problem with Ananias and Sapphira, we've already talked about how they lied to the Holy Spirit.

God killed them. And then in chapter 6, we have the problem of division. The Grecian widows were not getting what the Hebrew widows were getting. And so there was this complaint and murmuring in the church.

[35 : 01] Now, can you imagine in a church where great revival and people are being saved and things are happening and these people are saying, well, you know, our widows are not getting what their widows are getting and we're really upset about it.

You know, it's like complaining about black walls. I don't know. I don't know. I walked in and thought it was a theater. Sorry, dear.

I'm sorry. Please be careful with the shot, you know, tomorrow. I get a Monday, Wednesday, Friday. But I don't know what, but I guarantee you, same kind of thing goes on in our churches.

Deceit and division. Had it in the early church. Problems within. They had problems from without. They were arrested in chapter 4, verse 3. They were threatened in chapter 4 and verse 18. They were put in prison in chapter 5 and verse 18.

They are beaten in chapter 5 and verse 40. In chapter 7, verse 59, Stephen is stoned. It gradually builds up to chapter 8 and verse 1.

[36 : 07] Let's go there. Chapter 8 and verse 1. These problems within the church. God is allowing and bringing these problems to get the church to do what they're supposed to do.

Now, let's go back to America. I think you may be surprised what happens in a year and a half, a year from now.

You might be surprised what God is going to do. He is in complete control. And I have said for years, if we as a church, as churches, do not get on the stick and get something done, we're going to lose this country.

We're going to. And we cannot depend on anybody else to do it but those of us who hold to this philosophy. Because nobody else is going to do it.

You can go out. And I'm going to talk about this tomorrow. But you can go to all these big meetings that talk about revival and soul winning. They haven't accomplished one thing in America. I might have just made some friends mad.

[37 : 19] I don't know. But they haven't. And I'll show you that tomorrow. And God allowed this persecution to come to chapter 8 and verse 1.

And here's what it says. And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time, there was a great persecution against the church, which was at Jerusalem. And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

God allowed this persecution to build to the place where there was great persecution that was so great that the believers were forced out of Jerusalem.

Now, remember, in chapter 1, verse 4, they were ready to go. They didn't go. God allowed the persecution to come. And it got so bad that they had to scatter.

They were dispersed. They were like seed in the wind. They just had to get out. Didn't know where they were going. Just go. Just get out. Now, because of this, the church experienced and fulfilled God's plan for them.

[38 : 24] And if you look at verse 4, it's very clear what they did. Therefore, well, let's go back to verse 1 again and look at a couple of things. First of all, I want you to notice where they were scattered.

Where were they scattered? Judea and Samaria. Let's see. Chapter 1 and verse 8 said Judea and Samaria. Do you think that's just sort of coincidence?

I don't think so. He told them, go to Judea and Samaria. They didn't go. So he brings persecution and forces them to go to Judea and Samaria. I think that's pretty clear.

Notice who didn't go. And the Bible says they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles. Now, the apostles didn't go.

But the Bible says they were all scattered abroad. Now, you know, I'm not a real Greek scholar or anything like that. But I really think that word all, let me tell you what I think that means. I think it means all. Here's what I think it means.

[39 : 28] Preacher, we don't have any bus drivers this morning. Really? No, they're gone. Preacher, we don't have a choir this morning. Really?

Where are they? Well, they're gone. Preacher, we don't have any young people this morning. Really? Where's our young people? They're gone. Preacher, we don't have any ushers this morning.

Well, just get some other people to take the offering. Preacher, I don't think you understand. There's nobody in the pew to put any offering in the plate. They're gone. They're gone. Sunday morning came.

Sunday morning at the church in Jerusalem came. And the Bible says they were gone. Now, that's when most Baptist preachers climb the steeple and jump off.

They couldn't stand it. But if I read my Bible correctly, the Bible says that the persecution was so great that they were all scattered abroad except the apostles.

[40 : 33] Is that what your Bible says? It's right there. That's what it says. And I believe it. When Sunday came, nobody was there but the preachers.

All the laymen were gone, according to the Bible. Now, look at verse 4 and notice what they did.

Therefore, and by the way, there went their reputation down the tube. There went their reputation. I, G, you're over there at the church. You had a big split.

Everybody is gone. Ha, ha, ha. I don't know. Just go on. Verse 4.

Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Now, this word does not preach like mean preach behind the pulpit. That's not what that word means. We get our word evangelized from that word. They went out and told folks about the Lord.

[41 : 31] Throughout Judea and Samaria, thousands, tens of thousands. We don't know how many there were. All scattered abroad. And we could look at chapter 8. We don't really have time this evening to do so. But we could look at chapter 8 and chapter 9.

And we could see these churches being planted. Philip plants the church in Samaria. Goes down. The Ethiopian unit gets saved. Baptized. He goes on down to Ethiopia.

He goes up the coast planting churches. Preaching. Planting churches. Somebody goes to Damascus and plants a church there. We see that in chapter 9. I'm telling you, things were happening all over Judea and Samaria because these believers, laymen, like you, not preachers, laymen, went out and evangelized.

And told folks about the Lord and started churches. Now, I believe they did it through the church of Jerusalem. In chapter 8, you'll see that Peter and John go up to Samaria and help with this thing and take care of it.

This was all sort of falling together. But it was all started because laymen. Because God forced the laymen out of the church to go to other communities, witness to people, see people saved, baptized, and start churches.

[42 : 53] Now, I personally believe in Acts chapter 6, the men who were ordained there, had hands laid upon them, Peter or Philip being one of them, which is our example in chapter 8, were those who did the baptizing and led the church planting effort outside of Jerusalem.

Personally, that's what I believe. I can't prove it other than Philip. And I guess I got one verse. Has anybody got more than that? So, you know, I believe that they had a big part of that.

And these believers went out evangelizing and planting churches. You say, how do you know they planted churches? Well, look at chapter 9, verse 31. And notice the calm that comes to the church.

In chapter 9, verse 31, the Bible says this. Churches then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.

When you diagram the sentence, it is churches were multiplied. Churches popping up all over the place. New church. Here's a new church. There's a new church. There's a new church. There's a new church. It's happening on our mission field.

[44 : 06] Some of these men, they've been out there planting churches. Not a church. Churches. Churches. Well, what makes it different out there than here? Why shouldn't we be doing that out of our...

If we expect them to go out and do it, why aren't we doing it? And that's what was happening here. They were going out and churches were popping up.

This word churches is important because it's the first time the word churches is found. At this point, it was one church in Jerusalem. Now there are churches and churches are being multiplied. They had rest. They had rest. They had rest.

They had rest. They had rest. It means peace and tranquility. Now they still had some persecution. You'll see that in later chapters. But isn't it strange?

The government didn't change. The church did. I'm telling you, if we're going to have rest in America, it's not going to be because the government changes.

[45 : 06] It's because the church changes. It's because we have to do it. When the church in Jerusalem did what they were supposed to do, God gave them rest.

I think that's what the Bible says. And I don't think you can find anything else that it says differently. We have to trust God in this thing.

But in trusting God, we have to be about his business. And if we're not, he's going to allow the persecution and unrest to be here. And we're going to suffer. As long as we've got our heads stuck in the sand, we're going to lose this battle.

And I'm telling you, I'm preaching this stuff all over the country. And there are those who will continue to put their head in the sand and say, that's really not the way to do it. And, you know, I understand they have a different philosophy, a different thinking on it.

But how are we doing? Not very well. Not very well. Now, when this rest comes, these believers, many of them who had gone out of Jerusalem, I believe, returned.

[46 : 12] Not all of them, but some of them returned to Jerusalem. Back to their church in Jerusalem. Now go to chapter 11 and notice the change in the church, and I'll be done. Chapter 11, verse 19.

And we looked at this today, all these passages, but I do think it gives you a little different take on it this evening from this message. Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to Jews only.

So now we have the same believers as Acts chapter 8, verse 1. The same laymen. Okay, now these were still laymen. Chapter, verse 19 tells us this.

These were the same people of Acts chapter 8 and verse 1. Now they are traveling to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching, evangelizing, winning folks to Christ to start a church.

But now they're doing it on purpose. There they were scattered. Okay? They went out not knowing where they were going. Now they're going to these places on purpose.

[47 : 16] They planned it. My wife and I left Sumter, South Carolina yesterday about noon or whatever. We got on 521, went up 521, hit Interstate 20, came across 20 to 36, up 26 to 385 to 185, down 85, 85 to 321 or something, and came across McGinnis Ferry Parkway, hit Windward Boulevard or something, and ended up meeting Brother Canfield.

And when I saw him, I said, who are you and how did I get here? No. I came here on purpose. I traveled here. I planned it.

I left Canada a number of days ago. Brought my 243. I wanted to go hunting. I did go hunting for the first time in two years. Had a great time. Didn't shoot anything, but I had a great time.

Great time. I mean, you know, being a vegan, my diet has changed since the cancer, and so I'm a vegan, which means I don't eat meat, so it's shoot and release. You know, I kill it and then release it.

By the way, there is a group in Canada that really, this must be a real weird group, but they are shoot and release. They use tranquilizers. That's just dumb. You know, I can't use the word, you know what, because of children, but it starts with this, but they're just dumb.

[48 : 32] You know, there is that group in Canada. I heard about it the other day. But, I mean, look, we planned this trip. We planned to come here. That's what these people did. They planned to leave Jerusalem and go on this journey 200 miles all the way up to Antioch and preach the gospel.

Listen, that just didn't happen. The church put this thing together. You know why? Because their thinking changed. They began to develop a philosophy of ministry.

The layman in the church began to develop a philosophy of ministry and said, oh, this is our job. This is what we're supposed to be doing. We're supposed to be picking out places where we can go and plant a church.

Not only did the layman change in the church, but the leadership changed in the church. All right. Verse 20 says, and some of them, which were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching to the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Now, look at verse 22. When they get these people saved, the entitings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem. Now, how did they hear?

[49 : 41] CNN? CNN? I don't think so. Nobody watches that. All right. No. But somebody, they sent word back to the church in Jerusalem and said, hey, hey, guys, listen, we got a church started up here.

And the church in Jerusalem, look what they did. Then tongues of these things came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

So the church in Jerusalem had prepared Barnabas to pastor the church in Antioch. And he goes and becomes a pastor.

Now, the guy that we would call the church planter wasn't even there when the church was started. Boy, does that throw our philosophy in a big loop.

I'm not saying he shouldn't be. I'm just saying he wasn't. But, you know, and basically what we have done is we've just taken this philosophy of ministry and developed it to where churches, people from local churches like yours, go out to other communities, knock on doors, hold some get acquainted meetings, and get it ready for a pastor to pastor that church.

[50 : 57] And then put a pastor in place to pastor a new church. That's why we can do five this fall. That's why we've done 130 in the last 18 years. We average one new church, helping one new church every two months.

And those churches, those churches in the last 18 years, this year will give over \$2 million to missions. \$2 million to missions.

And it's all because local churches have gotten involved. But you know what? We're not even scraping the tip of the iceberg. We're just breaking the surface.

Just doing that. Now, I want to ask you a question. What if the church of Jerusalem refused to do that? What if they had said, ah, you know, man, we've got a good thing going.

Let's just stay here. What if they didn't go? We wouldn't be saved. We wouldn't be saved today. I want to ask you another question.

[52 : 00] Let me see if I can find a young person here. Young lady, come up here. Yeah, you. You're awake, aren't you? Good.

Yeah, there you go. What's your name? Maria, how old are you? 12 years old. I don't have any grandchildren. Quite that old. My oldest is 10. I want to ask you a question.

What kind of country is she going to have when she's 40? Look at what has happened in the last 10 years. What kind of America are you going to leave her?

It is frightening. Frightening. If we don't fulfill what God has said, what kind of country is she going to have?

Thank you, Maria. I've got 11 grandchildren, 10 and under. Preacher, you've got 16 grandchildren. What kind of country. What kind of country are they going to have? If we keep going the way we're going.

[53 : 07] Now, you look at the last 10 years, 15 years. If we keep going the way we're going, where's America going to be? I'm telling you, it scares me to death.

The only answer is church planning. This is the first mentioned principle of church planning in the scripture.

Now, for those of us that are Bible college students, we know that means something special. And I believe by following this pattern, we can get a lot done.

For pioneer, and I'm not against pioneer church planning, but when a church is pioneered here in the United States, what I mean by that is a guy goes out on his own, knocks on doors, rents a building, starts a church, you know, on his own.

One out of two do not survive two years. One out of two do not survive two years. Only two churches that we've helped start did not survive two years.

[54 : 11] Didn't make that. Now, there's about 10% now that have not survived, various reasons for that. But only two did not survive two years. That's a pretty good average over one out of two.

So we're at about one out of 60 is where we are. I certainly hope pastors will take a fresh look at the Jerusalem church and how God used them to plant churches.

And I certainly hope that you, as laymen in this church, will get behind this pastor. I thank God for pastors who have a great heart for church planting.

But pastors can't do it. It's got to be people like you that stood a moment ago that will roll up their sleeves and say, All right, preacher, we're with you.

Let's go out and plant churches like our church. Because if it doesn't get done, we're going to lose this country. And I don't want to see that happen.

[55 : 13] Let's bow for prayer. Father, we thank you for your word tonight. Thank you for these folks who have been so attentive. Father, I pray tonight that you'll help this church to even catch a fresh vision of what they can do to reach the world with the gospel through church planting.

Thank you for the young men who are here. Thank you for other pastors who are here. I pray you'll bless them as well. Thank you for the word of God that is clear in some of these things. Help us to be faithful to it.

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