

Church Planting Testimony

by Jeff Christianson

Jeff Christensen shares his testimony of being called to church planting and the importance of the cross, guidance, leading, tenacity, and perseverance in the process.

Duration: 9:29

Scripture: Acts 13:2

Topics: "Church Planting", "Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon by Jeff Christensen shares his journey of stepping out in faith and following God's calling to plant churches in mountain towns, emphasizing the importance of being willing to sacrifice comfort and embrace the crucified life in ministry. He highlights the battles faced, the need for tenacity, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in ministry decisions. Jeff's story reflects a heart for rural communities and a commitment to equipping church planters through a Bible College extension campus.

Transcript

Hi, my name is Jeff Christensen. I'm in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Part of my calling was, I was here at the Bible college where we're recording this session and I was bearing fruit, you know, as a teacher here, taught hermeneutics, taught biblical counseling, book of Colossians, senior staff members, salary, had a three bedroom condo, things were just flowing for me in ministry, just enjoyed my life here in Southern California and one of my students had a dad that owns a youth camp in Colorado and he asked me to come on out and do a family camp and it was in 2008, three years ago that he just dropped the bomb on me, Jeff, I want you to take this youth camp and I'm thinking, well, there's no way, you know, I'm bearing fruit, I'm in Southern California, I'm not going to move to the middle of the mountains nowhere when all this fruit is happening and then God brought a verse to mind, it was in John 15 to and he says, yes, Jeff, you are bearing fruit, but those who bear fruit, I prune and one thing I want to exhort any of you, if you're called to church planting, to not shy away from the cross, make sure that the cross is included, the crucifixion, the crucified life is if there's a cost, if you're looking for a comfortable, you want to be a, you want to stand up on the stage and be a, you know, a popular guy and a movie star or whatever, a rock star, church planting is going to eat you alive and there needs to be that willingness to go to the cross, not go around the cross or over it, but to be crucified with Christ and I think that when that call came, it was a sacrifice, it was, okay, I'm going to give up the comforts and that pruning came and I needed the pruning, I need, there were some areas of my heart, there were some areas of my life that needed to be pruned and when I went there to take the, the next thing you know, the Calvary Chapel down the road, the pastor come and

asked me, he says, hey, I want you to take the Calvary Chapel, my wife is sick and it's time that we move on, will you take the church? So I took a little mountain town church and my heart began to stir for these mountain towns and so what has happened in the time that I've been there, we took a team from the Bible College and we planted a Bible College extension campus that we equip church planters at and so we use this mountain town church to raise up church planters, to raise up pastors with, in the context of real lives, real people, real church, men and women that have the prodigal sons, those that are sick and in the hospital, visitations, pulpit time and so what's, that's what we're doing with that.

In the meanwhile, I drove up the mountain to another town called Glenwood Springs and we've been there for a year planting Calvary Chapel Glenwood Springs and so much favor, even in a kind of a new age community and it's been a real blessing but the battles have been excruciating, it's been a, it has been a battle and in a couple of verses that I'm reminded of and one of the pastors shared the same thing is, is know your calling, make your calling and election sure. There's got to be a calling, Paul called to be an apostle, you called to be a pastor teacher, that's the calling but then there's the guidance, where do I go?

There's the leading, I'm called to a certain area, called to be a pastor teacher but where am I guided, where am I leading and remember in Acts, Acts chapter 13 as they were sitting together ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit sent them, you need to be sent, there needs to be ascending and so I sensed that we were being sent by the Holy Spirit and it was my wife and I, it's a team, it's a partnership, she had to be fully in agreement and actually she heard the call before I did the leading and the guiding before I did and I was not wanting to leave my comfort zone and she was willing to step out and do that and so God really speaks to our wives, we got to listen to our wives, it's just important to get that intuition don't they, where they can, you know, have such a tight walk with

Jesus and a lot of times we want to listen to what our wives have to say and so sit long enough to hear from God, where am I going and you know, God will give you a heart for community, I love the mountains, I'm a mountain man, I live in near Aspen, Colorado where it's just rivers and you know, the culture of fly fishing and hunting and hiking and camping and all of that kind of stuff, I can go about and do the things I love and tell the people the culture about Jesus and so I'm right in the midst of things I love to do and I talk to people about Jesus, I'm a missionary in the mountains and I just love it, in those small mountain towns and so I have a heart for villages and it's very rural, it's not city by any means, our towns are 1500 people here and maybe 8000 people there and small

mountain towns, another verse that just was strong in my heart was in Acts chapter 20 where Paul said, none of these things move me, there needs to be a tenacity because the battles, you know, in Nehemiah, you see the sand ballots, the Tobias, the Gershom, the Arab, they'll come against you like a flood and it's like what in the world is going on, I'm serving you Lord and the battles that can come but you have to have a tenacity, none of these things move me, I'm pressing forward, I'm moving upward with Jesus and so I think there needs to be, even in the times of discouragement, when I say, you know what, I'm done, I'm going to go back and I'm going to be a mechanic, I'm going to go to church with my wife and my kids and just be a good Christian, yeah, man, why am I doing what I do but

you know what, I've been ruined for Jesus, I can do nothing else because of my testimony, I'm an ex-druggie and I mean, God pulled me out of the pit and he saved me and so I want to apprehend what I've been apprehended for and I know it's to be a pastor teacher and I know it's to bring the gospel to the small villages and mountain towns, there's so many towns out in Colorado, if you want to do a mountain town church plant, we've got a Bible college extension campus, I'll let you live in a cabin, I'll feed you, I'll let you

commute until you get established in Salida, maybe Rifle, maybe Gunnison, maybe Crested Buttes, some surrounding small mountain town communities, get a job, get settled and plant a church, it's my heart, I want to see the Rocky Mountains, all the villages filled with

little churches and it's not going to be a big mega church ever but it will be a joy and I really am praying that that's what our college and campus is about is equipping the saints for the work of the ministry and you know, another verse that really impacted me is as I was teaching, you know, verse by verse, it's what we do and I'm going through, I'm on Acts chapter 1, verse 8 and I was just flooded with the reminder that we're to plant churches and it needs to be by the power of the Holy Spirit and I think that we don't want to forget that, Acts 2.42, keep it simple, you know, you get, you look around at all the other churches and what they're doing and how they're growing, you know, they get the emergent and they got the seeker friendly and they got the mixture of everything.

I really fit because there's nothing like exposition going on in the community, actually for 20 years, there hasn't been a new church plant, there's actually been churches that have dissolved or gone liberal and so I just, I just am so encouraged as you go in there and you bring forth the word of God verse by verse, it's small beginnings, we rented, I drove by a high school, went and talked to the principal, I says, is there any place in here where you could, you know, could we rent to use it and she goes, well, let me show you, beautiful auditorium, it's an auditorium slash cafeteria where they do dinner plays with the stage, sound system, everything, nice, brand new, 2010, just built.

Well, this work is 250 people seat, I'm thinking, wow, this is awesome and I'm just inquiring, well, she pulls out the paperwork and she says, when do you start your church? I says, well, I'm just kind of, you know, inquiring, this was January 2010, she goes, I want a church in here and I'm thinking, okay, she goes, when are you starting? I says, well, how about Easter? I mean, I was almost and I went home, I said, I said to my wife, Jenny, I says, you know, we're starting a church and so that's pretty much the story, it's a neat thing to step out in faith, so may God bless you guys, in Jesus name, amen.

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