

Life Group Notes 9/8/2024

Pastor Richie Cayabyab

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net. Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Richie has raised this week, 9/8. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include many of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On the "sense of awe" that came over the disciples, and the fear of the Lord.](#)
2. [On the baptism of Jesus.](#)
3. [On the "five-fold" ministry.](#)

*****Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. ***

Pastor Richie began by recalling the history of GCC going back to Pastor Peter Bonanno, and then he said, "If you're here, it is not an accident." Things happen, he says, that draws us to a place where we meet.

1. Have you heard this before?
2. Do you have a story?
3. Was it difficult to come to life group? To church on Sunday?
4. Is it sometimes a struggle? Why, do you think it is?
5. Have you overcome that struggle? Do you have hints, as in...steps you took to overcome the struggle?
6. What brings you week after week?
7. What did you get from Richie's message?

Richie says, "When I came from the Philippines, comfort in the Philippines was not the number one priority. In the Philippines, the number one priority was survival. In America, the number one priority is comfort."

1. Can you explain?
2. Have you ever lived in another country?
3. Is comfort the top priority in this culture?

4. Do you leave a space between you and your closest neighbor, when you choose your seat in church? Do you choose your seat where there is more room?
5. Can you explain this?
6. Describe how you would feel if GCC were standing room only?
7. What would you do?
8. Did Richie's word today make you uncomfortable? Explain?

Richie recounted how his first life group began at Panera.

1. Do you remember? And no one showed up?
2. How awkward would it be to sit and wait for a "group" to show up, week after week?
3. Has that ever happened to you?
4. What did Richie do to grow the Group?
5. What did God do to grow the group? Why is this important to remember?
6. Richie says, "I believe God is calling us to be in relationship with one another." How does that work?
7. How does He make it happen? What is your role?

Look up Acts 2: [42](#)They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. [43](#)A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. [44](#)All the believers were together and had everything in common. [45](#)Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. [46](#)With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, [47](#)praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

1. What do you see?
2. Explain the purpose of these "scribe's notes" every week? What are you doing?
3. Has it struck you that this is how the early church began to grow?
4. What produces in you the desire to review what you heard each week?
5. What produces the desire to review what you heard with others who shared the experience?
6. What produces the awe? How does the Holy Spirit surpass expectations and thus produce that awe? How is He bigger than life itself?
7. Have you ever lived in a situation where you all had everything in common and shared? Do you have a testimony?
8. GCC has great favor in the town of Pembroke. Why do you think this is? If you're an "old timer" at GCC, what did Peter Bonanno do to curry favor with the town?
9. Describe the emotions Luke talks about in verses 46 and 47. Where did that come from? Have you known these emotions?
10. Describe the behavior of the early disciples. Make a list from this passage of what they did to maintain a degree of fervor?
11. Has anything changed since then?
12. When did this change happen?
13. What caused a change?

Go back to Acts 1:⁴And while they were gathered together, He commanded them: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift the Father promised, which you have heard Me discuss. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁷Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority.⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹After He had said this, they watched as He was taken up, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near the city, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they arrived, they went to the upper room where they were staying: Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴With one accord they all continued in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

1. Describe the very first life group. What were the qualities of the group?
2. Did they have the Holy Spirit from the very beginning?
3. What did they have in common?
4. To what extent does a common experience form a bond?
5. What were they missing at the beginning?
6. Why did they wait?
7. Exactly what were Jesus' instructions? What brought the Holy Spirit?
8. What is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus?
9. What role does obedience play in the power of the church and of life groups altogether?
10. Do you know if you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, i.e. with the baptism of Jesus?

Richie, next, spoke in tongues...do you remember?

1. How did you respond?
2. Have you been in a place where everyone around you was speaking another language? How did you feel?
3. Do you speak in tongues? What is this gift?
4. When Richie told you that he was actually speaking his native language, did you relax? Why?
5. Is it easier to accept someone's native language than to accept when a Christian speaks in tongues? Explain.

Now, take a minute to look at what Joel heard promised in Joel 2: ²⁸And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹Even on My menservants and maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit in those days. ³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the LORD. ³²And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has promised, among the remnant called by the LORD.

1. List the phenomena Joel has listed here.
2. What happened on that day in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, the first day of the Spirit-filled church?
3. What from this prophecy did not happen on the day of Pentecost?
4. What do we have to look forward to? How soon?
5. How many of these phenomena that Joel lists here have you witnessed yourself?
6. Which ones can you expect to see in your own lifetime...at any moment?
7. Did Joel prophesy the gift of tongues? Who did, and where? (Hint: Mark 16)
8. If you know your sons and your daughters will soon prophesy, will you listen to them more attentively?
9. How do you know when someone is prophesying?
10. Do you expect to hear prophecy? Why or why not?
11. Do you dream dreams? Or do you only see visions? Or both?

Now look at the crowd's reaction to the first Spirit-filled disciples: Acts 2: [37](#) *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"* [38](#) *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39](#) This promise belongs to you and your children and to all who are far off—to all whom the Lord our God will call to Himself."*

1. What do you see?
2. Why did they ask Peter what they should do? What was special about this crowd?
3. Have you ever felt as though the Spirit was talking to you directly? Do you have a testimony?
4. What does it mean to repent?
5. According to Joel's prophecy above, upon whom will the Spirit be poured? What does "all" mean when he says, "ALL flesh?" Who is left out?
6. Has anything changed since the day of Pentecost?
7. What evidence have you seen that the Holy Spirit is still being poured out?
8. What requirements does Peter list in verse 38?
9. Who does Peter say this promise is for?
10. Who is excluded? Have you been called to Him?
11. What changes come to Jerusalem when 3000 people believe, repent and get baptized?
12. Look again at [Acts 2:42 above](#). Why did more "life groups" suddenly form and become so important to the first disciples?

Richie lists the three most important reasons for life groups:

- **Reason 1: To encourage one another.**

1. Look at Hebrews 10:23-25 [23](#) *Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. [24](#) And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. [25](#) Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* What do you see?
2. If you obey this precept, who is on your mind?
3. Have you ever had such a habit of neglect as the author describes in verse 25?
4. Can you encourage others without ever meeting?

5. Of what "Day" is the author of Hebrews speaking at the end of the verse? Can it be the same Day that Joel speaks of, above?
6. How much more important is obedience to this precept today than it was two thousand years ago, when it was first shared with the church? Why?
7. Jesus prophesied that in the last days, because iniquity abounds, the love of many will grow cold. How does meeting together become the cure and answer to that threat?
8. Are we closer to that Day? How do you know?
9. It is said, "The gifts of the Spirit are not for the individual...but to be delivered by the individual to his neighbor." Explain. Does the mailman ever set out with an empty truck? Does the mailman have any purpose if there are no houses to deliver to on his route?
10. Do you have a delivery route...with no life group "home" to deliver to? Whom do you stir up unto love and good works?
11. How does a community build each other up in courage, and in abilities? How does that work?

- **Reason 2: To confess sins and to grow with one another.**

Look up Ephesians 4: [11](#)And it was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, [12](#)to equip the saints for the work [task] of ministry and to build up the body of Christ, [13](#)until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, as we mature to the full measure of the stature of Christ. [14](#)Then we will no longer be infants, tossed about by the waves and carried around by every wind of teaching and by the clever cunning of men in their deceitful scheming. [15](#)Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Christ Himself, who is the head. [16](#)From Him the whole body, fitted and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love through the work of each individual part.

1. What do you see?
2. Are there really crafty doctrines designed to mislead?
3. How do you avoid them? What is your guide?
4. Is this passage about specific titles or specific PURPOSE?
5. What is the ultimate purpose of meeting?
6. Who grows up?
7. Who gets unified?
8. Whom do we ALL come to know this way?
9. Who gets left out, if we continue to meet?
10. Who gets left out if I stop meeting?
11. Look at verse 12: What is the "work/task" of ministry? (When you yourself become mature, whom do you get to build up and equip?)
12. What does a church look like if we have been "fitted and held together" by the Head? What about us would be different?
13. What will it take for you and me to get to that point of mutual ministry?
14. What does it mean to "stop drinking milk?"
15. Look up James 5: [16](#)*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail.* What do you see? What is the promise born of obedience to James' exhortation?
16. Can you do this and obey the scripture without meeting together?

- **Reason 3: To follow Christ's command**

1. Look up Mark 8: [34](#)*Then Jesus called the crowd to Him along with His disciples, and He told them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up*

his cross and follow Me. [35](#)For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it. What do you see?

2. How is “taking up your cross and following Jesus” the same as the “work” of the ministry Paul spoke of above?
3. Whom are you serving when you take up your cross? (Whom was Jesus serving when He took up His?)
4. Can you out-serve Jesus? Who wins if you try?
5. What does it mean to deny yourself?
6. To whom are you accountable? How does that work?

Pastor Richie spoke a Word of Wisdom, saying, “God did not give us the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to make us comfortable. He gave us the Comforter so we could endure when things get uncomfortable.”

1. Explain.
2. Do you have a testimony?
3. If we have the Holy Spirit as our Guide, our Teacher, our Comforter and our Advocate, describe a situation where all this is NECESSARY? What are we facing?
4. To what extent is sitting on a couch with a remote in our hands involved?

Review Matthew 28: [18](#)Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. [19](#)Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, [20](#)and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

1. Is Jesus’ authority limited?
2. What does His “Therefore” imply concerning the authority that has been entrusted to us?
3. What do we teach others?
4. Who taught you obedience? Richie asks, “Who is discipling you?”
5. How good is your own obedience? Whom are you discipling? Do you have a testimony?
6. Look at His final promise: How is that comforting?

• **Final reason for life groups: It has always been God’s way unto discipleship.**

1. Explain.
2. Why is it that discipleship cannot be learned at home alone?
3. Can you list the ingredients required for discipleship.
4. Explain this: If God commands us to love one another, why will there always be someone we have a difficult time within our life group?
5. How do you handle difficult people in your groups?
6. Rate yourself: Do you get offended easily? Or are you unoffendable?
7. What is your secret?
8. Richie exhorts us to be willing to allow people to speak life into our lives. What steps have you taken?
9. What steps are you willing to take?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. List what steps you need to take to grow up.
3. Think, “What have I denied myself?” Answer the question and make a list. Then answer this: Did I lose or gain when I denied myself?

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On the sense of “awe” that came over the disciples and the fear of the Lord.** This is review, but it is good to remember the biblical language on a day where Pastor Richie is warning us that our comfort is not his aim: The “awe” that came over the disciples after the Holy Spirit came on the church is the Greek word, φόβος, (*phobos*...as in phobia), and it means **panic flight, fear, the causing of fear, terror**, secondarily another source defines it as (a) fear, terror, alarm, (b) the object or cause of fear, (c) reverence, respect. The “awe” related to the very real presence of God in the early church watched leaders raise others from the dead...and (Acts 5) saw believers drop dead after lying to the Holy Spirit. In the days ahead, only a God more powerful than the evil that is at war with our souls can save our children and even us ourselves. To what degree should our comfort matter in His presence? Further, Joel’s prophecy cited by Peter on Pentecost, and above, speaks of the great and “awesome” day of the Lord...The word he uses is the Hebrew word, אַרֵי (*yare*). If you guessed it means “terrifying/filled with dread” you would not be wrong. If perfect love drives out all fear...that perfect love begins to dawn on us BECAUSE there is fear to be driven from us. Love becomes the absence of fear because Love conquered fear and death. And this is why we gather!
2. **On the baptism of Jesus**—John the Baptist testified, “I baptize you with water. There is one coming after me whose sandal I’m not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with Fire.” Throughout the Book of Acts, Luke distinguishes between John’s baptism with water and Jesus’ baptism of the Holy Spirit. The latter, the Baptism of Jesus, is essential for the Walk with God to which we are called. Read the book of Acts with this in mind, and see what Promise comes with Jesus’ Baptism. Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
3. **On the “five-fold” ministry**—One of the key passages relative to the effective working of the ministry to a healthy Body of Christ is in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians [cited above](#) where he lists five aspects of ministry leadership: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists. Often, in today’s church you will hear speakers tell the audience, “You might not be one of the five-fold ministers...but...” The glaring error in this claim is in the unspoken implication that there is an “us/them” hierarchy: “I’m one and you’re not.” A teacher called by God can help with this claim, because, of the so-called “Big Five,” the teacher is dismissed as needless by John the apostle, who, in his first epistle, deliberately tells the body, “You have no need that any should teach you...,” and the prophets buttress the claim,

telling us plainly, “You will all be taught by God.” A teacher’s job is simply this: to point to the Teacher sent by God, the Holy Spirit, and so, put himself out of a job and out of the way. If I do my job correctly, you become the teacher. If I’m excellent at what I do, you will become a better teacher than I could ever hope to be. The same is actually true of each of the above leaders. An apostle has been sent by God to make disciples...for the purpose of making more disciples. Apostles make apostles as prophets raise up prophets. Together we perfect the saints to do what Jesus Himself did and sent us ALL out to continue. You were deliberately and intentionally sent by God Himself to your family and to your immediate circle. By definition, you have been called an apostle by God.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Acts 2:22-24
Tuesday: Psalm 16:5-7
Wednesday: Psalm 16:8-12
Thursday: Acts 2:42-47
Friday: Joel 2:28-32
Saturday: Acts 2:37-40
Sunday: Hebrews 10:23-25

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.