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WHO IS THAT MAN?

(When Pastor Kirk Yamaguchi and his family took their vacation, he gave me the wonderful privilege of preaching in our church, Canyon View Vineyard, at the three services on Saturday and Sunday, May 24 and 25. I continued on the regular preaching progression, and my assignment was Mark 8:1-26, the story of Jesus feeding the 4,000; His confrontation with Pharisees and Herodians; and the healing of the man born blind. Following is my message, including a few places where I have expanded beyond what I had time to say in the message. I have indicated these additional remarks by surrounding them with double parentheses. Like so: ((.)) Because the message is too long for one Newsletter, I have divided it into two parts. Glenn)

MESSAGE - Part 1

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This weekend we continue in Mark 8:1-26.

Imagine a friend ran up to you and said, "Have you heard the news? There is a preacher over in Denver who is healing everybody who is sick! He is healing blind people, schizophrenics, paralyzed people....and they say he raised a little girl from the dead!" You say, "What! Who is that man?" You run in and turn on your television, and, sure enough, they are talking about it on all the channels. Then you hear that Hal Lindsay and John Hagee are telling everyone on their programs to watch out, that the guy in Denver is a faker and is using the power of the devil to heal people. (I just picked out Hal and John as an illustration, nothing against them.)

Your heart starts beating fast, because you have a little son in your home that is dying of cancer. It doesn't take you long to decide that you are going, and you are taking your desperately sick son.

Now let's skip back 2,000 years. You have decided to go on that trip with your sick child, but there are no cars, planes, or motels. You are going to have to walk, or go by burro, and carry your child. It is going to take you several days, and you must carry a knap sack of food, and you will be sleeping by the side of the road.

If you turn back to Mark chapter 3, you find the occasion when Jesus healed a great number of people in Capernaum, by the Sea of Galilee, and the text reports that a multitude came to Him from: Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, across the Jordan, and from Tyre & Sidon (which is up in present day Lebanon). If you will look up at the overhead, you will see each of these locations marked, and that the marks cover the entire map of Israel. If you climbed up one of the mountains surrounding the Sea of Galilee at the time, you would see people coming from every direction. Some would be walking on crutches, some blind people would be led by others, many people too sick to walk would be carried on litters being pulled by a burro or carried by men, and great crowds of curious people would be heading toward the Sea to hear this Man whose teaching was shaking the nation.

Mark 8 says that 4,000 men were gathered on this particular occasion, "Besides women and children," as reported in the parallel passage in Matthew 15:38. So, conservatively, it is estimated that 12,000 people were gathered on the hillside to hear Jesus preach. Many were trying to get near enough to receive prayer for healing. Three days passed, and Jesus told His disciples to feed the people, since they had gone without food during that time and it was obvious they were famished. How are we going to feed them? the disciples responded. The disciples were slow to catch on. Jesus had fed an even larger crowd a few days before (Mark 6).

All they had on hand was a boy's lunch, seven loaves of bread and a few fish -- about what I have in this basket. Seven rolls (not loaves of bread like we get at the store, but rolls such as these). Jesus started passing bread and fish to the disciples, who started passing them on to the crowd. I'm sure the food multiplied at the hands of the disciples since one man could not physically pass out food fast enough for 12,000 starving people. These famished people kept eating and eating until they were completely satisfied, with bread and fish left over! These rolls in the basket weigh 16 ounces, and the fish would weigh about the same. If each person ate only two pounds of food, and I think famished people would eat much more, that means they were supplied with 24,000 pounds of bread and fish, or twelve tons! ((The people sitting immediately before Jesus must have started looking around to see where the disciples were obtaining this huge quantity of food. But no camel trains or donkeys laden with bread and fish were zipping in like Wal-Mart trucks. They must have had a growing sense of wonder as they realized that something unexplainable was happening before them.))

((If you will read Heidi Baker's book, There Is More, about God using her and Rolland, her husband, to transform the nation of Mozambique, the poorest nation on earth, you will find several reports where God performed a similar miracle. In the 1980's a huge, 500-year flood overwhelmed Mozambique, almost destroying the nation, and isolating thousands on little islands where they were starving. On several occasions, Rolland and Heidi were flown in to these desperate people via helicopter, carrying only enough food for perhaps a few hundred people. She told of times when they would be swarmed by thousands of people. She and Rolland decided they would pass out the food until it ran out, but it did not run out! They fed the multitude until all had been fed!))

Mark 8:17. After Jesus was confronted by a group of Pharisees and Herodians, Jesus and the disciples leave in a boat to go to the other side of the Sea. Jesus tells the disciples to beware the leaven, or the yeast, of the Pharisees (hypocrisy, religion, greed), and of the Herodians (worldliness, power, wealth, denial of the supernatural). They think Jesus is complaining that they forgot to bring bread. Jesus is upset. He says, "What's the matter with you guys? Are you blind? Don't you get it? You have been with me when I have healed the blind and deaf, when I walked on water, when I raised a dead girl, and today when I fed over 12000 people. Don't you realize who I am?" He asked later, "Who do men say I am? Who do you say I am?" This was the crucial question for them, and for us. "Who was, who is, that Man?"

I see a connection between this story and the manna that fell for 40 years on the nation of Hebrews in the wilderness. God gave the multitude bread, Jesus gave the multitude bread. And He said later, "It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, it was my Father, and I am the Bread of God that came down from Heaven to give life to the world!" That is what I believe He wanted them to see! And the communion we were just served is also connected to this story. Jesus said, "Eat my flesh, and drink my blood (spiritually) in order to receive my life!" **JESUS IS THE BREAD THAT GOD HAS GIVEN FOR OUR VERY LIFE!**

I want to talk to you about Faith and Unbelief. I am making an assumption, forgive me if I am mistaken. Some of you have heard all of this before, many times: Jesus healed the blind, Jesus raised the dead, Jesus walked on the water, Jesus was resurrected. You are sitting there looking at the preacher with your eyes open, but your brain has checked out. You don't believe any of it! I could have said, Open your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy and we will talk about the space ship that landed in Roswell, NM, and the little green men who are taking over the earth, and you would have said, Amen, brother! You have been inoculated against really hearing the Bible story today.

We compartmentalize. What do you get in church? Religious inspiration. The Bible, a book of ancient mythology. "Of course, it is not literally true. Nobody really believes it." Why do we think like that? Besides the natural resistance in our fallen human nature, we are raised in a culture of unbelief, steeped in skepticism, humanism, rationalism. From kindergarten to graduate school, in entertainment, the media, everywhere, we get the message: "CHRISTIANS ARE IDIOTS! TRUE BELIEVERS ARE RIDICULOUS!" The worst thing you can say about a person in the public forum is to call him a "fundamentalist." What is a fundamentalist? Someone who really believes the Bible.

Hold on a minute! The Great Commandment tells us to love God with all our heart, soul, MIND, and strength. It never tells us to check our brains at the door. I challenge any who are genuinely struggling with intellectual questions about your faith: read two books that are available in our book store: Josh McDowell's classic book, Evidence that Demands a Verdict,

which deals with the reliability of the Bible. And read Lee Strobel's book, The Case for a Creator. Lee is a brilliant Yale-educated lawyer. He interviews Nobel prize winners in nine disciplines: astronomy, microbiology, astrophysics, geology, etcetera, getting a scientific perspective on the question of creation. I believe there are answers to our legitimate questions, at least answers that take us as far as human intelligence can. But, many folks use intellectual questions as a smokescreen to cover their rebellion against God. If you are not willing to explore your questions even as far as reading a couple of books, you are probably not really looking for answers.

Christianity, as you know, is more than concepts, or philosophy, or history. It is turning over control of your life to God. It is getting out of the driver's seat of your life. When we kneel at the altar in prayer, or when we hold our hands up in praise ("Put 'em up!"), that is a vulnerable position. That is an attitude of surrender, and that is very difficult, especially for men. To truly decide to become a Christian is to identify with those "true believers" that are ridiculed by Bill Moyers and The Simpsons, and sometimes for good reason! There are a lot of flaky Christians out there (none in here, of course). Jesus said those who come to Him must "Come like a little child." And He said that is the only way a person can come to him. That is humbling! And that is the idea.

Let me tell you what I believe about our church: Revival is coming to our church. Many will be saved here. Their lives will change. If people's lives don't change, if they don't repent and turn away from their sins, then they haven't been saved, they just got religious. Healing is going to become normal in our church. Not only will people not be intimidated to come for prayer for sickness, but many will become bold enough to start praying for the sick. Many will be set free from the torment of demonic control.

Why do I believe these things? Because Pastor Kirk is preaching the Bible, and "Faith comes by hearing," and hearing, and hearing. For a preacher, you get what you preach: if you preach salvation, people start getting saved. If you preach healing, people start getting healed. If you preach repentance and holiness, people start cleaning up their act. If you preach deliverance, people start getting free from darkness. If you preach the baptism of the Holy Spirit, people start receiving the gifts and power of God.

Faith comes by hearing. But, please hear this: faith also comes by choosing to believe the Gospel, the Bible. That is to say, faith is not something that happens to you, it is always an act of your will. "Repent, and believe the Gospel, the good news about Jesus." That is a commandment. You choose to obey, or you choose to not obey. "Well," some might say, "I can't just choose to believe it, I'm not sure it's true." No, of course not, no one is "really sure" it's true before they make that decision. That's why it's called "faith." John Wimber said faith is spelled R-I-S-K.

A man said he went to a swimming pool and saw a little four-year old boy standing on the edge of the pool, and his father was standing in the pool encouraging his son to jump. "Come on, Johnny, jump to Daddy!" The little boy squatted as if to jump, then stood up. "Come on, Johnny, don't be afraid!" The boy squatted and stood up again. He squatted and stood up four times before getting enough courage and faith in his father to jump. Many folks sitting in church have been squatting and standing up for years. They have come to the point of decision again and again. It's time to jump. Father has never dropped anyone yet.

Some people sit in church and hear the pastor talk about "a personal relationship with God," about "hearing God" communicate to them in some fashion, about getting revelations from God, and they think: "I never experience anything like that." But those things come after you make a leap of faith, not before.

(Continued next month.)

DO YOU WANT TO BE A HERO OF THE FAITH?

Steve Saint is the son of Nate Saint, one of the five young men who were martyred by the Auca Indians on the Amazon some 50 years ago. Please read his book, The Great Omission. In this book, he asks the question, "Do you want to be a hero of the faith? Following are the requirements he lists to be such a hero:

- (1) You must be ordinary. If you are ordinary, that is a good start.
- (2) Do you love Jesus? Have you accepted eternal life? You have to be a part of the family to become a family hero.
- (3) Are you willing to trust God and His vision for your life and let Him steer you where He wants to take you? He is the only one who knows the way.

- (4) Can you persevere?
- (5) It helps if you are naturally weak. "For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10)
- (6) Do you want your life to be significant? God has a plan for the world, and a role for you, if you want significance! No experience necessary.
- (7) If you want to be a hero of the faith, remember this: It is not dependent on who you are. It depends on what you let God do with you (your mission), on why you do it (your motive), and on whom you do it for (your master).

YOU CAN BECOME A HERO OF THE FAITH!

BOB JONES' PROPHECIES

Many of you are familiar with Bob Jones, who is widely recognized as a prophet. I am leery of those who call themselves prophets unless I know them or know reliable people who vouch for them. Bob is elderly, which is in his favor. Ha! He is also closely connected to Rick Joyner's ministry, which is definitely in his favor. He has a pretty amazing record of accuracy over the years in his prophecies. That is not to say that we should uncritically accept his prophecies, but you know that. Prophetic words are to be "tested," according to the Bible. With this disclaimer, I will share some prophetic words from Bob (and maybe from God) about 2008. These prophecies were given in January, 2008:

- God says that His people must be especially careful about the words we speak this year. We must learn to bridle our tongues!
 - We must contend for the good things spoken to us in prophecies in past times. God's plans for us do not happen automatically, but must be fought for.
 - I saw three waves crossing our nation: the first wave was a wave of **joy**, that came through the revival at Toronto; the second wave was a wave of **repentance and intercession**, that came through the revival at Pensacola; the third wave that is now coming is a wave of **commitment**. This will prepare the church for the fourth wave that is to come.
 - I had a dream of a tiger followed by a leopard. God spoke a pun to me about the CAT scale (to weigh trucks), and said a huge time of shaking is upon us. On the CAT scale, the lion is a number 10. A lion is greater than a tiger because lions run in packs and tigers are solitary hunters. We need the Lion of the tribe of Judah!
 - The enemy plans to bring anxiety, fear, and panic on the people of the U.S. Take authority over it!
 - I saw something big happening in our nation in the heartlands between June 22 and July 22. (Note: Something big has already happened with the unprecedented floods in Iowa, Illinois, etc., that will have a huge impact on cost of food, etc. John Kilpatrick, pastor of the Pensacola revival, also has published a prophecy about a possible huge catastrophe in central USA, and specifically had a dream about an earthquake around the New Madrid fault line. Bob ameliorates his prophecy by saying that God wants something big to happen in our heartlands during this period of time.)
 - July 20 to August 9 has historically been a time when the enemy has launched destructive attacks against Israel.
 - I saw extreme weather patterns coming, winds that would shut down whole towns. The natural is a pattern of what God is doing in the spiritual realm. I believe winds of the Holy Spirit are coming that will shut down whole towns.

You might spend some time praying about these prophecies, and whatever else we do, we should be seriously praying for our country and for Israel.

MINISTRY ON THE AMAZON

On June 3-7, I had the fantastic opportunity to minister in Caballo Cocha, Peru, on the Amazon. I flew to Miami, to Bogota (spent the night), to Leticia, Colombia, turned left and went up the Amazon for 50 or 60 miles in a river boat, and checked in at the best, and only hotel in town (\$10 a night). I shared teaching time for 3-1/2 days with two other handsome, virile young ministers, one from Bogota, Colombia (Spanish), and one from Tabatinga, Brazil (Portuguese).

Caballo Cocha is a town of 9,000. The people subsist mostly by fishing and raising exotic fruit, or by providing transportation with their moto-taxi fleet (a 3-wheeled motorcycle with room for two passengers, similar to a rickshaw). An

economical way to get around, but they ran around all night directly under my open window. (I slept through it all.) I can verify that it rains in the rain-forest. It rains every day. Sometimes it rains gently for hours, sometimes it rains buckets. We had to stop our teaching in the big church one day because the rain on the metal roof was like thunder. Also, there are insects in the rain-forest. They are ubiquitous! When we ate our evening meal in a little restaurant, the gnats insisted on parking on our food. Ladies carried umbrellas around the plaza in the evenings even when it wasn't raining, to keep the hordes of gnats and other bugs out of their hair. One day I came to my room in the hotel and found two black bugs, the size of small mice, walking around in my bathroom. (They were debating the question of whether my hide was too old to be edible.)

The people in Caballo Cocha are mostly poor. I walked around and looked into their houses: 1X12 boards standing on end, some with dirt floors; most with concrete floors; furniture was a hammock and one or two plastic lawn chairs; in some houses I saw a little wooden table; in one a tiny, antique refrigerator; in another a tiny TV.

The church was a brisk 15 or 20 minute walk from the hotel. Or we could ride most of the way in a moto-taxi. The catch was that the last three blocks were mud, with a concrete road under construction. Since it rained all the time, on and off, my game plan was to walk through the mud as fast as possible. I always had mud splashes all the way to my waist. I looked like a mud pie. My frustration was that my two co-pastors walked through the same mud with light colored pants and brown leather shoes, and there was not a spot of mud anywhere but on the bottom of their soles! Really, I am not making this up. I have no idea how they did that, except with the help of some sort of rain-proof angels. (It's not fair!)

There were some 300 pastors, leaders, and wives in attendance. On Sunday morning many more attended. Jaime Useche told me that many of them traveled two or three days on the river to attend the seminar. He said the average pastor is very poor, usually eating only one meal a day. Their congregation doesn't give them money (Peruvian "reales," which are worth 1,700 to the dollar), since they don't have any. They give them what they have: fish and fruit. My heart was touched by these dear people who serve the Lord in such a sacrificial way. We had an open-air crusade each evening in the plaza, and on one night people stood for several hours in rain to receive the teaching and the outstanding dramas put on by a team of Bible school young people from Oklahoma. A total of about 500 people came forward to accept Christ during the evening crusades, which is amazing in a city of 9,000!

I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry.

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I did not preach at the evening meetings, but had many hours of teaching during the days. The response was tremendous. Many were healed spiritually, emotionally, and physically. At an evening meeting, a 14-year old boy was apparently healed of epilepsy (I won't take space to tell his story), and many were healed of tumors; of chronic sore throats (I have learned from going to Mexico that chronic sore throats are nearly always connected to witchcraft in the family and, by God's grace, I have a very high batting average of seeing God free them of the darkness and heal them of the sore throats. PTL!); also many were apparently healed of STD's (there is much sexual abuse and sexual sin, and STD's are rampant). Jaime told me at the end of the seminar that many of the pastors came to him and thanked him for bringing me down to share the teaching on inner healing and deliverance. They had never received any teaching in this area during their entire Christian lives! Wow! Isn't it wonderful that God can use even an antique to accomplish a part of His good purpose for His children! (I am certainly ordinary and weak, so if God can use me, He can use anybody.)

God Bless,

Glenn