

# How the Church Grows (Part 5)

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala emphasizes that the church grows through the active ministry of all believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Jesus in everyday life.*

**Duration:** 39:34

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:41 - 3:26, Acts 4:12, Acts 4:29-31, Acts 9:1-19

**Topics:** "Church Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000 with five loaves of bread and two fish. He emphasizes the importance of ministry and how it occurs when God's resources reach human needs through loving channels. The speaker encourages the audience to give what they have to Jesus, just like the disciples did with the five loaves and two fish. He also highlights the power of lifting up Jesus and preaching about Him, as it can lead to life-changing experiences and the spread of the Gospel.

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## Transcript

I want to entitle this, How the Church Grows. We've learned in our study, we've started a few weeks ago, a couple months ago, that Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be poured out. The disciples went and waited in Jerusalem.

The Spirit came. There was a big commotion. They were filled and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them the ability.

It happened to be in languages from different parts of the world. It happened during the Feast of Pentecost, so people were gathered by the thousands and thousands. In Jerusalem, they heard their own languages being spoken, heard people from Galilee praising God in a language they didn't know.

Crowd gathered. Peter preached the first sermon in the history of the Christian church, and thousands came to know the Lord as he told them to repent and be baptized, put their faith in Christ, give the outward sign of being baptized. And then the Bible tells us that the early church, we had a little picture of it last Sunday, a photo of it.

They devoted themselves to the Word of God, the apostles' teaching, fellowship. They just shared and loved each other. The breaking of bread, they had meals together and took communion together, and finally, they continued in prayers together.

And God was working wonderful ways, special miracles done by the apostles. And now we're gonna see in Acts 3, the church is gonna begin to grow. Now, the church of Jesus Christ grows.

Our church must grow. All churches must grow. I imagine that all the people who stood today, you go to a church back in your hometown.

We're living in an era right now in America where churches are in decline. Two of the major denominations are in negative growth since 2005, last six years, negative growth. Pastors are leaving the ministry, empty pulpits, discouragement.

Yes, there's churches that God is blessing, there's mega churches, there's all that stuff, but there's some very negative signs, and Christendom is not increasing like other things are increasing of a negative nature. Christendom right now in America, not speaking for other parts of the world, is hurting, and other countries like Korea are talking about sending people over from their nations to evangelize in America, and other countries, and send them, we need them. So now, this is interesting, how does the church grow? Well, we know the church grows.

Jesus said, go into all the world, preach the gospel. In other words, it's through telling people about Jesus and through ministering to them that the church grows. Now, to most people, when you say minister to people, you look up here and you say, yeah, you three and you, you do that, and Pastor Todd over there.

You minister to the people because that's how the church grows. You have a strong pulpit, or you have good ministry on the platform. This is not at all the concept that they had and the model that God gave us in the book of Acts, as we're gonna see.

So I wanna talk about two things here. I wanna talk about some simple secrets, and then we're gonna pray, about how ministry happens. My friend Warren Wierspe wrote a great book years ago, if you can ever get a copy of it, get it.

It's called On Being a Servant of God, and he defines ministry this way. Ministry occurs because he shares that he went to seminary and came out and didn't know what ministry was. Didn't know what ministry was, knew how to have church services and all of that, but what's ministry? He said ministry occurs when God's resources meet human need through loving channels for the glory of God.

Listen again. When God's resources meet human need through loving channels for the glory of God. That's when ministry occurs.

Now, we're gonna hear just briefly about, in chapter three, the second sermon, we're gonna get into it, but we're not gonna cover that sermon. We're gonna skip and go to something else, God willing, next week. But I want you to see a notable miracle, which was performed by the apostles, but it has seeds in it of all ministry.

And I want you to notice from another chapter how the apostles didn't do the ministry and building up of the church alone. Everybody did it. Chapter three, Acts.

One day, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer at three in the afternoon. Now, a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.

Peter looked straight at him, as did John, and then Peter said, look at us. So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, silver or gold, I do not have.

Early church didn't seem to have much money. But what I have, I give you. I have something for you, but it's not silver or gold.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Notice he didn't pray. There's no prayer here.

He speaks a declaration. Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up and instantly, it seems as he's helping the man up, the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk.

And then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping and praising God. And when all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

And while the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. In other words, another crowd is formed, just like in chapter two. When Peter saw this, he said to them, men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness that we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus.

You handed him over to be killed and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. Pilate wanted to give him a free pass, but you said, no, give us Barabbas. You disowned the holy and righteous one and asked that a murderer be released to you.

You killed the author of life, but God raised them from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong.

It is Jesus's name and the faith that comes through him, the faith that comes through fellowship in him. Believing in him, more faith is then imparted that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. Now, chapter eight.

On that day, a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. The apostles stayed in Jerusalem, but everyone else, all the believers, were out of town. Now, those who had been scattered, the believers preached the word wherever they went.

So the apostles, the ones who were considered the ministers, they stayed in Jerusalem. Everyone else, the believers, it's as if we all stayed here in New York and you were all scattered throughout the United States. But every place you were scattered, you, not us, you preached the word of God.

You ministered Jesus to the people. That's how the church grew. That's how the church multiplied.

That's how the Roman Empire was toppled, in a sense, by the growth of the Christian church. They fed them to animals. Gladiators killed them at certain times in certain places.

There were martyrs. They were despised by the Jewish religious establishment. Rome thought it was a cult and nonsense, and by just the people ministering Jesus to other people, the church grew and grew and grew and grew, and the next thing you know, the emperor in the year 300-something supposedly was

converted, and Christianity became the national religion of the Roman Empire.

So these are the glory days of the Christian church. Let's just notice a few things. By the way, I just felt, I feel prompted to say this, but maybe somebody's here, and the emotion of this meeting is bothering you.

You see the people praising God. You see lifting hands. You see people weeping and making a lot of noise, and that bothers you because of your background or your sense of what Christianity is about.

What would you do back then when the man was leaping and jumping and praising God? What would you have him, taken out of the auditorium? Because when that man was healed, the Bible says when he was healed, what got a stir going was he began to walk, which he had never done. Then he began to leap, and then he began to make noise and yelling and praising God, and Peter never said to him, hold steady, sir. You gotta leave here.

You can't be getting happy about Jesus. How many are not ashamed to make a joyful noise unto the Lord? Amen. That's just a little sidebar because I just felt grieved in my heart as if somebody here was saying, what are they lifting their hands and doing all of that? Maybe you don't know how much God has forgiven us.

Maybe you don't know how great God has been to us. How many have had a wonderful Jesus do miracles in your life? Praise God, shout. That always amazes me at football games and basketball games, and I used to play them a long time ago in college at Madison Square Garden and different places.

You hear that roar of that crowd, see cheerleaders crying and people going berserk, berserk, over basketball. Nobody remembers the game now, the football game. Nobody remembers, but you just get a little happy about Jesus, and there are people who will attack and say, ah, it's a bunch of emotionalism.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good and that's what I wanna say. So now, there's some interesting things here. First of all, we establish by the reading of these verses that ministry is not done by the apostles.

The church spread because the believers ministered. That's you up in the balcony. It's not supposed to be just us.

That's one of the chronic problems of the church. We've gotten to a professional ministry concept where you're the spectators, we perform, and then you do it because you're lucky if I stop in on Sunday. Hey, I'm doing you a favor if I come and put something in the offering.

So the concept of you and how you're supposed to minister to people as members of the body of Christ, that doesn't register with us. It's those folks, or maybe some deacons who are sold out to God, who are willing to talk and pray and whatever. So that mold is smashed.

So now, let's just get to these points so we can pray. So it's not just Pastor Olmo, it's his wife, Becky Olmo, and their children. It's all of us if the church is gonna grow, but how do you minister? How do you minister? Your call to ministry.

God has said in the church, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry. Not us do the ministry, you do the ministry along with us. The gifts were put in the church to perfect the saints so they would do the work of the ministry.

That means more than Kevin working in the office, that means more than Jason playing those beautiful chords on the keyboard and our violinist and the drummer. You do the ministry. We all do it together.

But how do you do ministry? Well, just little secrets that we see here about how ministry was intended to be. Not what you saw growing up, not what I saw growing up, not your Baptist tradition or Methodist or Nazarene or Presbyterian or Lutheran or Assemblies of God or Church of God, whatever. It's the Bible now.

We're gonna look at the Bible. God put it there so that we could replicate it through the power of the Spirit. I want you to notice as we see Peter and John going to the temple that day, and if you'll study the rest of the book of Acts with me, you'll find out that most all ministry was unplanned and was of a spontaneous nature.

You can't find hardly one sermon in the book of Acts that was preached with the person knowing he would preach that day like I knew I would preach today. You can't find it. How did Peter preach the first sermon? There was a big noise.

The Spirit came. He didn't know the Spirit would come that day. He didn't know what crowd would gather.

Boom, he's up, he's ready. He's preaching, and now God adds the blessing. In this thing, the crowd gathers, why? Because a man was healed and was making so much noise that they came to find out what was wrong or what had happened, and how did Peter know that he would preach that day? He was just going to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon to pray.

Nobody told him, you better be ready to preach now. No, you'll find this out in the life of Jesus. Jesus did go up on a mountain to teach.

He had times where he knew, I'm going up there, I'm gonna teach. Took a boat, went out into the sea, crowd was there, he knew, I'm gonna teach. But most of the ministry that Jesus did was he was walking, and somebody yelled out, oh, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, and he reacted to that.

And we have compartmentalized ministry that ministry happens in the church meetings, and that's why it falls on us. But that is not found in the Bible. Ministry happens in the everyday interaction of life, meeting people, God showing us by the Spirit what to do, just through stuff happening, ministry happens.

You don't say, I'm gonna go out and do ministry now. Now, Billy Graham Crusade's special vacation Bible schools, they're organized, they're great, they're right, they honor God. Would to God there's more of them, but most ministry happens in the book of Acts by just stuff that happens in life.

One thing leads to another, and in this case, we see a spontaneous, unplanned sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Now, there's something mysterious about this passage to me. It's always been mysterious to me since I was a teenager, and I began to open my heart to the things of God.

The question is, how did Peter know that God would heal that man? How did Peter know to say to that man? The man didn't ask for healing. There was no healing line. There was no calling people forward.

There was nothing. There was just a man begging, asking for money. How did Peter know that at that moment he should say, look at me, silver and gold have I none, but I have something for you.

In the name of Jesus, get up. How did he know to do that? There were people begging all over that gate. How did Jesus know who to heal, what dead to raise? Jesus never went into one place where he just went into a hospital and cleared out the place.

In fact, in his own hometown, he could not do many miracles because of their unbelief. So what does this tell us about ministry? This tells us that ministry, according to the New Testament, is done when people are living their lives, walking with Jesus, and very sensitive to the Holy Spirit, what God wants you to say and do at any given moment. Now, ministry is not just saying to a lame person, get up.

If that's what God shows you and gives you faith for, that's what you do. But ministry is loving someone, saying a kind word to someone, helping somebody, praying for someone, saying to someone, as God directs you, can I talk to you about something? Can we go over here on the side? Can I pray for you? Ministry can happen a thousand ways. Ministry can happen that someone's ready to quit and commit suicide, and God puts a word of encouragement in you to give that person, and you didn't know their mental state.

But notice that ministry happened here in an unplanned, spontaneous way that could happen to you tomorrow. Would to God, in the name of Christ, it would happen to all of us tomorrow. That as we're interacting on the subway, job, flying, airports, wherever you do, school, neighbors, relatives, that we're sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and when he prompts us to say something, do something, pray, say a word, lift up Jesus, we know when to be quiet, and we know when to speak.

All in favor, put your hands together and say amen. The moving of the Holy Spirit is as Jesus said, the wind blows where it wants, you can't control him. Nobody knows where the wind comes from and where it's going, but it's real, it has power.

So is the moving of the Holy Spirit. So we know that miracles and ministry and everything happens when people are walking with God, they love the Lord, and they are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and they're open to him 24-7. Like last night, God gave me a dream.

I haven't had five dreams in my life that are from the Lord, but I got a dream last night from the Lord. What it's about doesn't matter, but I believe I got the dream from the Lord and I got the interpretation from the Lord. Did it happen in church? No, it happened sleeping.

How many believe that the Holy Spirit can speak to us at any moment of any day? Lift up your hand. And you and I have to be ready because God knows what's happening in the people around us when that open door comes from that person. These three people, he just says be still, just be polite and move on, but that's the one to talk to, that's the one to pray for, that's the one, that's the one.

That's how ministry began in Acts chapter three. Not in organized setting, but in spontaneous reaction to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Come on, how many of you ever been with somebody? Come on, be honest now.

You've been with somebody or something happened and God gave you a prompting to say something or to pray or to do something, and you knew this was a special moment from God. Just lift up your hand. Have you ever had that happen to you? Should be happen to all of us.

People are in need all around us and God puts us out in the world, not just the ministers, but the body of Christ so that we would be open to what the Lord wants us to say and do. Number two, I want you to know

something else that I see as a characteristic of ministry that we want to emulate. With this, I kind of bring this to a close.

The second fact is that when God gave him an open door to talk, they proclaimed Jesus Christ, not church, not a doctrinal position, not a racial message, not an ethnic message, they proclaimed Jesus. You'll see this all the way through the book of Acts. If you squeeze those guys, Jesus is gonna come out.

They lift up Jesus. They lift up Jesus. That's important for all of us.

Do you want to minister to someone? Don't tell them about the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The Brooklyn Tabernacle can't help them. Jesus died for them and rose again from the dead.

Can we say amen? And where the Holy Spirit honors our ministry is when he knows we're gonna lift up Jesus because God will not share his glory with any other name. This is what holds back churches. They don't want to just lift up Jesus or a minister.

He wants to lift up his own persona, his own books and what he's accomplished, full of himself, or a choir full of themselves, or a church full of themselves, or a denomination. If you say something bad about Jesus, they'll let it go by. You say something bad about their denomination, they'll be up in your grill in a second.

Why? Because that's what they're into. But the early apostles were into, we don't want to tell you about church, we want to tell you about Jesus. You want to know how this man can walk? It's Jesus.

Now, two things about that little interaction there are very meaningful to us. First of all, notice that they wanted to make sure they didn't get any of the glory. They said to the people, I mean, what if you had raised someone up who had never walked and the crowd gathered? Some of us might have been like, yeah, check him out.

I did that. I'm the one who spoke that word. Yeah, me.

Not John, me, Peter. P-E-T-E-R, get it. Get it down.

No, no, they said the opposite. What are you looking at us? We didn't do this. Do you think that we have some power? Do you think that we have some godliness or some devotion to Christ that made this man be able to walk? No, it's simply faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus gets all the glory. Jesus gets all the praise. Don't look at us, look at Jesus.

Now, that's very important because wherever Jesus is gonna be glorified, the Holy Spirit is gonna gravitate toward that and help us and bless us and strengthen us and work things that we can't imagine. Why? Because he was sent to glorify Christ. Jesus said when he comes and the Spirit comes, he will glorify me.

And if you and I are into glorifying anyone else or anything else, the Holy Spirit's gonna be grieved because he knows what Christ did on the cross. He knows Jesus is the son of God and now he sees a church being lifted up or some two-bit pastor being lifted up. He goes, no, no, Jesus is the only one who gets all the glory and all the praise.

Can we just clap once just for Jesus? Everybody, let's give him. Jesus, get all the glory and praise today. There's something else as I close.

Notice that when they lifted up Jesus and they preached Jesus and they talked about Jesus and you can do that and you can tell people what Jesus did for you, you can minister to people. As the Holy Spirit gives you a prompting and an open door, you can tell people about Jesus. Jesus changed my life.

Jesus is the son of God. Jesus is the savior of the world. I not only sing it in church, I want to tell you, oh, the blood of the lamb that washed away all my sins.

Even when I was in sin, he died for me. He can change you. You know the peace that I have? You could have that peace.

You know the joy I have? You could have that joy. So they lifted up Jesus and they made sure that all the focus was on him but there's something else very interesting here. When I look at the language of it and I think who's speaking it, I become taken back by the fact that they're not only bold, they're very bold.

Jesus had been crucified in that city less than, let's say, two months before and here they are preaching about him with like no fear. So the Spirit gave them boldness. They weren't shy.

They weren't in-the-closet Christians. God wants us all to be bold. Do I get an amen? Amen.

God has not given us a spirit of? Fear. But of love, power, and a sound mind and boldness too. There's something else that strikes me about this.

How would Peter have the chutzpah and the nerve to say to them, you disowned the Holy One of God. You denied him. Pontius Pilate wouldn't let him go but you are the ones who said Barabbas, Barabbas.

You're the ones who put him on the cross. You disowned him. You denied him.

You knew that he was special and you didn't stand up for him. When Peter had done it himself, does that not strike you? I mean, Peter's preaching like a ball of fire and telling people, but in love under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, you really denied the Lord. And someone could have lifted a hand and say, hey, I was by the fire the night he was arrested.

You denied him three times. Who are you to tell me anything? And that tells me something about if God's gonna use us to minister, you have to have a completely forgiven, forgotten past. Come on, do I get an amen for that? You have to operate with a sense of total forgiveness, total acceptance with God.

My sins have been washed away. Yes, Satan, I resist you in the name of Jesus. I have messed up and I denied the Lord three times, but it's under the blood.

He has forgiven me, and now I can stand for him and speak for him. That is so obvious to us that they not only wanted Jesus to get all the glory, but they were fearless and they were without condemnation because hasn't the devil stopped some of us from ministering to people because he whispers in our ear, after how you failed God, after you've been so lukewarm, after the mistakes you've made that no one knows about, but God and you, and the moment you look at that, you will close your mouth and you will not be free to follow the Holy Spirit. The only way you move in the Holy Spirit and minister to people is you know whom the Son sets free.

Praise God is free indeed. Though your sins be as scarlet, they'll be whiter than snow. The past has been eradicated.

Jesus erased all the bad pages, and the only way God sees us today is through Christ, and we're perfect. We're perfect in Christ. He doesn't see Jim Cimbalo or else I'd never been able to be used by God at all.

He sees me in Christ. Christ is my righteousness, so my righteousness is perfect. Christ is my righteousness.

Say that with me. Christ is my righteousness. Not your track record.

Christ is your righteousness. There's been a transfer. He took your sins and he gave you his righteousness.

We sure got the best of that trade. How many say amen? Say it again with me. Christ is my righteousness.

Louder. Christ is my. You can't minister to anyone.

You won't follow the leading of the Spirit. You won't be bold if you're looking inward and digging down, oh yeah, I failed God so bad. Trust me, you can't.

These men were bold and someone could have said, who are you? You were arguing who was the greatest less than three months ago. Who are you to tell anybody anything but oh, there's a freedom in Christ. He's washed away all my mistakes.

Don't think that that's the Holy Spirit making you look back at all your mistakes. That's not the Holy Spirit. That's the devil impersonating the Holy Spirit for he's the accuser of the brothers and the sisters.

No, but we gotta stand firm in the liberty that we have in Jesus Christ. I've been forgiven. I can speak for him and stand firm, not because I'm perfect, but because he is full of mercy and he's the Savior of the world.

One more time, one last amen. So, let's close. Let's close.

So we found out that almost all the ministry in the New Testament was spontaneous. It wasn't done in a set up meeting. In fact, we know very little about the services.

We don't have a record, hardly, of any services that they had. It was all the people of God ministering. God even took a common believer, a regular guy in a church, and had him go pray for the Apostle Paul when Saul of Tarsus got saved and became the Apostle Paul later.

So, spontaneous, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and obedience to what God shows you to do. Then we found out they spoke Jesus. They talked about Jesus.

They lifted up Jesus. They said, do not look at us, look at Jesus. We're not telling you to come to a church.

We're telling you about Jesus. And they were bold because they knew their sins had been forgiven, of which there were many, just like us. Last thing, silver and gold have I none, but that which I have, I give you.

Ministry is always the impartation in some way of something God has given you. You know, and on Tuesday, when we pray, we're gonna continue on with our study of love letters from Jesus, and the letter to one of the churches, Sardis, is this. Jesus says, I know you have a name that you're alive, but you're dead.

You don't have a thing. Are you Christians? Yeah, but do you have anything from God? Are you alive? Are you moving in the Spirit? Are you really focused on Christ and his commission of reaching people with the gospel? No, you're dead. You're dead.

You've heard that said about churches. That church is dead. When I started out in the ministry, oh, you talk about deadness.

My sermons were so dead, and that little church on Lennox Avenue was so dead, there was an oppression. Did you know it was so dead that one Sunday, I got up as a young man, not even in the ministry, six months there, not even three months there, and I couldn't preach. There was such a heavy darkness that would prevail that I broke down and started to cry and just called the 15, 13 people in the church forward to pray, and I just told them, I can't preach in this atmosphere.

Just because you gather together and have a church building doesn't mean there's life. Only Jesus gives life. Now, silver and gold have I none, but that which I have, I'm gonna give you.

What do I have? I have a word of faith for you. I have a word of miracle for you. Look at me.

Now, get up in the name of Jesus, and walk. That's what Peter had. If we have nothing to give people, then how are we gonna give them something? If we haven't received something from the Lord in fellowship with them, then there's nothing.

In other words, unless God gives you something, unless we're living in closeness to Jesus where he's imparting faith or love or encouragement so we can say to people, you know what? I know what you're looking for. I don't have that for you, but I have something better for you. Come over here because I'm gonna pray for you.

God's given me a prayer for you that's gonna change your life. I'm not making it up. God gave it to me.

He gave me faith for you. He gave me love for you. He gave me compassion for you.

He gave me an interest in your situation. I'm willing to sacrifice my own comfort zone so that I can minister to you. I have something from God for you, and you're gonna be able to get up and do things you've never done before because I, as a Christian, have something from God for you.

A word, a prayer, an arm around your shoulder. I'll weep with you. I have something for you from God, but if we are bankrupt ourselves and we don't have anything from God, what are we gonna give people? Come to church.

Trust the Lord. He'll see you through. God is good all the time.

Mm, and that's all we have, and otherwise we're empty. We just have trite sentences, but Peter said, I don't have money. Money I don't have.

I got something for you, though. I just got it from the Holy Spirit. I didn't know this would happen today.

I didn't know I would meet you, but I have something right now for you. Ministry happens when God's resources reach human needs through loving channels who have something to offer the people. Remember what Jesus said to the disciples? I close.

The crowd's been with me, thousands, 5,000. They've been here with me all day listening to my teaching, and now it's getting late, and I gotta send, you know, they haven't eaten all day. And the disciples said, send them home to get them out of here so that we can rest.

It's been a long day, and Jesus said, you give them something to eat. They go, what, are you joking? There's 5,000 people. Jesus said, what do you have? I got five loaves.

We got five loaves from a kid, two fishes. But that's a joke. We're afraid, we're embarrassed to even tell you what we have.

He said, no, give it to me. Whatever you have, if you give it to Jesus, he will put his hands on it, listen, and he will multiply it, and suddenly, they're handing out food to thousands of people. Why, because there's something in them? No, what they had, they gave to Jesus, and he gave them something back for the people.

He blessed it, and he broke it so that they could feed the people. That's what he does with our lives. That's what he's done with my life 1,000 times.

Every time he's blessed me, he's broken me, smashed me, humbled me, he wants to do that with all of us, because when we're big and puffed up and proud, we can't be food for people, we can't bless people. But when we realize how much we need them, oh, my goodness. Brothers and sisters, all I see is that they were devoted to Jesus and his cause, and they were open to the Holy Spirit, and they turned the world upside down.

I wanna turn Brooklyn upside down. How many are with me? I wanna see America turned upside down. I wanna see America turned upside down.

Come on, can we say amen to that? Come on, clap for where you're from if you're not from Brooklyn or New York City. Let's close our eyes. I surrender all, Jesus.

I want a consecration like Peter had. I wanna be like that bread and that fish in your hands. I want the miracle to happen so that I can minister to people today, tomorrow.

I wanna be like the Spirit, you'll lead me. You'll make me sensitive, and I'll have my eye on you so that I'll know when to be quiet, when to talk, when to be bold, when to pray for someone, when to command a demon to come out. That's how ministry happened there.

It wasn't set up and organized, it was a flow of life. Now, when I was in college, I sat in a meeting just like this, and God was starting to deal with me in my senior year. And in a meeting just like this, I heard a message just like this, and I came forward and said, God, man, I'm not even a strong Christian, but there's something in me I wanna be used by you.

I wanna be used by you. I wanna bless people. I wanna see Jesus lifted up.

So here's my paltry five loaves and two fishes. It's not much, but I give it to you, Jesus. Now, I was already feeling like there was something working in there for some kind of, could it be ministry? No, it can't be ministry.

Never dreamed I would ever pastor a church. But you see, if you respond to Jesus and you give him what you have, he'll take care of the rest. You don't have to worry about promotion, open doors.

He opens the door, nobody can shut. He'll do it. Our part is just to say, I wanna minister.

Now, we all need to now pray about ministry, but I wonder if there's some people up in the balcony or some young person or middle-aged person, you felt, no, it's too late for me. I'm at the age, I can't do what I've always dreamed of doing for God. That's a lie.

With God, all things are possible. Anybody here feel a call in the ministry, here, overseas, whatever? You could be as young as 14 years old or you could be 64 years old. Now, dear Jesus, we've heard your word and we've been convicted that we don't think about ministry.

We don't stay awake and alive to the spirit. We're not looking at people the way you would want us to look at them. How can I minister? How can I help them toward Christ? Can I say something? Can I love them? Can I show them in some practical way the grace of Christ? And Lord, today, we ask you to begin a new work in us so that we would be like the early believers were.

They went out and preached the gospel everywhere they went. They weren't bulls in China shops. They were sensitive, they were wise, they were loving, but they were spontaneous in their obedience to the Holy Spirit.

They didn't care what other people thought. They didn't want attention on them. They wanted all the attention to be on Jesus.

They didn't live in condemnation. They lived in freedom. For whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

You didn't call us to live in guilt no matter what we've done in the past. And finally, Lord, you imparted to them something, some faith, some love, some something, some hope, some grace that they could then impart to others and minister, and that's what we ask for today, starting with the speaker to the top of the balcony.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24096.mp3>

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