

How to Bring Heaven in Healthcare

Episode 6: Releasing the Creativity and Wisdom of God

Full Transcript

[Length of episode: 25:17 minutes]

Pete Carter

Hi, I'm Pete Carter. In this session, I'm joined by my friend Dave Foggon, one of the senior leaders of Eastgate Church and also a member of the Heaven in healthcare team. And together, we're going to dream about the potential of seeing many believers releasing the creativity and wisdom of God into the world of healthcare.

Dave Foggon

Well, we're going to be talking a lot about healing and miracles and things like that, but we also know that God wants to do much more than that, doesn't He, in the world of healthcare?

Pete Carter

Yes, I think one of the things we started with was the idea that actually Christian healing could sit alongside great healthcare as a great additional resource. So we focused on that a lot, probably in the early days of our thinking about creating the organisation which is now Heaven in Healthcare... but we realised that was actually a limitation. It was a good place to start, but actually God wanted to take it far bigger than that. There is far more that Christians have to offer to the world than just healing, you know? So that's the sort of things we're looking at.

We talked about peace and joy, but I think we have to come around to talking about wisdom – that aspect of a 'sound mind' is heaven's wisdom and how we utilise the wisdom that actually resides within us for the benefit of mankind, the world around us, sometimes in just our everyday routine or in the mundane or in routine healthcare. But actually, for – I would say – strategic advances. There are some massive advances to be had in the realms of healthcare, and I'm convinced that God has solutions for every situation we're facing.

You know, for instance, dementia – we're struggling to find solutions to that – there's lots of research going on but it would be great to think that Christians would be at the forefront of those areas of research. I have a dream of the world being free of HIV/Aids, and I'm not saying it has to be this way but the most obvious way in my mind at the moment is a vaccine that would eradicate that. Smallpox has already been eradicated as a reality from the Earth through vaccinations. So I think, you know, those sorts of things are heaven's wisdom released on planet Earth to make the Earth a healthier place, which is directly aligned with the purposes of heaven. In heaven there is no sickness,

there is no pain...all these things. So what does it look like for heaven to invade Earth? It's got to mean a diminishing of sickness and pain on the Earth, and medical breakthroughs are a route towards that. So I think Christianity has got a big part to play in medical breakthroughs and the delivery of healthcare, which needs wise practice. It really does.

Dave Foggon

Yeah, that's really good. Where do you see that going, and do you have any interesting examples of where you see people starting to move in that space?

Pete Carter

Yeah. I was thinking about this a lot because I would say in my own personal life I'm not sure I've seen a staggeringly great breakthrough where God gave me this amazing idea that has taken the whole of healthcare forward. But in my everyday life, I think the wisdom of heaven has been working through me, hopefully every day, and I've seen that in all sorts of ways, but we go back to sort of a slightly maybe a bigger level, I think we've got a great example with a friend of ours. Her name's Joy and she's developed this organisation called Emerge Advocacy, and she's very much part of the Heaven in Healthcare scene. And Joy's background is that she's a youth worker. And one time, whether it was on a particular day, but God stirred an idea within her that touched you there were a lot of teenagers in the A&E departments who were in trouble and needed help for various reasons. Now there's all sorts of reasons that teenagers might end up in our emergency departments, but some of them are self-harm, overdoses, you know, kids in great mental distress and trauma. And often the A&E departments are not an easy place for them to be, so God told her, 'Why don't you go and sit with teenagers in the A&E department and see what comfort and help you could be?' Just the idea and I would say God gave her an idea - and that's because the wisdom of heaven is is a creative force. And it tells us that in Proverbs 8: that wisdom sat alongside God during the process of creation. So wisdom is not just not just a problem-solving situation, but it is a creative force to actually start to create new realities. So Joy did this - she started to go and sit with troubled teenagers - very much with the permission of the staff in the A&E department - and before long it was recognised that she was doing something that was really helpful, you know, so the A&E staff said 'what she's doing is really, really helpful because we don't have time to sit with them'. So actually that developed from an idea of hers to actually her then being welcomed into to the system actually also to build a team and develop a team, and that team now provides a service six nights out of seven for the A&E department in this specific hospital, where that team are on call between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. of an evening, and the A&E staff can call them; they can contact this team to come and be with with with any teenagers that are having difficulty like that. And the team, they'll do a walk-through. And they actually develop a bit of rapport/relationship with these kids, and then they follow them up after they've been through their healthcare episode, whatever it is, because most kids are dealt with in a way that gets them through that moment. But actually, the 'moment' has usually had something leading up to it. So actually to help them walk out of those those times and [give] support. So Joy has developed

this thing called 'Emerge Advocacy' and within the last year or so when that hospital had its' CQC inspection, which is the Care Quality Commission, an assessment of Hospital's performance overall, Emerge Advocacy was cited as an example of good practice within the hospital, which is a fantastic thing. So actually, somehow this idea and then forming it with wisdom grew it into something that is now acknowledged within that hospital, and now it's being expressed in another hospital already, and it is just developing in a third hospital because other hospitals said 'Well, that's really good what's happening over there...we could do with that'. And so she has come from an idea of an individual sitting in A&E departments to now teams in three hospitals actually starting to provide a level of support and care for troubled teenagers, and I think that's a fantastic example of that. This is beautiful, really. What's important to say is that she is not health trained, but she's got the Holy Spirit inside her with a motivation to go and help. And an innate wisdom in building teams and stuff like that. So there's lots of stuff like that, but that's one good example.

Dave Foggon

Yeah. I love that story. I love what I really like about it as well as it started off with kind of just quite simple humble origins, and that she just recognised a need and had compassion for that need and I wonder if there's a link between the compassion and the wisdom of God, because it's almost like he gave her the wisdom of how to expand this thing and how to build it when she had the heart for it. And you know, when we think about wisdom, we often we quite often look at the life of Joseph. And if you look at the the journey that he went on, you know, obviously he had this amazing prophetic gift but right at the beginning, he brought a bad report about his brothers - that's a little insight into his character - that when he was younger and immature and [there was] maybe a bit of selfish ambition in there. But by the time that he was coming out of the jail, he's a very different person. The prophetic gift hadn't really changed, that was always there, but what really strikes me is that at the moment that he has this revelation and this understanding of what was going to happen to Egypt and all the nations. What strikes me is that he immediately had the strategy there. And I think that that's because his heart had changed. And you see that later when he's reconciled to his brothers - that he has now a heart of compassion. And I think because of his compassion for the people, God was able to release into that the wisdom - it was almost like that compassion was a safe place for the wisdom to the land.

Pete Carter

I entirely agree. I think, when you look at the book of 1 Corinthians, it talks about the list of Spiritual Gifts, but it puts them in the context of 'in way of love'. So 1 Corinthians 12 is followed by 1 Corinthians 13 and then you get 1 Corinthians 14. So you've got the two chapters, which are mainly about the operation of Spiritual Gifts, (1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 13), but right in the middle, it says 'but follow the way of love' and so the context is definitely that...but one of the gifts of the spirit is wisdom, the gift of wisdom. I think in my Christian life, probably what I've asked God for more than anything else is wisdom and with a great confidence because of the verse in James: 'If you

lack wisdom, if anybody lacks wisdom, ask for it and God will give it to you generously and without finding fault'. And so He's not saying, is he worthy of my wisdom? No, he wants to give generously, but actually he will form my character. But the reason he wants to create wisdom in and through us is actually because he still loves the world and he wants solutions for the world.

And again, just another example for me is just in my medical practice, you know, the thoughts of God, you know, just just just, you know, I should be always aware of them (and I'll probably read a Bible passage about that in a few moments). But I remember one specific time when I was doing a session in general practice and it was busy - not frantically busy - but I was coming towards the end of the session, finishing at 6:30 at night. At 6.30pm we kind of hand it on to the overnight out-of-hours services, and I was taking phone calls, just triaging stuff and dealing with people. And this lady phoned up - and her voice sounded OK - and she said 'Doctor, could you just give me a bit of advice, please?' And I said, 'OK, yes, sure'. She said, 'I've got this tummy upset. I've got diarrhoea and vomiting. What would you advise me to do?' Now that's quite a straightforward symptom there, and normally you start with some standard advice that goes along the lines of fluids, rest, you know, any aches and pains, paracetamol. And so I asked her if she had any other symptoms that would alarm me, you know - because you have to - and there weren't any, really, I thought it sounded quite straightforward. It had only just started, and so I was on the verge of giving her normal advice and thinking 'Call us back if you got any more trouble...etc' But I felt this urging inside me saying 'ask her to come and see you in the surgery..in the workplace'. I thought that's going to be a bit difficult for this poor lady. We're just about to close... so I said, this might sound a bit strange, but I really do need you to come and see me. She said, Well, doctors that will be very difficult, you know, it would very difficult for me to leave the house because I'm going to the toilet so much. I said, 'Well, I understand I'm sorry to but I think it's really important that you come and see me'. So she did. Then when she walked into the room I asked her some questions and she looked a little bit off colour - not majorly - but when I examined her, I realised there was something quite serious going on with her, and I admitted her to hospital immediately. She actually had quite a serious condition that would have been easy to have missed. And this lady came back to me the following week after she was discharged from hospital and she said, Well, thank you, doctor, because the hospital said, You probably saved my life. Because I had developed this serious issue - and I won't go into it - but she said probably if it had been left a few more hours, my life would have been at serious risk. That is one of the problems that doctors face - you are on the verge of those, and you don't know everything - but I thought, that was the kindness of God and the wisdom of God. The ability to hear that voice and say that, I noted it and said thank you, Jesus. It was helpful to me, but not just that - he loves that lady and he wants to pour out his wisdom. And I don't think that's just restricted to Christians - I hear a lot of doctors talking about maybe a 'sixth sense' because God can talk to anybody and He wants people to be well and he loves health care; He's passionate about it, I'm sure.

Dave Foggon

I'm sure you've got loads of other stories [from] over the years of that kind of situation of learning to abide in a place of rest in the midst of the busyness of what you're doing. Because you obviously can't change how physically busy you might be, but on an internal level, you know there's this kind of tendency to embrace the rushing. It's almost like this idea of frantically running from one thing to another and trying to 'fix' everything. And actually, you know, one thing that God has said to me over the years is 'You'll be far more productive if you actually just make a point of remaining connected to me and letting me know that I'm God to you and living from that place'. How important is it to you do you think to bring in wisdom in the everyday and to kind of live from that perspective?

Pete Carter

You know, I think it's really important. I think learning to listen to the voice of God all the time is important, but I think it's generally easier to do that when you're living in a place of peace, because [otherwise] anxiety crowds you and that's just preoccupying. And because I've got the Prince of Peace in me, and I broadly have a philosophy that as long as I keep my river flowing, peace is flowing out of me, and it's very difficult for anxiety to get in. It doesn't matter what's thrown at me, as long as I keep this flowing, then I'm - broadly speaking - going to be in control of my environment; not a victim, but victorious over it, as we've talked about previously.

So I think I think that's important and another thing is a confidence in the fact that God wants to speak to me. I think sometimes Christians think that hearing God is a gift of prophecy, but it's not - hearing God is every Christian's birthright. 'My sheep will know my voice'. So it's the ability to understand His voice, and he's very good at whispering in the chaos. So often I've found that when life's really busy, he doesn't shout at me. There's a little whisper and you go, 'Oh...OK, yeah!'. It's almost peaceful in its own right, so I think that's useful. So I would love to read this passage of Scripture, because I think it has informed me a lot over the years:

So in 1 Corinthians 2, Paul's talking, and he says.

I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world who are soon forgotten. So we've got a different source of wisdom. Now the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God. His plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began for the rulers of this world, have not understood it. If they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. This is what the Scriptures mean when they say, 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him'.

So, the Bible is basically saying there that God has something prepared for us and now we're in this loving relationship with God. Now I think it's very easy for us as Christians to park that into the future with 'Oh, phew, when I get to heaven, then these things I'll understand, and some of it will become

clear' But the Bible goes on to say 'But it was to us that God revealed these things by Spirit'. So actually, there's a past tense, actually. And at the end of it says, actually, God has revealed these things to us. So I think it's very easy to park some of those aspirations as a bit of a mystery. We'll never know. And there are some things we won't know until Jesus comes back. But but broadly speaking, this is for his Spirit, searches everything and shows us God's deep secrets. And so I think we need to have an expectation that God's going to reveal things to us and elsewhere it talks about 'we have the mind of Christ', not that we will have so that actually His thoughts should become natural thoughts for us. And so when we live in that place of peace then that's far more likely to be true, that the thoughts are based in this environment of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. And I think within that, we'll find that wisdom starts to flow.

And another thing I think - you and I have talked about it a bit more - but Wisdom is a creative force for the future, and there's stuff there that God's imagined that we haven't yet. But He wants to reveal it to us. So I think if all we can think of the current problems, we're limiting what wisdom can do. But the wisdom of heaven can create other realities that we have not even imagined yet, and there are aspects of healthcare that God has in mind that we haven't even entered into. I think Christians should be at the forefront of those breakthroughs, you know, research and ideas and creativity. We see in the technology world, you know, some things if you'd dreamed of them 50 years they would say 'You guys are crazy'. You know, there's all sorts of stuff going on. So I'm sure there's a whole lot more for us to discover that will actually lead to wellbeing. If you go back in history, you know - dreaming of vaccination - that would eradicate, disease! There are more diseases that need to be eradicated, but I'm fascinated by Bill Gates, to be honest. Bill Gates is an amazing guy in what he does with these resources, but he's dreaming of eradicating polio from the world, and already two of the three main strains of polio have been effectively eradicated and there's just the third one to go. That's amazing, isn't it? Well, I think God wants to give us those sort of creative ideas, and He's not lacking in resources to release for us to to start to make the world a healthier place. And that would seem to me the shalom of God, the whole wellbeing of God that He wants to release in ways that we have yet to imagine.

Dave Foggon

Yeah. That's really good, I think, as you know, I come from a creative background, and I imagine that particularly when you think about the healthcare world, a lot of people commonly have a misunderstanding of creativity, and I hear a lot of people say, but I'm not creative. And actually, it's because we have a very narrow perception of what it is. And actually, when you look at - it reminds me of Exodus 31 when God is talking about Bezalel and how he's filled him with the Spirit of God and with understanding and wisdom. And he's a creative person. We see him as a creative person. He's making stuff...but he's got wisdom and understanding. I think the connection there is - as you were talking about it really - is that God's creativity has purpose. Yes. It's not just making stuff so that it looks nice. And even when

we do create stuff with beauty, it has a purpose in our lives. And I think that what you and I already, I guess, are really keen for people to grab ahold of is the fact that actually God's got solutions to things where we haven't even seen the problem yet! And it's actually releasing people into things and actually, if you're in a position where you can see the challenges of a situation surrounding you, whether that's in your department or in a team, or maybe in your entire sphere of healthcare, then the reason you're there actually is because God trusts you and actually, He's going to give you the strategies for that isn't He?

Pete Carter

Yeah, I would say I was probably one of those people who thought I wasn't creative and that went back to my schooling - I was much more at the 'factual' end of the spectrum...science, you know? I love science, and I pursued science because that was a route through to a medical career. So, you know, I dropped more artistic subjects, which I wasn't very gifted at, to be honest - certainly music. So I guess I grew up with this idea that I wasn't very creative. But if I'm made in the image of God and He's the Creator, then my nature as a Christian is creative - it has to be - unless we think that God stopped being the Creator. I think that's another challenge sometimes: people think that God did the process of creation, and then he stopped. God's still very creative. He doesn't stop being creative. His nature doesn't change, and He exists outside the time. So that was that was quite an interesting thing for me to come to terms with because it is very common - particularly in the scientific world - to think well, we deal with 'the facts'. We are factual, we're scientific, we need evidence, we need this, that and the other. But actually, breakthroughs usually come from somebody imagining a solution or something new. 'So I really think there must be a way through' - hope arises and you're thinking, 'OK, how can we deal with HIV/Aids?' 'Well, there's got to be a solution'. So it starts with an idea, not a fact. So I think that ability - going back - to dream; to imagine is really important and to recognise as a Christian that this is actually inherent within me. And so whatever situation, I'm in, actually God wants to release solutions, but not just solutions for problems, He wants to actually release creative ideas to create the future. So I think that's one of the things again, within Heaven in Healthcare, we want people to discover that part of who they are, their identity in Christ. But again, going back to the Holy Spirit inside them it is a creative force. And let's just imagine that there are at least 50,000 Christians who work in healthcare within the UK, probably 100,000 or more. Then if you multiply that across the world, there are millions and millions of Christians who work in healthcare across the globe. How many creative ideas have we got between us?! How many great ideas, how many great solutions have we got? And if the Holy Spirit is at work in each and every one of us, what a great world we could create. That's the dream of Heaven in Healthcare: let's create this amazing future! Yeah. So that burns within me... and I'm sure it burns within you.

Dave Foggon

Yeah, that's a great dream!