



Los Elegidos Ministries: Los Elegidos Bible Club -
Los Elegidos Radio - Los Elegidos Outreach
Sunday 2/2/25



Sometimes, I just sit down and write because it helps me process the trials and tribulations (and sadness) God said (1Peter4:12,13, 2Tim2:3,10) we would face if we choose to follow Him, pick up our cross and truly follow him down to the very letter of His word . . .

It was just the other day I found myself once again shedding tears over the loss of my dad (September), and now I was being confronted with the loss of one my very best friends and fellow missionaries, Hapa Philips, by another close friend, Jaime, who called me early yesterday morning and said he had just read in the Surfer's Forum (Ensenada) that Hapa had passed away . . . how was it that one of our best friends had passed and we were hearing about it through social media??? That's the three of us sitting on a wall near the ministry where I worked back in 2008, all of us still relatively new to the life of a missionary and a bit before we would face the real hardships and trials that come with stepping out in faith and serving in a country unbeknownst to us . . . Hapa was the one that stood beside me in the winter of 2008 when I was told that my "mija" (beloved daughter) Samaria (8 years old) had been killed instantly when she tried to run across a highway to join her mom and brother waiting on the other side . . . Samaria was the one who helped me learn Spanish while I was working at an orphanage in South Ensenada, the first kid in all of Ensenada to befriend me - for "mija", it didn't matter that I spoke no Spanish, she was just looking for a "dad" to take care of her and spoil her, which is what I did, for hundreds of kids that came through that ministry . . . Hapa did the exact same thing at a different orphanage . . . Hapa was the one that told me, "Walt, please don't go up there and look at your kid...", when we attended Samaria's wake - I took his advice and instead chose to focus on the last thing she said to me, "Walt, I'm so glad you're back - I didn't think you were ever gonna come back, we missed you."



Hapa would always invite me and Jaime (at the time, working for a local church in town) out to the ranch (Casa de Paz - orphanage in Valle de Guadalupe) to shoot anything that moved with our .22 pellet rifles with scopes. We had a blast! (NO dogs were harmed) In return, I invited Hapa (right photo) out one day to the orphanage to take on the squirrel problem we had run into after planting over 30 brand new fruit trees - it looked like a horde of cockroaches attacking our trees, except these things were furry. In over a week we were able to reduce the squirrel population (at our neighbor's ranches too) to a minimum - we were pretty impressed by the accuracy of our rifles.

I had the honor of videotaping Hapa's wedding (<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/1795929>), this after hearing from Hapa for over a year, "Walt, I don't think I'll ever get married."

I dedicated his wedding video to his new son "Gabo", after hearing Hapa mention he always wanted a son . . . I had also heard that all Gabo ever wanted was a dad. . .

Years and years later, after I heard that Hapa's (he had mentioned to me beforehand) marriage had ended in divorce, I remember driving by the old trailer he use to live in with his family, it was now empty and abandoned - I'm not sure why, but after seeing it that day (I had driven by 100's of times before) I remember driving out to our ministry center sobbing over my brother's divorce. I even asked the Lord, "God, why am I so affected by this?"

You see, when **God** brings two people together, He really means what He says, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." The Lord was showing me just how deeply (we cannot fathom) He was grieved by the breaking up of *His* kids . . . I remember Hapa sharing with me all the hopes and dreams he had for his new family from the Lord . . . truly the devil only comes to steal, kill and destroy.

I recall one day driving home from the ranch (new bible college) where we use to work together at times, and on the way home we were followed by a truckload of armed soldiers and a helicopter which tailed us all the way (for 30 minutes) to the front doorstep of our second story apartment . . .



As we went upstairs Hapa mentioned, "Bro, if they come after us, just walk down the stairs very slowly with your hands in the air and say nothing."

That's when we heard the bull-horn in Spanish, "Come out with your hands up or we're coming in for you!" As we slowly walked back downstairs with our hands in the air, they kept asking us over and over and over again, if we were drug traffickers! With our hands now placed on the trunk of my Honda Accord I answered them in my broken Spanish that we were just missionaries, who happen to work at the ranch which was inconveniently located near the drug traffickers. They finally put their weapons down (pointed at our heads) and said be careful, there some bad people out there . . .

As a missionary doing the Lord's work, sometimes time just flies by and before you know it, I was now married and again had the opportunity to work with Hapa at a different ministry called Genesis Diez, located just a mile away from where my wife and I would soon work, El Zorrillo.

Our time there together was short-lived, but we worked on a few projects (photo-right) together, mostly construction - at times Hapa would come over and help out with our new ministry, Los Elegidos Bible Club (photo-below), and also do whatever he could to help us along the journey.

What Hapa loved doing best was helping out our friends from Arizona who came out annually with their vision care outreach, going to different communities in the area and going through hundreds of clients, outfitting them with brand new glasses - He even had a ministry geared to helping the disabled with a beach visit and free surfing lessons, something that he was extremely blessed to be a part of, just being in the water.

That photo to the right (in our early years) was Hapa's favorite restaurant located in the heart of Valle de Guadalupe, a ten minute drive from the orphanage where he worked. We ate their ALL the time! I took my wife there so many times to share with her all our missionary stories of the past . . .

The last time I had dinner with Hapa was over a year ago, his health was declining

(a number of surgeries) and he was now spending more time in the States trying to get his health back on track. I remember our conversation that evening over some pizza, he wanted badly to have his daughter come visit for an extended stay in the states, and at the end of our evening of fellowship, he told me he was ready to go home and be with the Lord - he was so tired and weary of being ill, he just wanted to go home.

I believe the Lord granted my dear friend his desire - he had just returned to Ensenada after having his daughter visit for almost a month and sadly, shortly after arriving in town with his daughter on Thursday, my good friend went home to be with the Lord in the early morning hours of Saturday . . . his landlord shared with me how he struggled that (Friday) night trying to get on his feet, taken to the hospital in an ambulance - I wished he had called me so I could be at his side . . . I know, that I know, that I know, their were angels at his side waiting to usher him into heaven . . . he was not alone.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Psalm 116:15

I started writing this in the early morning, it's now ten o'clock at night - too many tears shed trying to write this memoriam about my good friend Hapa, a Warrior for Christ to the very end.

I love you bro, and I will see you in heaven very soon.

Walt & Maribel, your homies for eternity . . .

p.s. Please pray for Hapa's kids, Aby & Gabo - were taking them out this week to eat and share with them about their dad, and the man of God we knew. He was far from perfect just like the rest of us, but he loved the Lord, and he loved to serve . . . please pray that the Lord heal his kid's hearts . . .

Much love from Mexico . . .

