Jason Holt Preaching

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. So Jason, let me think. I've known Jason a long time.

I've known Jason since before he was married. I've known Lori a long time. But anyway, this is one of the finest young men. If I could pick a model for what I want our ministries to look like around the world, if I could pick what I am excited and proud about, it's what's going on in Santiago, Chile.

I know that. I see it. I watch it. I know the young men he works with. I know the churches. I know his family. I know him. And you are blessed as a church that God would allow us to have families like the Holtz in our church and to have them working.

And we've got them all over the place. They're not the only ones. We have them all over the place. But tonight, as you listen, Jason will preach. Open your hearts. Open the Bible and learn. Come walk in. Brother, we don't have any dead times.

I'm going to keep talking until you get here anyway. So anyway, you listen tonight as Jason brings the message. I know you'll be blessed. Thanks, sir. Well, it's great to be back, as we said earlier. And we thank the Lord for this church.

And to be honest with you, our heart's desire in Chile is to start churches like Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda. It's an exciting thing to be a missionary on the field with a true heart to reproduce the church that one has been sent from.

My dad had probably one of the most important roles in my foundational years. He and Pastor Gardner preached my ordination back in, I guess it was 2001, 2002.

He went home to be with the Lord shortly thereafter. And Pastor Gardner filled that role of spiritual leadership, of a friend, of my family, a mentor.

And we're excited today to be a part of Vision Baptist Church. Now for several years, part of Vision Baptist Missions. And excited about what God's doing through this church around the world and the small part that we have there in Chile.

And I'd like to ask you, please, to open the Bible to the book of 1 Thessalonians chapter number 1. 1 Thessalonians chapter number 1. About a year, I guess it was two years and one month ago, I preached here for the Sunday service of the missions conference.

And we looked at verses 1 through 5. I like to pick up where we left off then. And we're going to pick up in verse number 6. And I think at this rate, by 2020, we should go through the book of 1 Thessalonians.

And so just trying to follow the pastor's model of expository preaching. And so 1 Thessalonians chapter number 1, verse number 5. Before we read here, the interesting thing that we find as you read the New Testament in the context of missions, so many things come to life.

Because many times we're in areas leading people to the Lord, starting churches that are comprised mainly of first generation Christians.

People that their parents and grandparents weren't believers. And they're the first ones in their family to put their faith in Christ. And you think about how can you really evangelize a city through national church planners.

How can we reach the world by training first generation Christians to reach their own people and then to leave their country? You know, many contexts there are different maybe than some of the contexts that we have enjoyed, or at least I have in my family coming from multiple generations of Christians.

But how can that be done? And sometimes we have the mindset, or maybe I'm the only one, that someone that is so new in the faith and has just been saved for 6 months or 12 months or 18 months, that that person has so far to go before they could actually be used in the ministry.

But we go back to God's Word and we find that the work that Paul did, the work that the different apostles did, was just that. They were going into areas, starting churches where churches had never been before, preaching the gospel, gathering together a group of new believers, and shortly thereafter, in many cases, the surrounding communities were being impacted by the gospel, and literally in their generation, they impacted the world.

And so those contexts of the books of the New Testament encouraged me as a missionary, knowing that being on the mission field, working with guys that are so new, that are so rough around the edges at the beginning, but we know that God can use them in a similar case, as we see here in this model church here, in the book of 1 Thessalonians.

And I think that we can learn a lot of principles that we can apply to our own life, whether you're a first-generation Christian, if you've been saved a few months, or if you come from years of being a follower of Christ, I think the example of this church can encourage all of us.

Let's start reading what the Bible says in verse number 5. The Bible says, Here we find Paul Silas, or Silvanus and Timotheus, Paul Silas and Timothy are writing the book here.

[5:28] These first few verses, they're kind of remembering all that God did, how the message was preached, the gospel is preached to this group of people, and how that message was preached in power, in the Holy Ghost, in much assurance.

It was a powerful message that changed their lives. And we see here in these following verses, the impact that the gospel had in their lives. Look what the Bible says in verse number 6.

And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost, so that ye were in samples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith that God word is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

[6:38] Let's pray together. Father, we thank you so much for this great text here. And our desire this evening is to be used by you, and to hear from you, and to study your word, and be changed by the principles of your word.

We thank you so much for a church that gives priority to preaching, and priority to your word. And I pray this evening, God, that all of our lives will be changed as we look into the truths that's found here.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. So how does the gospel change our lives? How does the gospel change lives of people on the mission field?

How, when we go into areas like happened just back in November of last year, into a community called Quilpue, that's about an hour and 45 minutes from Santiago, and we begin to preach the gospel in Iglesia Bautista Vision, if that sounds familiar, Vision Baptist Church in Quilpue, Chile, how does the gospel impact lives there on the mission field, here at home in Alpharetta?

How has the gospel been impacting people for centuries? Well, here we find that in verse 5, they preached the gospel. Verse number 5, For our gospel came not unto you in word only.

[7:49] It wasn't just a verbal message. It wasn't just some kind of lecture that they gave, but it was a powerful message. And look what the Bible says in verse number 6. And ye became followers of us and of the Lord.

The first thing we see the gospel producing is the gospel produces followers. It produces followers. You know, when we preach the gospel, the message of the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus, and the implications of that, and the reason why he died.

He died because we're all sinners. Every single one of us have sinned. There's a separation between us and God. And Jesus died to pay the price of our sins, to offer to everyone the free gift of salvation.

And we had the privilege of going around and telling people, whether here at home or overseas, that God loves them, died on the cross for their sins, and offers the gift of salvation.

And he wants everyone to be saved. And here we find that gospel message was preached, and the results were they became followers. They became followers.

[8:56] You know, the word disciple means a follower. It means an apprentice, someone that's learning, someone that's moving forward. And I love the way the Bible phrases this here, is they became followers.

It wasn't necessarily just one day they woke up, and they had arrived at the final destination. When we're saved, we don't wake up the next day, and we know everything there is to know, and we're living a life that completes with God's perfect plan, and our family, and our thought life, and the way we do things.

Yes, we're new creatures. Yes, we've been born again. Yes, the Holy Spirit is inside of us, but we become, as we grow, as we move from a babe in Christ, to a child in Christ, to a young man, to an adult, to someone with maturity in Christ, that that's the process that we see going on here in the Bible.

We see it in our own lives, and that's what's happening on the mission field. How can people that are first generation Christians impact their community, impact their country, and take the gospel to the world?

Well, it starts by them being followers. And you know, the way that you can be used by God, and the way that you can understand God's purpose for your life, and you can be used to serve the Lord with your life, is today you ought to start following.

[10:18] You ought to start being a follower. That's what the gospel produces. It produces followers. The interesting thing here we find in the passage, is what they followed. Look what the Bible says here.

And ye became followers of who? Come on now, help me out. You became followers of? Us. And? Who else? Followers of us, and followers of the Lord.

You know, so many times we think, sure, they need to be followers. You know, somebody accepts the Lord as their Savior. We'll use Ed here as an example. Ed's here, and it looks like little Ed's right beside him.

And so Ed and little Ed are right here. They're both taking notes, and he even dresses better than the big Ed. And so, great. Here we find two people, right? Let's just assume that recently they both made the decision to put their faith in Christ, and that they're both here now taking notes and looking sharp.

That's great. So, the Bible says that they become followers of the Lord. And we think, that's great. Ed and little Ed, you guys both need to follow the Lord.

[11:23] The Lord has a plan for your life. He is the boss. He is your owner. He is the one that's your father, and be followers of him. And no doubt, that is extraordinarily important.

But what we find there in between them becoming followers and becoming followers of the Lord is that they were followers of us. In church, we don't need to lose sight of God's role of using you and I to encourage new believers in their growing relationship with the Lord.

The reason why we have a church, the reason why we have multiple services in a week, the reason why we encourage you to be faithfully participating, not just coming in and filling a space and then leaving afterwards, but to get involved and to build relationships with others and to help out new believers that are coming in is because it's necessary.

Everything that we do in the service of the Lord through the New Testament is in the local church, is in the body, is all of us working together as a group to help other people.

In other words, a new believer that puts their trust in Jesus today needs someone like you to be an effective follower of the Lord. Because when we first get saved, many times, and I could give you a lot of stories from Chile of how we've seen these kind of things happen, but you talk to someone, alright, you need to come to church, hear the preaching of the Bible, hear the Bible, start reading God's Word, and God talks to you through the Bible, you talk to Him through prayer, and so go after it.

[13:05] And the person kind of looks at you like, I have no idea what you're talking about. So then, you know, taking the Bible and alright, let me save my place first. And they're like, alright, well here's a big book and there's a lot of pages and thus saith the Lord, go and get a potter's earthen bottle.

Wow, I guess I need to go to Walmart and see if there's a potter's earthen bottle. Yeah, tomorrow, let's see what am I going to read. I hear this word, ye kind of bashan. Well, I'm not of bashan, and so I guess that's not for me.

And so they're like, I don't know, but I should read the Bible. God talks to me. God's going to use people like you to encourage others to be followers of the Lord. And I've shared briefly about how my father was so influential in my life and how Pastor Gardner has been so incredibly influential in my life and continues to encourage me.

The truth is, I can't do it alone. We need each other in the body. It's so important to have others that can encourage and others that can give advice and direct and correct at times.

That's so important, and I encourage you all as we follow the Lord to get close to each other so we can encourage each other to follow Him.

[14:18] That's what the gospel produces is followers, followers of the Lord. It's not a new concept in the Bible. In 1 Corinthians 11, 1, the Bible says, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

1 Corinthians 4, 16, Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. Philippians 3, 17, Brethren, be followers together of me and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

So the Bible teaches us it's so important. The things that Paul told Timothy, that the things that Paul had taught Timothy, that Timothy should teach to faithful men, that those faithful men in turn should teach to others.

So it's not good enough just to say, here's the Bible, Ed and little Ed, you guys take off and figure it all out and it'll all work out and I'm sure you'll be fine.

That's not the plan that we find in the New Testament, but we should come along their side and encourage them and spend time with them and teach them, disciple them from God's Word.

[15:20] and God can use you to do that. And that's part of God's plan for all of us in the body, in the church, to help others follow the Lord.

Now it's not about following us, it's about following the Lord. But people don't understand many times how to follow the Lord and God uses us to encourage them, not to point them to us, but to point, hey, here's Jesus and the way I'm trying to do it following Jesus, you can kind of come along my side and we'll both go together looking unto Jesus because that's the most important thing.

Now we don't follow men blindly, it's got to be based on the Word of God, right? Well the passage here teaches that, look what the Bible says in verse number 6, and ye became followers of us and of the Lord, look at the next part, having received the Word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost.

So here not only does the Gospel produce followers, but the Gospel produces students of the Word of God. Students of the Word of God. You know, the way we know how to follow is we make sure that what's being said is from the Bible.

Amen? We encourage you all to bring a Bible and if you don't bring a Bible, they're probably projecting the passages on the screen because it's important that you know that what's being taught is from the Word of God.

[16:40] In the Bible studies on Sunday morning, in the church services, in the houses, and wherever you might be gathering together, we center around one thing and that's the teaching and preaching of God's Word.

And if you want to know how first generation Christians can change their country and how first generation Christians can be used to impact the world, I'm glad you asked me the question, you find it right here in the Bible.

They become followers and then they receive the Word of God. They're following mature Christians, they're following the Lord and they're receiving God's Word.

They're taking it to heart. It's like Jesus said, if you've got an ear, you better hear. The idea there is not only should we be hearers, but we should be doers of the Word.

And so receiving the Word is not just an intellectual thing of passing this information into my knowledge bank so that I can answer some more questions in Bible trivia the next time we play.

[17:41] No, the idea is that we are learning, we're reading, we're listening to learn to apply what the Bible says. And that's the way first generation Christians can grow quickly and that's the way it happened here in the Bible.

We find these men and women receiving God's Word, following the Lord, following mature Christians that were there helping them, in this case, particularly Paul, Silas, and Timothy that were writing this church a letter, a follow-up letter from the ministry they had worked there.

a passage in the Bible in James 1.21 it says, Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted Word.

Receive with meekness the engrafted Word. The same idea here. We're taking the Word and we're receiving it. Engrafted. If you can imagine the idea, I don't know anything about plants, but some of you know about plants, but it seems like I've seen on one of those shows that talks about plants, the idea of grafting and you kind of cut open a little notch and you stick a branch in there and you wrap it up and it kind of forms a branch that grafts into that original trunk and that's more or less the idea.

I know you guys can give a much better explanation, but that's the idea, all right? You can Google it when you get home and figure it all out and send me an email. But the idea here is that the Word of God, we take these principles and apply them in our lives to the point that they are inseparable from us afterward and these new principles have found roots or grown roots in our life and now they form who we are and the way we live and the way we react and the way we think and who we are in our heart because the Word of God has been received.

And I encourage us all and I say us because it's not a you thing but it's an us thing. We all need to be followers. Followers of some good Christians that can encourage us and followers of the Lord and we need to keep receiving God's Word not just coming to church to mark it off the list of what we need to do or not just reading the Bible to check off the little box that we've completed with our daily duty but we should be hungry to learn from God's Word what He wants us to learn.

Who He is and what His plan is for this world and for our lives and we find that in His revelation in the Word of God. We should all be very excited tonight that we have the Bible we have God's Word in our hand and we don't need to learn per se more information but we need to receive what we're learning into our heart to apply it and to live it and that's what missions is all about.

You know, when we go to the foreign field there's not some kind of secret sauce or special recipe on alright, now how can we do this so that the multiplication of churches and we can start churches in several places and have pastors that are going out it really boils down to helping people be followers of the Lord and in the meantime encouraging them along and spending time with them and helping them be followers of mature Christians as they're following the Lord and helping them learn how to receive to obey God's Word.

The church here it says here in verse number 6 the latter part having received the Word in much affliction they were going through all kinds of problems all the heroes of the first century were being put in prison or being killed despite all the afflictions and the problems they had joy of the Holy Ghost.

You know, when we receive the Word when we obey the Word when we go into our time of reading eager to learn eager to hear from God eager to spend time with Him then we can have joy through the Holy Ghost we can have joy a contentment despite whatever circumstances we might be going through and the secret to have that joy is spending time in God's Word and following Him a submitted life here I am God I die to myself I die to what I want and I completely and wholly surrender my life and my future and all that I am and all that I have in my family I surrender it all to you I give it all to you I'm following you I'm staying close to some guys that can help me in my spiritual walk and I'm trying to obey what God's Word says that's what that's it in a nutshell we find here in this verse what it is to have a victorious Christian life and that's what the ministry is all about and you know what you might be listening to this passage and God might be encouraging you to not just have a a habit of being a part of a church but to really be involved with other people that you can encourage that you can teach how to study the Bible and read the Bible and learn from God's Word

God can use you to do it God will use you to do it you just have to be surrendered to Him [22:41] and given to Him holy and tonight you can make that decision or renew that commitment that no doubt many of you have already made let's go here in the Bible and continue seeing what the gospel produces because it doesn't only produce followers and students when the message was proclaimed here but look what the Bible says in verse number seven alright first generation Christians verse number seven so that ye were in samples or examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Akiah now here we have this church that is hearing the Word of God that believed that is growing they're following Paul, Timothy, Silas they're following the Lord they're receiving God's Word brand new Christians young Christians immature Christians at the beginning but they're growing up they're moving forward and the next thing you know here Paul, Silas and Timothy are writing and they're remembering all the things that God had done and they're saying you guys heard the message and you started following us and following the Lord and you received the Word and you became examples for everyone else now what in the world we see that passage and we think no, no, no, no the first generation they weren't the ones that were the examples maybe, I don't know the church over at Antioch maybe they can be examples maybe a few in Jerusalem although they probably wouldn't be a very good example but maybe some that were scattered that then started doing the ministry maybe they would be but the Bible says here that this young congregation grew heard the gospel grew and became an example for so many more look what the Bible says in verse 8 for from you sounded out the Word of the Lord sound now where's the Word of the Lord sounding out from?

come on now help me out it's sounding out from that young first generation church they started out being followers being students and the gospel doesn't just produce followers and students but it produces teachers and preachers and leaders amen and the next thing they were encouraging this group of young Christians Paul and Silas and Timothy helped them and they grew up and the next thing you know this group is helping others and they've become the exemplary church in Macedonia a larger area like a state a larger geographical area this church is the church that's encouraging other people in passages like this maybe it doesn't mean a whole lot to you but I read it as a missionary starting churches on the mission field with these small groups of people that are just cutting their teeth on some principles of God's Word and a guy's up pastoring that's not been in the faith for so long but he's just grown up quick and God's doing some amazing things in his life and I'm so encouraged to see you know it happened about 2,000 years ago

I guess it shouldn't be strange that it's happening today amen there's a guy named Vladimir Vladimir is pastoring the third church there that we worked at starting in Santiago Vladimir spent the majority of the 1990s in prison he was actually abandoned basically by his parents when he was a kid living on the street living with family got involved in alcohol and drugs and just a lot of problems and during all that time to feed his habit he was robbing and got put in jail and got out of jail and got back in jail for armed robbery and just some very difficult things then shortly there after he got out of jail while he was in jail somebody preached in some kind of service and he got saved he got out of jail led his wife to the Lord he had a wife that waited on him all through the 90s for him to get out of jail and moved to the area where God just happened to lead us to start the first church next thing you know he's in the church and growing and moving forward and tells me he thinks God's calling him to preach and you know the first time he told me that

I was sharing with a few of the students the other day I didn't really think there was any way possible that this guy was ever going to be pastoral material and I remember having that conversation and I'm thinking well praise the Lord brother maybe I'll just really think about it and pray about it because I don't really think this is going very far and I told him you know we're having classes in the morning you're working you got a family just you know I appreciate your heart but that's about it well about a week or two later he comes to me and he said alright well I quit my job in the morning I picked up a night job so I'm working all night I'll be off at 7.30 I'll be there for classes at 8.30 because I know God's calling me to the ministry and I thought alright well good well you know this will last about three weeks four weeks and he's going to be out of here I don't want to hurt his feelings so come on in Vladimir and that's great and let's see what we can do and next thing you know Vladimir is working now as a church planner and writing emails about how the church is growing and how he's leading people to the Lord and Josh Ewing is actually going there to that church and learning the language and they're about

I don't know somewhere around 75% through with language school and so it's exciting to see that's just one case of so many cases of how God's using people and you know what we often times might look from afar and say I don't know about this and I'm not sure if this guy's got well I don't know maybe I'm the only pessimistic one around I don't know but you know what it's God through the gospel that makes followers that makes students of his word that makes those guys soon to be preachers and teachers of the Bible and leaders and examples for other people and people that we thought would never be able to be used by God are now leading the ministry and encouraging others and being an example to so many other young men that are serving the Lord and coming up in the ministry what an exciting thing to be a part of that but let's don't look at it in a third person context of a far away country but let's think about you and your life where you're at right now

[28:58]

God wants to use you he wants to use you to be a follower of him and to develop a relationship with somebody that can encourage you your pastor one of the other guys here in the church ladies here in the church that can encourage you you know what that happens so that soon you will be the preacher the leader of other Christians also I don't know if you're getting the idea right God saves us and helps us grow up so we can help others grow up too right that's what it's all about and that's what we find here happening in this passage how these guys were used the Bible says in 1 Timothy 4 12 let no men despise thy youth be thou an example of the believer in word in conversation in charity in spirit in faith in purity so here we find that these followers soon became leaders there in the ministry so the gospel it produces followers it produces students of the word and it also produces soon preachers and teachers and leaders people that can be examples for other people also look what the Bible says here in verse number 9 for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you so this church is proving what ministry we had there with you look what it says in verse number verse number 9 the last part there and how ye turn to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come not only does the gospel produce followers and students and soon preachers and teachers and leaders but the gospel produces hope here these people these young Christians they turned to God from what

I've seen if you're following along with me here or not alright I'm going to ask you a lot of questions alright you turned to God from what from idols you know it reminds me of the Old Testament passage about the guy that had the tree and he cut the tree down and from the tree he carved this beautiful statue and with the rest of the tree he chopped it up to cook his food and to warm himself and you know many people around the world today are bowing down still to beautiful statues of different people and different representations but those do not provide any hope the Bible says that we're all sinners and we're condemned already and none of those things can provide any hope for us and maybe in our culture today we don't have a whole lot of that maybe in our own households but many times other things or other people other possessions become idols in our life and they take the first place in our lives and our attention and our time and what we have is given to something besides the Lord and they're idols and the truth is they don't provide any hope it's like a it's like a tunnel without an end that we keep going down trying to find some satisfaction in that substance or in that relationship or in that hobby or in that job and we think just a little bit more and I'm going to be happy finally but that provides no hope it's just an idol but there's a living and true God there's the God of the universe the creator of it all the one that really provides hope for us and here the gospel led these people to the true and eternal hope in the true and eternal God and the Bible says here in this passage look what it says verse number 10 and to wait for his son from heaven you know the hope that we have today as believers in the gospel believers in Jesus is that he's coming back to get us it might happen today it might happen tomorrow it might happen before this year is completed we don't know when he's coming back to get us but it's a hope that we have all the pain and suffering and difficulties and trials and things that are happening here in this world they only last for a short time and soon will be with the Lord and here we find these young Christians they became followers and they're students of God's word and they're really growing and then they're helping others and they're leading others and being an example for others and the whole time they're putting their eyes on the hope of glory

Jesus Christ is coming back soon the only true and living God and this evening we have hope in our God we have hope in what we do for him because the time that we invest in others has an eternal impact and God can use you I encourage you all around the world or right here in this neighborhood God can use you to help others to encourage others to lead them to the Lord and to teach them the principles of God's word the exciting thing of being a missionary sent out of this church is that the pastor here in just a few minutes will be taken off to preach at another church plant here down the road and what an exciting opportunity here at home to reach people with the gospel so the question is for us we can look at it from a distance and say oh this is a great church that Paul worked at what a great example they are it's great what's going on in Chile or China or some other far off land what about in your life maybe you haven't taken the step to put your faith in Jesus as your personal savior today is the day you ought to do that maybe you have but you just come to church and you kind of slide in and hear the messages and slide out you've not really developed relationships with others to encourage you in your walk and to grow in the word of God do that maybe you've been around for a while and you've really grown but now it's time for you to invest in others that's the way that first generation

Christians or maybe in your case second or third generation Christians can impact the world with the gospel the gospel is the power and people need to be followers and need to receive the word and he'll use you to help others do that let's go to the Lord in a word of prayer as the pastor comes forward God I thank you so much for this opportunity we have to study your word I thank you so much for this church in the Bible that reminds us so much of brand new churches that are being birthed in different parts of the world and even right now in Cobb County and we thank you that that same reality happened here at this church not too long ago but thankfully now there are men and women and young people that are mature and strong in their faith and they're serving you and being examples to so many more but I pray this evening that some that have kind of gotten away from that that commitment to disciple others and encourage others today they will renew that to help others also and I pray for some that maybe have never really developed those relationships with some good Christians that can encourage them that they'll renew their commitment to do so and they'll attend church and read their Bible ready to listen and to grow and God you've got amazing things planned for our lives to reach this world with the gospel and you want to use us and I pray Father that we would surrender ourselves give ourselves to you to be used of you as we look unto you knowing that the hope of glory is your coming and that will happen at any time and in the meantime we need to take advantage of every opportunity to serve you work in our hearts change us in Jesus name I pray this message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings a heartache on the floor of 17

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