

PROCLAIM

WEEK 2: CAN I GET A WITNESS?

At the end of this message, remind me to show you the scariest verse in the Bible.

Publicly thank the staff for recognizing me on Easter: "The kind of stuff you only hear at funerals."

When Navy SEALs decide who can be a Navy SEAL, do you know what they look at? Two things: Performance (can they do the job?) and TRUST. I think God is totally the same way. He blesses us with gifts, but the question is, "Can He TRUST you to care for His sheep?"

I trust our pastoral staff. I've watched them for decades. You can trust them too. You know how you know? Their kids are amazing. Their children LOVE and HONOR their parents. How many of us know that pastoring and parenting require the exact same skill set?

So when you see our pastors, please honor them. And it's a great honor when you address them as "pastor."

Wasn't Lukika amazing on Easter? Lukika STILL follows Jesus after all these years!

She first gave her testimony 5 years ago. She's still following Jesus today, in fact, harder than ever. Do you know how many people share their testimonies and we can't find them anymore? I really appreciate Lukika's staying power.

I loved how Pastor Mark reminded us that Jesus chose Mary Magdalene to be the FIRST to PROCLAIM that He had risen from the dead.

And Pastor Mark posed a great question on Easter that deserves more prayer, reflection, and meditation.

If the Church's job is to PROCLAIM, that's the Church's primary authority, then WHY MARY? Why not call Joe Moore or Howard Dashefsky? Why didn't Jesus start Twitter in the 1st century and spread the news that way? Put it all over social media. Go on Facebook with a selfie saying, "I'm back."

No, instead he picked Mary and the Apostles.

Why?

***Question 1 (for Ohana Group, Shabbat Family Discussion, & Personal Meditation):
Why do you think Jesus chose Mary and the disciples to PROCLAIM the Good News of His Resurrection?***

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Jesus wasn't just going to spread information, He wanted to spread transformation. He doesn't just want to inform you, He wants to transform you.

He wants to transform the world into His Kingdom.

In order for that to happen, he doesn't need tweets and selfies.

He doesn't need messengers...

He needs WITNESSES.

He gave you His Spirit so you would be a WITNESS.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and you will be my WITNESSES"
(Acts 1:8).

That's not just a promise, that's a prophecy. When it comes to prophecy, Jesus is never wrong.

You WILL receive power through a relationship with the Holy Spirit to be a WITNESS.

So the question Jesus is asking us today is NOT "Who will be my social media manager?"

He's asking...CAN I GET A WITNESS?

Think about it for a second. What is a witness?

***Question 2 (for Ohana Group, Shabbat Family Discussion, & Personal Meditation):
What does it really mean to be a WITNESS for Jesus?***

When my family went to Disneyland, they couldn't stop talking about Galaxy's Edge. Why? Because they read about it? Because they watched a video? Because somebody told them it was awesome?

NO. It's because they were THERE. They actually went on the ride. They were telling me from their EXPERIENCE. They were EYEWITNESSES.

So in the same way, maybe somebody told you about Jesus. But until you meet the risen Messiah yourself, firsthand knowledge, you will not be a witness.

The power of the Holy Spirit is not just awesome feelings when you worship, it is the power to change. TRANSFORMATION POWER. And when you see how the Spirit has TRANSFORMED you, then you've got something to say. You are a WITNESS to God's transforming power. You've met Jesus.

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One of our favorite sayings at New Hope Hope Central Oahu...

"Transformed lives transform lives."

This requires going on a journey with Jesus, and growing stronger in your relationship with Jesus.

A couple of cowboys were riding down a dusty trail, when suddenly they saw an Indian Scout with his ear against the ground. One cowboy says to the other: "Hey, let's check this guy out because these Indian Scouts are amazing!" So they got off their horses and walked over to the Indian Scout. What are you hearing, pardner?"

"Stagecoach"

"Wow! Cool!"

"6 horses"

"Amazing!"

"The driver wore a red bandana."

"What? How did you know that!"

"Ran over me 1 hour ago."

Experience! Nothing beats experience.

You do remember Jesus Himself did not start His ministry until He was 30 years old. He started off as a baby like everyone else and the Holy Spirit formed His identity. Can you imagine what kind of journey He went on to come to the conclusion that you are THE SON OF GOD, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE?

That's why I liked the movie "Young Messiah" because it tries to imaging Jesus at age 10.

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I would spend the first four sharpening my ax."
- Abraham Lincoln

Jesus said it even better:

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Mt. 6:33 ESV)

If you want to advance the Kingdom, seek FIRST the Kingdom."

***Question 3 (for Ohana Group, Shabbat Family Discussion, & Personal Meditation):
How is your personal Spiritual journey going? How can we support one another?***

Remember I said that I found the scariest verse in the Bible?

Here it is:

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²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Mt. 7:21-23 ESV).

Just because you're an excellent speaker doesn't make you a witness.
Your ability to turn a phrase won't mean nothing if you can't turn your life around.
Years in Bible college will not make you a witness.
Building your relationship with Jesus will.
Learning to listen and obey Him makes you a witness.
Learning to love Him makes you a witness.
And on that day, He will not say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."
He will run to you with open arms.
And He will say, "I've been waiting for this moment!"

Question 4 (for Ohana Group, Shabbat Family Discussion, & Personal Meditation):
How can you tell that you truly know Jesus, and, more importantly, how can you tell that He knows you?
If you were called on the witness stand to testify about your faith in Jesus, what kinds of things would you say?

Before long the witnesses of Jesus came to Rome. Rome was completely pagan, worshiping pagan gods like Jupiter and Pluto. Roman historians like Lactantius and Tacitus recorded the persecution of the Christians by Roman Emperors. One of their favorite forms of persecution was throwing the Christians to the lions in the arena. They would dress the Christians as wild animals and herd them in the arena. The crowd cheered with blood lust as the Christians would huddle in a circle. The brothers in Christ would courageously place the women and children in the middle, guarding their families. The Romans didn't feed the lions so they were starving and ravenous. But as a lion pounced, one of the brothers would step forward and allow himself to be mauled. The crowd screamed in delight. But as another lion attacked, another brother would step forth. Now there were less cheers. As brother after brother sacrificed himself for the others, the crowd grew silent. As more and more Christians offered themselves to save the others, the hearts of the crowds would turn.

By the year 325 AD, the Emperor himself would come to Christ. Constantine decreed the Edict of Milan which banned the persecution of Christians throughout the Empire.

How did this happen? The Christians weren't allowed to preach in the open. They bore witness through the way they lived, the way they loved one another.

Jesus is asking you today, "Can I get a witness?"