

Week 2 December 12 – 13th: **A weary world rejoices**

The title of this message is “A weary world rejoices” from the classic Christmas song, Oh Holy Night.

For all of us, 2020 has been a wearisome year. Christmas like nothing we’ve experience in our lifetime because of Covid. And for many, it’s hard to find something to rejoice about!

And likewise, 2000 plus years ago, it was a wearisome world where the people of Israel were being oppressed and persecuted that our heavenly father decided to bring Jesus into our world.

And as we saw in our previous series, the Chosen, The people of Israel were being oppressed, harshly controlled by their Roman rulers, by the Religious leaders of the day were more interested in having people conform to their own traditions and laws. Economically, they had a hard time keeping up having to pay the high taxes of the Romans. It was wearisome for the people of Israel. BUT HOPE Came their WAY! And it was in a person, Jesus Christ that brought the Hope of a new way of living.

And yes, it’s 2000 years later, and we are experiencing a weary world. Socially, we’ll have to celebrate Christmas and New Years differently, School wise (many students are not getting the f2f instruction) no homecoming week, no P.E classes, etc., get Honolulu City Lights but no can go inside Honolulu Hale to see the Christmas trees, can’t have the traditional sitting on Santa’s lap at Christmas.

But seriously, Economically, it’s a dark time for many (loss of employment, and economic projections say it’ll take years to recover, Church service wise, for God’s people to gather **in mass** it’s not promising, politically our nation seems divided, Socially,

we are so restricted, I so miss gathering with my extended church ohana and my own ohana. Thanksgiving wasn't quite the same. 2020 has been a wearisome year to say the least. **BUT HOPE IS ON IT'S WAY.** Vaccines are being produced, but the roll out to the general public is still months away.

I don't know exactly how you're dealing with life now, but for me, there are times of inner groaning and moaning to get back to the former normal of our everyday living. **But I go back to the promise that "HOPE IS ON IT's WAY** but until that vaccine, we just groan and moan for a better day!

The people of the people faced wearisome times. And it was in the midst of hard times that the prophets in those times would prophesize about the Hope of a coming Messiah

The prophet Micah reported this about the coming Messiah, there were gonna be some labor pains that happens, until the coming of the Messiah.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,

are only a small village among all the people of Judah.

Yet a ruler of Israel,

whose origins are in the distant past,

will come from you on my behalf.

3 The people of Israel will be abandoned to their enemies until the woman in labor gives birth.

Then at last his fellow countrymen

will return from exile to their own land (Micah 5:2 – 3)

And that's exactly the situation that Jesus was born into our world. The people of Israel were abandoned into the hands of their Roman Conquerors. And Micah gives a metaphor, a picture of what it will be like for the people as they await their new ruler.

They will be labor pains until the promised ruler comes. Times would be difficult Micah prophesized.

This same metaphor of a woman in labor pains is also mentioned later in the bible by Paul. And this is what he says to the Christians in Rome. In Romans 8:22 - 23

I go read um from DGASB

Us guys know, from befo time till now, dat all da tings God wen make stay moan jalike get big pain, jalike wen one wahine suffa plenny wen she born one bebe. 23Eh, az how goin be fo us guys too. Us guys get da Spirit in charge a us dat God wen give to us now. But we still yet moan inside too. Us lidat cuz we no can wait fo da time wen God goin make us his kids wit full rights, an hemo oua bodies from all da pilau kine stuff.

We are all moaning and groaning for that one day, when God will deliver us from this fallen world.

There will be future glory, a future for us when we see Jesus face to face where there will be no covid, no pain and suffering. But we also know that there are so many in our lives that don't share that same Hope as we do. A hope of Jesus being our Messiah, our savior, our ever present. And that's what many of us are groaning and moaning inwardly for, those unchurched friends and family to come to know Jesus. Because we know that the only way to have eternal hope is to have a relationship with Jesus. And in the midst of our groaning and moaning this side of heaven, There is Hope ON IT's WAY! Or I should say, "HOPE IS HERE" through Jesus Christ.

So where am I going with this. Listen carefully, **I'd like to call all you who have tasted the goodness of Jesus to do our part** so that we can shine brightly for Jesus together as an ohana. Just

like a multifaceted Diamond, each of our lives represent a facet of brilliance, to shine the message of HOPE to the world.

For us at New Hope Central Oahu, how can we practically respond in doing our part to shine the message of Christ to our world? Well, it's pretty obvious to many that this gift of The HOPE Center has come into our world.

We just opened up our four weekend services. This is our chance to live out "Church" again. By very definition the Church is a gathering place for those who worship God. It's the assembly of our ohana.

I wanna invite you and call all of you back to our gathering facility at The Hope Center. All us pastors want to as you to discern well and ask God to direct your decision if regathering for you is wise. With that being said, those of you who feel led to come back, we get to see each other face to face. And shine brightly as that city on the hill.

I want to personally invite you to our Hope Center services in Wahiawa and when you come, ask how you can be a part of our New "Hope" weekend services. In good faith, we are opening four services. And if necessary, we'll consider opening more. Why, something happens when we all get together to sing out our worship together and be with one another.

Yes, we are living in a weary world and we are groaning and moaning for something good to come. But let me remind our Hope has already come, the person of Jesus Christ! And in this Christmas season, may we unite ourselves to do our part in sharing the hope we have in Jesus now and forever.

Here to share with you about the gift we have in our Hope Center is our Wahiawa Campus Pastor Lori Shimabukuro..

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Lori

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HOPE center

Aloha and welcome to the Hope Center!

2 Corinthians 4 ... tells us we are broken and know God's goodness because we have come to know him through that brokenness. Vs 6 and 7 tell us That there is a light that God Himself has placed in our hearts and that is what will shine forth. This treasure placed in us, His earthen vessels, so that glory not be to us but to God Himself. The idea of claiming and reclaiming what is God's property, God's people, and recognizing the distractions that get in the way of folks seeing and hearing of His goodness is the basis for what we do.

The vision of the Hope Center is our "operation reclaim" not just to see individual lives transformed but entire communities through Help, Options, Prayer, Encouragement. With the understanding that we are in the midst of a battle and that our HOPE and VICTORY is found solely in Jesus.

It houses one of NHCO's campuses where one can meet, grow in deeper relationship, and fellowship with others in Christ. It also houses our drop in help & education center but, we are not a traditional help center.

The vision for the HOPE Center was given nearly two decades ago that true life transformation happens best through a

holistic"whole person" approach. You need help with a hurt, habit or hang up, it takes more than just focus on that area. It takes Jesus focus in light of the whole person.

What do I mean by that? We know the plan of the enemy to steal, kill, destroy - attack identity (harvest, generations, and plan over each life in Christ. He does this by creating disparity and distractions of self (in our relationships, our finances, our health, any other immediate need) so we focus SOLELY on our immediate needs and find our identity in everything else but God. The enemy uses this to eliminate and really obliterate JESUS from being the answer.

Think of your windshield. I was driving the other day and had a bird do a fly by. I am looking at the road ahead of me but my focus was split between my destination and that poop. It doesn't take much to sway our focus.

At the HOPE DROP in Help and education center we get to be the Lord's windshield wiping system, helping to eliminate not those immediate distractions so folks can readjust their focus on the journey to JESUS and get to the one who and only one who can truly heal, the one who can bring resolve, and the one who has already provided the way to victory in every situation.

So, God's timing is perfect, in that, we were contacted end of January. Before we really began to feel its affects in the US and in the state. Of course, in March the state and many other places entered into a complete shut down which meant our facilities were closed. By the Lord's grace and provision, we folks from our

congregation and community (nearly 100 folks) stepped up and in to giving of their time, talent and resources, to renovate this building to be the Hope Center we know today.

While we have been holding services officially since Nov. 1 and will officially open the drop in help and education center in January, we have already begun to provide general and specialized assistance and referrals. The Lord has brought together an amazing group of folks with servant hearts and community partners to help in the provision of services. We have already seen retooling, assistance with benefits, and job placements happening and are excited for what the Lord has planned.

Our teams have been and are being trained to:

- host classes from community partners (parenting, finances, home ownership, etc.)
- Assist with obtaining benefits
- supports in situations of civil legal issues, domestic violence, homelessness, nutrition and wellness
- supports for seniors;
- and those affected by COVID-19

The vision of the Hope Center is an ongoing journey that everyone can be a part of. Either here onsite and/or everywhere He leads you. It's about clearing a path for folks to see Jesus in practical ways. It's about reclaiming ground, reclaiming souls and whole territories for Jesus, not just for today, but for all eternity.

Thanks for coming by. We look forward to seeing you soon. Our doors are always open and Hope is always alive in Christ.