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ABE HUBER

Pastor Abe Huber is called “The Billy Graham of Brazil,” and because his niece, Sarah Walgren, is a member of our fellowship, our church was blessed to have him speak on October 7-9. God has used Abe to introduce a special cell-group model in San Teren, Brazil, and grow that church to 70,000 members, and then to spread this model to hundreds of others churches along the Amazon and as far away as Mongolia. Abe does not see himself as a big-shot, he understands that this is God’s work, and he is the most humble, loving, gentle, transparent guy you will ever meet. Following are some of the insights that I got from Pastor Abe:

- *Ekklesia* is the Greek word for church in the New Testament, and it is used more for the local church than for the universal church.
- Abe drew a heart on a white-board representing the universal church. Inside that heart he drew a smaller heart, representing the local church. Inside that heart he drew a smaller heart representing cell groups - - which he pointed out, scripturally, are central in the New Testament: Remember Jesus and the 12. *And daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.* (Acts 5:42) Inside the smallest heart, **representing cell groups, which really are the New Testament church**, he drew a tiny heart representing one-on-one discipleship.
- One-on-one discipleship, and cell groups that meet in homes, are the church, and the local church and universal church, including para-church ministries, exist to strengthen the basic church; i.e., the cell groups.
- Jesus has gifted certain people as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to build up and edify the church (cell groups) in order to equip the saints (cell group members) for the work of ministry. When a flock of sheep is healthy, they have lots of babies. The shepherds don’t have baby sheep, the sheep have baby sheep.
- Mature sheep are commissioned to disciple the less mature. They are simply used to channel God’s life into the disciple.
- God is the One who forgives our sins. When we confess our sins (repentance is implied) to God, He graciously forgives us. (1 John 1:9) But in order to be healed of our sins and their consequences, we must confess our sins to one another. (James 5:16) This work is normally done in the church (the cell group), where there is love, transparency, and confidentiality. (Do you really want to be free? Humble yourself and vomit it all up.)
- **SIN, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND JUDGMENT:** *I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.* (John 16:7-11)

The Father sits on His throne in heaven. The Son came to earth, but He ascended to heaven where He sits at the Father’s right hand, the place of honor.

The Holy Spirit is on the earth and sits on the throne of our hearts. The Holy Spirit came to earth where He – through the church, the Body of Christ – convicts the world:

(1) of sin. Note: sin, singular. The Holy Spirit will use you to convict the world of sin, not sins. People will be convicted by the Holy Spirit, or they will be condemned by the accuser/the devil, because of only one sin, as explained in Verse 9: *Because they don’t believe in Me.* Jesus forgave everyone’s sins on the cross (John 3:16-18), so the only sin that will bring condemnation is unbelief. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.* (1 Cor. 5:19)

(2) **and of righteousness.** The Holy Spirit will use you, your life, your way of living, to bring conviction to people about their manner of living. Abe said that when he was a boy about 8 or 10 years old he read in the Bible that sometimes angels “live among us unaware,” and that he became convinced his father, who was a pastor and a godly man, was secretly an angel. One day he asked his father if he was really an angel and was genuinely surprised when his father said no. There was a businessman in their town who was very intellectual and who boasted that he was an atheist. On one occasion that man had to spend two weeks with Abe’s father, and at the end of that time he went to his friends and said that his mind had been changed. Spending two weeks with Abe’s father had absolutely convinced him that there has to be a God! The righteous life lived by Abe’s father changed his mind and brought conviction to his heart. God is expecting you and me to live that kind of life.

(3) **and of judgment.** Through your life the Holy Spirit will demonstrate to the world that Satan has been defeated! *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.* (John 16:20)

• **A REVOLUTION IN THE WAY WE THINK** (Romans 12:2):

(1) **About numbers.** Many churches act as if it is shameful to go after numbers of people. But numbers represent souls, and *the Lord doesn’t want anyone to perish.* The Bible talks about numbers: *The number of disciples multiplied greatly.* We have to believe God for big growth. If there are about 160,000 people in Mesa County, you should believe for at least 10% - - 16,000 members in your church. You should pray for that and be expecting to have four or five services on the weekend.

(2) **About how to do ministry.** Ephesians 4 tells us that the sheep are to do the ministry. If the leaders here will feed and care for the sheep, the sheep will just naturally have lots of babies.

(3) **The Biblical Way of Ministry:** The church in the home! The cell is the smallest component of the human body with the DNA of all. Five books in the New Testament talk about the church in the home (and other books make reference to it): Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Philemon, Colossians.

(4) **Five Functions of a cell group:**

- Evangelism and integration
- Pastoral care and discipleship
- Fellowship
- Leadership training
- Growth and multiplication

(5) **Three Atmospheres of the cell group:**

- Atmosphere of love
- Atmosphere of joy
- Atmosphere of faith

Remember that nothing forced will work!

WHEN IN A FIX, PHILIPPIANS 4:6!

I started to title this article, “What, Me Worry?” because there are a multitude of things to worry about in our world right now. Right? (Weather out of control, terrorism, political insanity, looming financial collapse, etc.) But I wanted to use my favorite poem and the only poem I have memorized: “**When in a fix, Philippians 4:6!**” Let me share Phil. 4:6-7 from the NLT, and I encourage you to read it, meditate on it, and if possible memorize it:

Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Wow! What an amazing and encouraging promise from our heavenly Father. And the next verses (Verses 8-9) are equally needful:

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.....then the God of peace will be with you

The word “worry” in the New Testament is a Greek word whose root is derived from the word “choke.” Worry, anxiety, fear and stress truly choke off a person’s breath, rest and life. And the Bible tells us we don’t have to live like that, that God offers us another pathway. Philippians 4:6-9 describes that pathway.

James MacDonald says that our minds are limited to three channels: Channel 1 is the past, Channel 2 is the present, and Channel 3 is the future.

Some folks are tuned in to Channel 1. The screen brings up scenes, events, memories of the past: wounding things that other people said or did, and traumas, accidents, mistakes. Or embarrassing, hurtful things that they themselves did, or mistakes they made that wounded others. These memories dredge up bad things that resulted in life changing consequences for them and their loved ones.

The problem with Channel 1 is that we cannot change or correct any of those things that happened in the past. What we can do, by God’s grace, is forgive (others, God – if we have been blaming Him, and ourselves); and we can repent of our own sins and mistakes, ask God (and others, if appropriate) to forgive us; receive God’s forgiveness; AND CHANGE THE CHANNEL!

Other folks are tuned in to Channel 3. Their screen brings up awful, fearful scenes of the future: “What if I get cancer like my mother did? I don’t think my hospitalization would cover that. The way inflation is rising, how am I going to afford to retire? What if I should get Alzheimer’s? Or diabetes? Or ALS? What is going to happen to us if Donald or Hillary gets elected? (I just scared myself and had to go back to Philippians 4:6.) What if my son has a car accident or loses his job? Etc.”

The reality, of course, is that we cannot control the future. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus said:

So don't worry about these things, saying, "What shall we eat or drink or wear. These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today. (Matthew 6:31-34)

I can’t control my future health or my future finances or my family’s future. I can switch to Channel 2 and eat right and exercise, I can give faithfully and save when I can, I can love my family and pray for them. And I can commit us all into the hands of a loving Father and choose to trust Him.

And please consider the following insight from my Priceless Files:

BACK PAIN

Dr. John Sarno, professor of clinical rehabilitation at New York University School of Medicine, has treated thousands of patients with chronic back pain. Although he was a specialist in this area, his success in treating such patients was very poor, with many patients suffering for years or even decades. He discovered that injuries of the back, even herniated discs, are rarely responsible for their pain. He began to question his patients with chronic back pain and discovered that a whopping 88 percent of them had a history of tension-induced reactions. The back-pain sufferers also tended to experience the following: tension and migraine headaches, eczema, colitis, ulcers, asthma, hay fever, frequent urination, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Dr. Sarno concluded that painful back spasms and chronic back pain often resulted from chronic tension, stress, frustrations, anxiety, repressed anger and worry. He says that tension causes the blood vessels supplying the back muscles and nerves to constrict, thus reducing the blood supply and oxygen to the tissues. The result is painful spasms. This condition may eventually lead to numbness, the sensation of pins and needles, and decreased strength in the muscles. Muscle spasms in the back create constriction of the blood vessels that supply the muscles with blood and oxygen, a process that leads to decreased oxygen for muscles and nerves. The result is a cycle: more spasms and more pain create more anxiety and more tension, which create more spasms and more pain. Muscles of the neck, shoulders, arms and legs may also be impacted, leading to fibromyalgia, fibrositis, myofascitis, repetitive stress injury, and other conditions.

Following Dr. Sarno's research, he began to treat the underlying emotional components related to back pain as well as any structural abnormalities, and he began to experience an astonishing success rate. 90 to 95 percent of his patients reported they were pain-free and cured permanently.

Following are a few of many ancient insights from God's Word:

- *Many a time they afflicted me from my youth; the plowers plowed on my back.* (Psalm 129:2-3)
- *A calm and undisturbed mind are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rotteness of the bones.* (Prov. 14:30)
- *Pleasant words are sweet to the soul and health to the bones.* (Prov. 16:24)
- *A merry heart does good like medicine; but a broken spirit dries the bones.* (Prov. 17:22)

Following is the testimony that a lady in our church, Kathleen, gave me permission to use:

"Last year I was in a terrible condition. I had terrible pain in my back and limbs that prevented me from working, so I had no source of income, and my husband, who has been emotionally abusive, had kicked me out of our home. My father left us when I was 11 years old and I only saw him once more in my life. Then a miracle happened on November 12. You came to speak at my Alpha class and asked if anyone present had a chronic illness. You asked me to come forward and asked me a lot of questions about my past. We went through all the hurts and disappointments in my life, and one by one I released the pain, anger, resentment and grief. I felt lighter. Two days later I was walking down the seven stairs outside my condo and realized I had used only one foot on each step. I was amazed, as I had not been able to do that for three or four years. I had carefully placed both feet on each stair to reduce the pain. The next day I showed my eight year-old granddaughter and she was amazed. She said, 'Grandma, it's the hand of God!' The rest of the day we were running up and down the stairs. We walked around the lake near my home and even ran awhile.

I continued on that week and could get up from the couch without any pain in my limbs. I slept without waking up from pain. I told everyone I saw. I used to walk like I had wooden shoes on and cried in the night from pain. Two weeks later a friend helped me get a job with her company."

Kathleen said her newfound faith has been severely tested, but she is fighting the good fight of faith and is growing in the grace of God. Praise the Lord!

GRAHAM COOKE'S WONDERFUL INSIGHT

ABOUT ANXIETY

One other great example from my Priceless Files on this subject, from Graham Cooke: Graham Cooke says he has lived without any anxiety for more than 20 years, and this is the way he does it: He pictures himself in a house with a central living room or den, and that is the place where he meets with Jesus. Jesus lives there in that big room, and it is always a place of rest and peace. Surrounding this room are a number of doors leading into big closets. That is where Graham keeps his problems, concerns, trials, and prayer needs.

When a big problem intrudes into his life, and there are a lot of them, he consigns it to one of the closets. When he chooses to deal with that problem, he goes into that closet and prays about it. He may pray for several minutes or for an hour or more until he feels he has dealt with it as he should before God. Then he leaves the problem in the closet, goes out of the closet and locks the door. He will not allow that problem to enter into his den, his heart, his place of rest and peace. In his den he is abiding with Christ, and Christ does not have any fear or anxiety whatsoever. He thinks this is how Jesus lived a life of serenity and peace in the midst of trials and turmoil, and he believes that Jesus gave him this revelation of how we could all live in the same way He did.

Graham says that peace and rest are the place of spiritual warfare and the place of victory over the enemy. We can't fight the devil when we are full of anxiety and fear. Fear is a sign of lack of trust in God! It is a sign that we feel that we have to win this battle. It is not pleasing to God for us to run around with stress and anxiety. Are we going to trust Him or not?

Hebrews 4:1 says, *Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.* This is important to God and to you and me. This should be a central matter in our Christian faith. Prepare the big room in your heart as a place of rest and peace, and stop allowing the enemy to walk around in there with his dirty feet! Amen?

What are you going to do the next time you are in a fix?

When in a fix, Philippians 4:6.

MY FISHING ADVENTURE

One of the most beautiful places in Colorado is the forested mountain named The Grand Mesa just east of Grand Junction. It is described by Google as “the largest flat-top mountain in the world.” It rises to an elevation of 11,000 feet and covers an area of 55 by 35 miles. There are more than 200 fishing lakes on top, in addition to countless deer, elk, moose, bear, marmots and chip monks. From here in Grand Junction you can drive to the top, the nearest point, in about an hour.

My granddaughter, Jolee, and her husband, Micah, invited me to go with them on Saturday, October 1, to fish a lake that has been inaccessible to me in the past, Cottonwood #2. There are five Cottonwood lakes, and in the past I had fished them all except #2. To get to this lake, you must drive to the far end of Grand Mesa via the city of Collbran, ascend to the Cottonwoods, then go by 4-wheeler another 20 minutes or more to Cottonwood #2. This trip took us about 2-1/2 hours, and it was a jewel of a lake on a spectacular fall day.

Micah dropped me off at the lake and went back on the 4-wheeler to get Jolee. I walked down the lake, maybe 100 yards, casting a spotted Panther-Martin, and caught and released three nice trout. About that time Micah arrived back at the lake with Jolee, and I started feeling out of breath. I thought it was the altitude and sat on a rock for a while, but I was feeling weak and nauseated. I slowly made my back and sat in my lawn chair and felt sicker. I got a terrible, stabbing pain in my back, then I started dry-heaving, then my left arm got numb and tingly. The thought finally dawned, (Duh!) that I was having a heart attack.

I asked, “Lord, is this the day I am going to get to see You and be with You?” The thought gave me a shiver of excitement. At the same time, I felt sad at the idea of leaving my children and family and friends. I didn’t hear God reply to my question, but I felt a tremendous sense of peace and well-being although I was really sick and in a lot of pain.

I called Jolee and Micah over and told them what was going on, and I told them that that if I died I didn’t want them to feel guilty for bringing me fishing, that it was a great fishing trip and a beautiful place to go and meet the Lord. Then I started praying that God would allow me to make it to the hospital, as I didn’t want to die in front of Jolee and leave her with a traumatic memory.

Micah couldn’t get his 4-wheeler started! It seemed like forever but was probably only 10 or 15 minutes. He took me back to the truck, where he had some aspirin in the glove box, PTL! He then went back to get Jolee and brought her back - - then drove rather rapidly to the hospital in Grand Junction, all of which took about three hours. (No cell service where we were or we could have called for a helicopter.)

EKG and other tests showed that the main artery on the front of my heart was totally blocked - - and my doctor told me later that this is commonly called “The Widow Maker” because men even in their 30’s and 40’s die from this particular heart attack. The way it was described to me - - when an artery becomes blocked, the heart, or a part of the heart, immediately starts dying. In some cases (in my case), a spidery network of tiny vessels surrounding the heart permit just enough blood flow to keep the heart going, but getting medical help quickly is imperative. A stint was put in place by angiogram, by God’s grace I came home in four days, and on that same weekend attended a 3-day seminar led by Pastor Abe Huber from Brazil.

At my age, 90 in February, I have been feeling pretty limited and useless, and the Lord has not told me why He has given me some more time, but it is my plan to get to know Him better and to serve Him to my utmost for the rest of my days. He is so wonderful. He is so good and kind and faithful. Aren’t we blessed to know Him!

God Bless

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