

How to Bring Heaven in Healthcare

Episode 4: Creating a Heavenly Culture Full Transcript [Length of episode: 33:54 minutes]

Pete Carter

In this session I'm joined by my friends Dave Foggon and Sasha Caridia. Dave is one of the senior leaders here at Eastgate and a member of the HiH team, and Sasha is also a member of the HiH team and works as an emergency medical care practitioner. We are going to explore the ways in which you can create the culture of heaven wherever you are and especially in your workplace.

Dave Foggon

So, we all know that healthcare is an incredibly pressurised environment. There are all kinds of different challenges that people working in that world face. As Christians in working in the health sector we also have access to heaven resources of heaven, the peace and the joy of heaven. A big question though that people are going to be wondering is what does that look like, and how do I actually release that into that environment.

Pete Carter

I think that is a really important question that we have to tackle. No doubt healthcare is a high pressure environment, and whatever part you play in it - you can even be ancillary staff - actually, maybe you are a cleaner or a porter, but you feel the importance of what you're doing because you are contributing to people's wellbeing and literally saving lives. So I think it's very relevant for everybody. It gets probably more relevant for those right up at the coalface at the delivery of critical healthcare, but there's no doubt that is a problem. Certainly in the UK. My experience of seeing health provision in other countries is that everybody is feeling that pressure right now. And another part of the pressure is this lack of resources to meet demand, because the demand is growing, and trying to find the resources to meet that demand is creating a very high pressure environment, and I think you'd agree with that Sasha wouldn't you, in your place of work?

Sasha Caridia

Yeah, certainly we will find that with the numbers coming through the door, you get to the point where you think 'When are you going to stop...what is happening?!' So it can be. And pressure for lots of different reasons - not just people coming to us, but obviously sometimes the atmospheres and the internal workings of the health service in terms of who you are working with and where you're working at.

Dave Foggon

...and I guess one of the challenges of a discussion like this where we're talking about 'oh, you can be the solution...you can bring heaven to earth' is if you're

approaching this with a 'oh, its something that I need to do' mindset, it almost feels like more pressure, doesn't it?

Pete Carter

Yeah, it can feel like that. That suddenly I've got to be 'the good guy' in the environment but I'm feeling so pressurised myself. So yeah, you don't want to add that on. It's like not adding healing on as another thing you have to do - as if somehow as a Christian you have to become good at that as well and not feel I'm struggling with any of this. So, the Bible has actually got a lot of great answers to this problem I believe, so if we actually look at it from a biblical point of view, then Paul in Corinthians talks about when he is under real pressure and all sorts of persecution. He talks about his 'light and momentary trouble', which for most of us would not have been light - it would have been severe pressure - and there is a phrase where he talks about 'hard pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair'. And I think that's a really helpful concept - that somehow we can be in that hard, pressured situation but not get crushed within it; we can be perplexed which really is 'I don't understand all this' but I don't get into despair. There are some things where it's very difficult to understand what's going on and you are trying to deliver your Christianity and great healthcare into that situation, and is it making a difference? People's lives get lost and that is very difficult, and you are meant to feel that sort of thing - it is an emotional context as well. It would be wonderful to have a 100% record in healthcare but we don't, so you have to deal with the challenges of loss and failure, (or whatever you want to call that) and there's an illustration which I have used for many years which I think's very helpful, which I'll do right now if that's OK.

This is just a straightforward drinks can which at the moment is not open, and I'm trying to crush it, and it doesn't matter how hard I press that, I can't get it to crush - do you want to have a go at that Sasha? [laughter!] Now we are applying a lot of pressure to this, but we can't crush it. Not if we actually just pour this out, now Sasha I want you to crush that can [laughter - Sasha crushes can] So, if we look at this - crushing that can is very difficult - crushing this one takes very little pressure, and the key difference is the pressure inside. So these cans are in themselves exactly the same, but what's inside - the pressure inside - is what makes this one able to withstand pressure. So we need to be confident in the internal pressure that we have inside us as Christians - pressure in a really good way. Because we actually have the resources of God inside us, we have the living God inside us in the form of the HS and he is greater than anything that's in the world. Our internal reality is greater than any external reality. Now we need to learn how to live like that and not get crushed. So it is not uncommon for people to find themselves crushed, so the answer to that is not trying to get rid of some of the external pressure, (although that can be helpful) but the answer is in strengthening our internal reality which is a key issue.

Dave Foggon

...and ultimately that's really about changing our thought life, and what we believe rather than I have to do this and I have to do that.

Pete Carter

If you talk about Jesus, he withstood enormous pressure. None of us could imagine the pressure that he endured, particularly on the cross. The weight of human sin throughout all history weighed upon him. That's someone who knew what pressured looked like, and yet he withstood it. But Jesus was always confident in his 'being', not his 'doing' as such, so he always said I am this, I am that, so his internal reality was unflinching – I am this, I am that. So Jesus didn't say 'I'm going to do this' – he was confident in who he was in any situation. One of the things I think about is the lady who had been bleeding for 12 years and when she approached him she said if I can touch him, I'll get healed. He didn't even know she was there; he didn't try to heal her. She accessed what was already available within him and then she benefited from it. So his internal reality actually overflowed into that lady's life and created that difference. So I think we have got to learn how to be confident and grown in that internal strength and I think the bible has got quite a lot to say about that as well.

Dave Foggon

I think for me, it's useful to think about when we use phrases like 'releasing the KoG' or 'bringing heaven to earth', what that actually means. Because not everybody will necessarily understand what that means and ultimately what we're talking about is the presence of God, because the KofG is in the presence of God. What I love is that with Jesus, when he was baptised, the father declared his unconditional love for his son, and then that was tangibly manifested with the HS. It said the HS remained on him. And in Ephesians 3:19 Paul said – that's essentially what we have. You pray for us to know this love that surpasses all knowledge that we would be filled with all the fullness of God, and that's an experiential knowledge that were talking about, not a head knowledge – so it's an experiential knowledge that surpasses all head knowledge. So really, experiencing his love is cultivating his presence in our day to day lives and that love is completely unconditional.

So really, what does it look like to bring heaven to us all? Well in one sense, it's very simple. Just let God love you. In the middle of your daily life, be intentional about stealing away a moment, and that doesn't necessarily mean stopping the task that you're doing, but in your thought life, steal away a moment to let him love you in the middle of it all. And I think that's something that I know that you do really, really well and everybody loves hearing your stories about what God's been up to in your life, because that's something that you've been cultivating for a while, isn't it, Sasha?

Sasha Caridia

Yeah. And it's interesting because I was thinking about this recently that [this] is where I'm at now, but I haven't always been in that place and it's been – I feel like – a process. So, I became a Christian and and 'Yeah, great, I'm saved....and that's fantastic'. I had some experiences of Holy Spirit, quite profound ones early on, and then that stopped for various reasons. Something that happened that I became afraid of – I didn't need to be afraid of – but it was an explanation, given I decided (because I'm pretty much black and white) 'Well, I don't want that because I want this to be OK'. And then just shut

that down as such. So He's always been there, but not to the degree that He could be present in that sense.

So working in the ambulance service and I would have conversations with people about Jesus, and I couldn't really find much else to offer them, except I knew that they needed to have a relationship with Jesus and the destination was heaven, and that's okay, because then you're not going to hell, you know, if that's okay. I spent almost eleven or twelve years like that and then I had an experience where I just met with the love of God in a way that I hadn't in the past - through someone else describing their journey, talking about signs, wonders and miracles - I then had to make a choice, and I made the choice to simply choose to believe what He said was true. And that, for me, has been the key all the way along.

So with regards to being aware of His presence and releasing His presence wherever I go in this context (the workplace) I think it started with, if you like, some 'principles' which - I don't know - if you're going to pray for healing, then you would find out what the problem was, and then you would ask if it's OK to pray for someone, may I lay a hand on you. And all of that is good, and that's OK, and it works. It's a good phrase. 'It works!' But what I started to realise was when it didn't work, I was becoming disappointed because actually it wasn't it that was the issue it was who who was behind the principle, what was actually happening when you were praying for someone. It's just a big journey I've sort of been on and so that kind of happens early stages in my career in the ambulance service. And then when I had this moment of realising that there was more, I had this sudden realisation: I was thinking about it - I remember where I was when I had this moment - I describe it as being met with compassion. I felt like a compassion for my work colleagues. So I suddenly thought, I now have something that I understand to be true, a reality that I didn't understand before, that Jesus heals and you can hear from him and that's our birthright and then people can then have an encounter with his love and his presence in that way. And whilst I've been cultivating that and developing it outside of the workplace, God really challenged me, He said 'But you're not doing it at work' and I had to face the fact that, well, what was I afraid of? And I thought Hang on a minute. I am surrounded by people who are, a lot of the time, hopeless. They're going through situations such as mental health issues around trauma with regards to what we deal with on a daily basis and all of a sudden I realise that I have a solution. And that started with me first realising that He wanted to get into the places in my life to help me heal up and restore in that sense, yeah, and realise the love he has for me and my identity, our identity and who He is in us and then moving from that place.

So I think it is, and it continues to be a journey of experimenting with the goodness of God and that's what I really, really love! And you hear stories of how someone may have engaged with someone; how they heard from God, and you think, 'Oh, hang on, that's available'. So I mean, you talk about some of the stories that you've talked about in terms of how you will engage with people in terms of not praying for them directly - so not laying hands on

someone. I remember the first time I heard something like that, I think a few years ago now. So I thought, hang on a minute. How does that happen? Oh, there's an internal reality that actually, it doesn't mean that it's not dependent on me laying a hand on someone, but actually me being more aware, and attaching faith to the fact that He's in me, He's in us, and therefore His goodness is in me and wants to get out.

Dave Foggon

What I love about what you're saying is actually that what started all that was that you had this moment of the compassion - where you were filled with compassion. And I think that somewhere along the line, you need to have that moment and it's not necessarily an encounter, but it's a revelation - this understanding that it's not really about what I do, but ultimately it's really just about first and foremost, letting God love me wherever I am, whatever I'm doing. And what you start to find is that as you let Him love you - and the way I describe it as I let Him 'marinate' me in His love. Yeah, when I'm around other people, (the more I do that when I'm around other people) the more I start to become aware of His love for them. And that's the compassion. And what you find is, is that when you're in a conversation or some kind of dialogue with somebody and that's going on, Holy Spirit is: something's going to happen. Something wants to happen. And then it's just a question of, okay, how do I manage this appropriately within the health world? But it's not a question of, 'Oh, what do I have to draw on?' It wants to get out of me...it's there!

Pete Carter

We have to not see it as a 'task' to do. You know, creating heaven on Earth is not a task, but actually it's our 'being', and so getting that sense of identity right - who we are in Christ - is really important, and the Bible talks about the Kingdom of Heaven a lot, you know, so Jesus went around preaching the Kingdom of Heaven, which is also, you know, the other word to describe it is the Kingdom of God. So actually, get the idea of what's heaven in healthcare, it's actually God in healthcare, you know, is not this ethereal idea 'ooh we're trying to get heaven' it is actually that we're trying to deliver the reality of God into our workplace of healthcare or any part of our lives. And so understanding what the Kingdom of God is like is really important. In Romans Chapter 14, it talks about the Kingdom of God is righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. Now in the Holy Spirit is the important bit because that's in God, you know, actually, He's our source. So He's the river inside us for that. And a few years ago, I used to think there were just three components without any particular order but I've come to realise that there actually is an order to those those three. The righteousness of God is basically our standing in God; that God actually puts us in the same standing as Him. It's an extraordinary thing that we are seated with Him in heavenly places, so suddenly wow, we are with Him there. So He is taken us away from our old life and put us in this new life. And so I think realising the the enormity of our new life is very important. And within that new life, our sin is completely removed from us. So I wake up in the morning. If I understand righteousness, I don't wake up thinking, 'Oh, I'm a sinner this morning', I wake up thinking 'I stand with God'. You know, I'm here with him in heavenly places. I still have to resist temptation.

But sin is not not an overriding reality in my life. It's a possibility, but it's not a reality that I have to succumb to. Therefore, I don't feel any shame before God. I don't feel blame. I feel good about myself. And then I think, if I've got that standing, I work from that place of doing the works of God now. Righteousness, peace – so if I don't feel ashamed about myself or blame, then actually peace is a direct outcome of that. So actually, I then feel at peace, so I'm not anxious about the day facing me. I'm not worried about what might come today, and I live from a place of peace rather than trying to get it when I'm in a difficult situation – trying to get peace then is not a great place to live. It's like chasing peace down and desperately trying to get some of it (more stress!) 'I've got to get some peace. Help me somebody. I got to.... I'm really worried...I haven't got my peace!' But then once you live like that, then joy is a natural outcome. So getting this righteousness bit first is peace and then joy.

And then it goes on to say something I think is quite extraordinary – it says those who serve Christ in this way. So in this manner are pleasing to God – this is what pleases God because we're actually taking hold of what he's paid for us. He doesn't want us to live in sin – mindedness and anxious and miserable. This is this is what He wants for us. So it's pleasing to God. And then He says something: 'and approved by men'. Yeah, now that's the bit I think that is surprising. It's not that we're seeking approval but actually if we live this way, people will be attracted to us. Because people are attracted to peace and joy and also they're fed up of being judged. Yeah, they get fed up of being blamed and shamed. And that is that is part of the prevailing culture within the health service. That it's easy to to attack people. So I think that it's really important to get that scriptural principle, right?

Dave Foggon

Yeah, that reminds me that is like a workplace I was involved in once, which obviously wasn't healthcare related for me. But when I used to share testimonies of miracles in the office and things like that, and they really didn't know what to make of me! They thought he's a lovely guy, but a bit odd! But I remember one day my boss said to me, 'I think every company needs a Dave'. And I said, 'What? Why do you say that?' And he goes, 'Because every time you come in my room, you bring peace. I don't feel stressed about things anymore. I feel positive and I feel full of joy' and they didn't know what to make of me. And sometimes they didn't even really know what job I should be doing at that point. But they just knew that they wanted me there! And I think that's the thing, isn't it? It's that they didn't know what that was. They didn't have the language for that, but they were recognising God, manifesting those things in that environment.

Pete Carter

And we have to be intentional about it, don't we, actually? So I think probably the best illustration I can give from my medical career was right in the early days when I was a junior hospital doctor. When I worked a weekend shift, it was it was 80 hours nonstop, you know, and I had to be available all the time. If you got sleep, it was a bit of good fortune, you probably averaged about two hours a night. So we were very tired and also for 72 hours of

those 80, I was actually taking all the emergencies – literally everything was coming our way. Cardiac arrest etc – you had to be ready for anything at any moment in time. So it was tiring, to say the least and pressured and enormous pressure on it. And what I found is if you got a chance to sleep – and I didn't mind catching bits of sleep, but then, you know, it was always a bit of a hassle getting woken out of a sleep to go to an emergency. But I particularly didn't like it around about 4:00 in the morning – there was something about between 4.00 and 5.00 – it really really bad! And I remember actually, if I was woken up between 4:00 and 5:00 to go to to an emergency, I'd think, Oh well, that's probably the end of the night for me, that's sleep gone....and this is inconvenient...all these human thoughts, real realities: I'm feeling a bit miserable, I'm feeling pressurised, this is inconvenient, to say the least. I'm not feeling happy. I don't want to be doing this particularly.... but what I'm realising is that the person coming in – it's not their fault that they're coming in at 4:00 in the morning – and their life is just as important as a person at 14:00 in the afternoon or 10:00 in the morning, and somehow I have to deliver the best Dr Carter, I possibly can for this person. Because a miserable, stressed, anxious, slightly resentful Dr Carter is not going to deliver great healthcare and also, for the members of the team around me – then that that makes for a miserable working environment. So yeah, my responsibility was to try and deliver the best Dr Carter, so I'd get up and put on my white coat, start walking along the hospital corridor, so I used to summon that strength within me by two things: I used to make sure I started worshipping and I started speaking in tongues out loud. Yeah, because the gift of tongues it says, builds you up. And the way I would describe it is like I started off as a sort of a half-inflated blow-up toy or something or lilo! I was out of shape, really. I was out of my Christian shape, because I was being crushed. But as I came up, as I allowed him to inflate me, I came back into shape and then I was able to deliver the in-shape Dr. Carter to that patient and also to all my colleagues. And it was extraordinary and I would say that every Christian has that resource within them. Yeah, but we need to know how to draw on it and be intentional about drawing on it.

Dave Foggon

Yeah. That's very good. That's very good. We're really good, are we – I think as Christians, we've kind of got down that the salvation thing is something you can't earn. And yeah, but it's almost like we isolate that out, and everything else you've got to earn! Everything else we try and earn through our prayers or our worship and things like that. And for some reason, it's kind of that's on its own and with everything else we kind of find it very easy to get into a 'works' sort of mindset.

And I remember years ago – and this is a turning point in my life, and this was in a ministry context – but I was feeling absolutely spent. I'd had no sleep and I knew I had a whole day of these of meetings to do, and and I woke up that morning and I remember saying to God, 'I've got nothing'. And, you know, I couldn't feel Him; I couldn't feel His presence. I just...I've got nothing. It's just me...and there isn't even much of me right now! And He just said to me, 'go to 1 John 4" and I just read that familiar verse 'We love because He first loved

us'. And I realised in that moment that my whole life, I had read that as a compulsion, as if it's a duty - 'I must love because of what Jesus did for me'. And He said to me, in that moment, 'you've got that all wrong' - you can't love without me filling you with the capacity to love. And actually, it's never my intention for you to give out without constantly being filled with me at the same time. And as He said, I instantly became full of his presence, I could feel it so strong, and I realised that it's almost a bit like, you know, when someone becomes a professional singer and they have to learn circular breathing. So it's like, you know, to get to that capacity of being able to perform the singing, you need to be able to learn to breathe out at the same time as breathing in. And I realised that what this is really about is: whilst I'm leaking God to people, releasing His presence to people, actually I need to just shift my awareness to the fact that He's filling me at the same time. You know, as much as I love to go and spend the time praying for an hour or soak in His presence for an hour, I don't need to do that to get more of God. No, He's filling me all the time. The only thing that's missing is my awareness of that. Yeah, and that's something that you kind of cultivate at work really well, and all your colleagues notice that about you don't they.

Sasha Caridia

...I remember one time, I was sat at my desk and computer was here and the cubicle door curtains there, and it was - as ever - relatively busy, and I was just taking a moment. For all intents and purposes, it just would have just looked as if I'm looking at my computer. I was just sat there, you know, hands down, and I was just taking a moment to be aware of that reality (of God). And my colleague came through the curtain, and all of a sudden out of my mouth, I shouted, "cake!"....and she'd got this wedge of cake with her! And she then said, 'That's just like your healing hands, isn't it?'

Dave Foggon

How did she join the dots of cake and healing?

Sasha Caridia

That's the point. She recognised that actually, it's the same source. She recognised something of the presence in terms of that same thing that enabled [me to know] that is the same thing that enabled her healing in her back. You know, and there's this whole conversation around Jesus, any time any of this stuff happens, and I've even been asked if I'm a Jedi!

I sat down next to a colleague once and I only sat there about a minute or so -I was waiting for her to finish her notes and again [I was] just sitting there quietly and she stops and she looked at me and she just said, I don't know what this is, she says, but I just want to pray and come back to God. I said, "OK, let's do that then". I think [there are] just lots and lots of stories like that....

I think some of my favourite things, are just being aware of that internal reality and then those that are in the workplace decide that they want to know who Jesus is, or they then become on fire again, if you want to put it that way, you know, they start to realise there's a different reality (as I did

some years previously) that they want more of a Holy Spirit. Yeah, and that's some of the most fun I've had at work, where thankfully we've had closed doors, not curtains! But, you know, a few colleagues who have wanted that and then I have had to leave [them] in their room just enjoying God – so I've gone off and seen a few patients....and that, I think is actually really powerful when when it's not necessarily just you are aware of, and that's a beautiful, powerful in itself and stuff happens around you. But when you're helping other people become aware of the reality and then they're asking for that same sort of experience as such, you want to put it that way. And then you look back at some of the stories and you realise that since that happened, you know, they've gone on to do X, Y and Z, and that's how they've they've grown in knowing who they are and whose they are and what's possible. And that actually, at one of the hospitals I worked at, affected the whole virtually the whole unit in different ways. Yes. Yeah, it is fun!

Dave Foggon

And it all starts from that place of you ultimately knowing who you are in Him and who is in you, and just cultivating an awareness of that, and look what happens as a result!

Sasha Caridia

Yeah, exactly, and I think the key for me is, and you've touched on it and you've touched on it as well is the whole thing that we have to be the super Christian or the good person... I've got to be that Christian at work... and that's very much how it was, and then you start to get this reality of Him in me, and then what you're saying about you don't then have to try and get more of heaven. You just be. That's who you are. I mean, you can't get more in you – He's fully in you. It's like, you know, in Colossians IT talks about the fullness of the deity, and then that fullness in us and Christ is in us, the hope of glory. Well, then that's talking about a realm of glory. That's his presence, his nature, his character and everything that's associated with it. And so stuff happens in the glory! Stuff happens when you show up because you carry it! And I'm looking forward to that moment where you stand before Him; you get to see some of the stuff, maybe, that you weren't even aware of – the domino effect of you growing in the awareness of His presence. Yeah, the domino effect!

Pete Carter

I think it's beautiful – it says – 'in His presence is fullness of joy'. Yeah, so what's that like? What's what does fullness of joy look like being expressed in our lives and through our lives? Also, I have the Prince of Peace inside, but He's the Prince of Peace. Yes, He's the wonderful counsellor. So if you know, if I need, you know, counsel, so to speak, He's there. He's my source. Yeah, He will lead me into all truth.

There's a beautiful verse that I love is in Romans chapter 15, verse 13, and this is a way of praying, and I suggest people use it. It says, 'I pray that God, the source of hope'. So, actually it tells you there that He is our source. So if you're feeling a bit short of hope or hopeless, then actually, we have a constant source. So, He's a source of peace, he is a source of joy, but 'I pray

that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely' – not just a little bit – but it says 'fill you completely with joy and peace'. And then it says this: 'because you trust in Him'. And that's the key, it's actually, I trust in Him and trusting in Him is trusting who He is. I trust his nature, that He's constant, that He never changes. So His source is always true and available. And then, it says, this: 'the outcome – I love this – if you do that so you get filled, then you will overflow' because the filling is not just enough for you. And I think that again, is why this is a slightly incomplete sort of illustration (the can) because it's not overflowing. But the outcome is that you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. And I think that's why we want Christians to get confident in who God is inside them through the power of the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit inside us is, is almighty God. He is the most powerful being that there is! So to think that I lack power is a crazy thought. Or to think that I would somehow lack hope is a crazy thought. To think that I would lack joy or peace would be a crazy thought, if I'm accessing this source. I think that's the key that we're talking about – of releasing heaven on Earth – this has to start there. We can sometimes think, Well, OK, we're releasing heaven on Earth, that's all about the miracles – well it includes miracles, but I think it's very difficult to release miracles as a part of heaven on Earth if you're anxious and miserable, because immediately, you're not flowing in the spirit. So if it's a pressure so 'Oh, I've got to do miracles now...I'm anxious about it', then it's not going to happen and people will say, 'Well, why isn't it happening?' – well, you're not in the Spirit, so to speak. So, I think it's just getting these things in place first – righteousness, joy and peace, and if you flow in those, then releasing the rest of heaven starts to become very easy.

Dave Foggon

It's kind of inevitable!

Pete Carter

It is. But if you've not got that in place first then trying to do the rest becomes a hard task.

Sasha Caridia

I was just thinking about a lady at work, at one of the previous places I used to work, She said, "it's actually quite difficult when you're at work, because you make my stomach ache so much! [you've got] an enormous amount of joy, so you were always making me laugh!"

Pete Carter

Another Scripture that's really important that I find very helpful is 'God hasn't given us a spirit of fear'. So if we're ever operating from a sense of fear, we know it's not actually the Holy Spirit. The source is not correct, so we can't expect heaven to be expressed when fear is operating, and fear is – anxiety is fear...all sorts of things are fear-based. I think fear of disappointment is a massive one in the health world, you know, so when it comes down to healing: what happens if it doesn't happen? Which can be compassionate, but it can actually have a degree of fear in it. We don't want to disappoint people, do we, so, you know, we're frightened of that. So we've not got a Spirit of fear

but love, power and a sound mind. Now we've got those three things to pull on, which is the love of God, which we've already talked about - compassion - we are not powerless and we've got a sound mind to deliver this in an appropriate, wise way in the context in which we work and live.

Dave Foggon

Yeah, that's really good.