

**General Topics :: Promise Keepers****Promise Keepers - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/10/19 16:22**

Last weekend (Otc. 10,11) I attended the Promise Keepers Conference here in San Jose, Ca.

For those unfamiliar with this it is a call to men, in the words of one of their presenters:

"The thing about Promise Keepers I love is they lift up men," Stine said. "There are not a lot of places in society that let men be men. I believe so much in what Promise Keepers teaches: that a man's first obligation is to God, and then to lead his family."

This would be Brad Stine, a comedian and a Christian. More on him in a moment.

I have to admit going in that I was a bit skeptical of the whole thing, fearing that it may be trite or perhaps emotional without any substance, worse that it may be dishonoring to the Lord. Yes, there was some hype and I started to feel that maybe my fears were correct, yet I sensed the Lord telling me to "judge nothing before it's time".

I want to clarify that this is not a "preaching" type of conference per se, more of a variety, teaching, lots of worship (besides singing), even some laughter. Some gut wrenching stories from the presenter's of where the Lord has brought them from, through and to.

Thought I would share my impressions.

Something many of us have probably heard in sermons past is the old "How come we can get all pumped up and act like fools rooting at a sporting event, but just clam up when it comes to things pertaining to God." Well that wasn't a problem here. 8,500 men, young and old singing praises to the Lord and as I looked around maybe only a handful weren't participating, arms upraised, with one loud voice....Powerful! At one point they had us (the "Choir", as they called us) start an a cappella version of "Amazing Grace", yes there was room for the Holy Spirit to move, and in this instance it seemed as if we were an army, I think I can better appreciate how the walls around Jericho fell.

Joe White, ex- Coach at Texas A & M University, pastor amongst other things did a very powerful presentation on 'which side of the cross are you on?' referring to the two thieves crucified with Jesus. He had two huge telephone pole sized, actually I think they were just that, poles that had the first two cuts for where the crossbeam goes and proceeded to chop out the centers with an axe while he went through the whole story of the thieves response to Jesus and each other, besides a number of verses from the epistles that he tied it all together with. All from memory and all between swinging the axe as chunks of wood were flying, laboring in his breathing. After the wood was cut away he picked up the cross beam and nailed it together, tied it with a leather strap and then lifted it up off of the cradle it was perched on and tilted it upright. These were no mere props, but a full 8-10 foot cross. Then he did again, still quoting verses, I wish I had all the text. The one represented the cross's of the thieves, the cross representing our Lord he paused to complete the story with it perched on his shoulder and with some help tilted it into place. I can hardly do justice to describe all this, but it was a powerful demonstration from a man who is 59 years young. He gave an altar call and a call to complete surrender to the Lord of all things to the rest of us.

Overall the "Challenge" was to surrendering our all to the Lordship of Jesus and to evangelism.

There was an interesting approach to Bible study from Buddy Owens, with the emphasis on reading conversationally with the Lord, "praying back God's thoughts to Him", taking time to reflect, application in practice, "read with your ears" as opposed to "just getting through it" so that you can finish reading the Bible in a year. The idea of getting it down into your heart from your head.

Actually we even took the time to do the study in our seats, applying the ideas to Col: 3.

The comedian, Brad Stine.

What can I say, I had some reservations about a comedian in this kind of setting. But I was proven wrong again. As someone who came to Christ after being in the business for awhile, involved with the secular side of things, he was refreshingly hilarious. Kind of reminded me of a clean Dennis Leary. For the most part I haven't heard too many good "Christian" comedians, most seem to be more corny than funny.

But he was intelligent, ripped up the absurdity of secular humanism as well as the ridiculousness of some animal rights

activists (The extreme ones, that want to equate animal rights to the level of humans).

So what was the message they were trying to convey?

Here is a bit from their website:

The Challenge

The theme for Promise Keepers 2003 is "The Challenge: A Call To Action." Inherent in this theme is the understanding that men need a challenge, a challenge to surrender to Christ, to follow Him, to grow in faith and obedience, and to serve Him as a son in His Kingdom. Because sin has twisted man's original design and because the unredeemed man relates to his world either in passive acquiescence or in hostile domination, Promise Keepers is calling men to a life of action that is aligned with God's original design for a man: a life that is no longer self-centered, but God-centered; a life that is no longer lived in isolation but in brotherhood; a life that is no longer self-serving, but spent on serving others and sharing with them the redemptive plan of Almighty God through His Son Jesus Christ.

To close out the conference was Joseph Stowell, President of Moody Bible Institute. He exhorted us with something I appreciated and had been repeated throughout the whole conference; A warning against emotionalism, of walking away from this whole calling to surrender and evangelism without taking it to heart and taking it to our communities. He had us all kneel and pray, a time of silence before the Lord, you could have heard a pin drop. Then he asked us once again to surrender.

Before I attended this I had done my homework, I find that this is an organization that is solid Biblically. After attending I can say that sure, there was some hype and sure, there could be more emphasis on repentance, on sin. This may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I was surprised, encouraged and challenged.

To be fully surrendered to the Lord.

To be a better husband to my wife, to my family.

To be a witness to the world in life as well as speech.

Re: Promise Keepers, on: 2003/10/19 17:30

I am constantly hearing so much negativity about PK. I wish more of those who seem to only be able to criticise and complain would actually go to an event like you've described before vomiting their vitriol. It sounds like great things are taking place at their events moved by the Hand of The Great God. Praise Him!