

Unbelievable, Part 4 – Unacceptable

There are two Amber Hagermans. To her family, Amber will forever be a 9-year-old tomboyish girl with a toothy smile and brown bangs. She absolutely loved Burger King, chocolate milk, Barbie dolls, and her national anthem “America the Beautiful” for the line “amber waves of grain.” She loved to visit her grandparents in Arlington, Texas and to ride bicycles with her 5-year-old brother Ricky ... and that’s where she was and what she was doing on January 13, 1996 ...

After one spin around the block near a boarded up Winn-Dixie Supermarket, Ricky returned alone. “You tell Sissy to get back home,” his grandmother said – but when he returned, he explained that he couldn’t find her. By the time Amber’s family rushed to the scene, police officers had arrived. A witness told investigators that he saw a man lift Amber off her bike, force her into his black pickup, and speed away. It was only eight minutes from the time she left the house to when the 911 call was made ... that’s how fast it happened.

The kidnapping devastated – and then motivated – the community of Arlington unlike any other case in its history. For the next four days, thousands of TV viewers watched repeated video footage of Amber blowing out birthday candles, playing with her little brother, and being tucked into bed. Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson said, “In those four days, she became a very real person. She wasn’t just a photograph they were looking at. It was almost like she became Arlington’s child.” And every single night that Amber was missing, Sheriff Anderson’s own 5-year-old daughter would climb into his lap and ask, “Did you find her?” “No, not yet,” he would answer. She asked the same question the night after Amber’s body was found in a creek several miles away. “I just lost it,” Sheriff Anderson said.

There are two Amber Hagermans. To total strangers she is a tragic figure whose namesake, the “Amber Alert,” has helped locate more than 230 abducted children nationwide in the past eleven years. Just after her death, police officials and broadcasters began talking about what could be done the next time. Through trial and error, they created the Amber Alert using the same system reserved for storm warnings. Now, when a child is abducted in a major city, an Amber Alert is issued on TV, radio and even via cellphone text message. Within minutes, thousands of ordinary citizens are on the lookout for the perpetrators of these crimes. And for 230 families, that has made all the difference in the world.

“We have a lot of really smart law enforcement people who sat around and never contemplated [a system like this],” Sheriff Anderson told the Dallas Morning News. “We live with that frustration every day. If we’d have been smarter, if we’d have been faster, we might have had a different outcome.” What happened was just UNACCEPTABLE.

Heaven has issued its own “Amber Alert” because the devil has kidnapped our society and is holding it hostage. Huge numbers of Canadian children are now growing up with little or no exposure to the gospel of Jesus Christ. And even many who attend church are receiving precious little of the Word of God. If we could see into the spiritual realm, we would realize that many of our nation’s young people look like the starving children who suffer in Africa’s famines. **Many have been lost, but IF THE CHURCH WILL ACT, many more can be saved!**

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 8:44 (NIV) You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The devil has deceived humanity for millennia with the oldest lie in the Bible: “MAN IS HIS OWN GOD.” Every man is created so that he must worship something. And if he doesn’t worship the true God, then he will worship a false god, even if he has to manufacture it himself. And the ultimate lie is that human beings should worship human beings! How do you know if you have bought into the lie? Well, if you feel like you are in control of your own life and don’t need God’s help, then you are actually being held hostage by the devil.

Romans 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.

All behavior is based on a BELIEF, so behind every sin is a LIE that I am believing (I need to figure out the lie motivating the behavior!).

Spiritual change always starts with a DECISION of the mind (in fact, feelings are always the last thing to change!).

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

In order to change my life, I must change my BELIEFS first – because trying to change people’s behaviour without changing their beliefs is a waste of time! The Bible term for this “belief change” is “repentance.”

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Matthew 18:11-14 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

IT IS UNACCEPTABLE THAT THERE ARE LOST PEOPLE AROUND US WHEN WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW!

Remember what Sheriff Anderson said? "If we'd have been smarter, if we'd have been faster, we might have had a different outcome."

THAT IS WHAT DRIVES HEAVEN, THAT IS WHAT DRIVES YOUR PASTOR, AND HOPEFULLY THAT IS WHAT DRIVES THIS CHURCH!

It was the first thing Jesus said to His disciples when He appeared after the resurrection ...

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

It was the last thing Jesus said to His disciples before He ascended into Heaven ...

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

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IT IS UNACCEPTABLE FOR US NOT TO COMPLETE OUR MISSION!

Colossians 4:5 (NLT) Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

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Ezekiel 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Romans 1:15-16 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

IT IS UNACCEPTABLE THAT THERE ARE LOST PEOPLE AROUND US WHEN WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW!

Matthew 9:37-38 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Do you know what Jesus did immediately after He asked His disciples to "pray for labourers"? He sent THEM out to be labourers! (Matthew 10:5)

Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

1 Thessalonians 2:19 (LB) For what is it we live for, that gives us hope and joy and is our proud reward and crown? It is you! Yes, you will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back again.