

PROCLAIM

Week 3: Bring Your Church to Friends

Welcome back to our mini-series, *Proclaim*, where we look at the church's role to proclaim to everyone about the good news of Jesus, that Jesus makes our lives whole, by first, putting him in control, and owning our role. In other words, the message of making God large and in charge, and den us take fo charge of our lives, fo erything come good inside, in our personal lives and in all our relationships, and in every part of our lives. And don't miss next week as we'll focus on making our lives whole in our homes, having Shalom in our Homes.

Last week, you heard PMike teach about our role being an eye witness to the amazing work Jesus has done in our lives. "Can I have a witness!". And we no need feel like we need to know all the answers about Jesus. It's like the blind man who got his sight back. His message was when asked can you explain what happened and who did this? His reply, I just know I was blind and now I can see.

How many of you can say, that once you were spiritually blind, but now you can see better? That's our message we proclaim! No have to be complicated.

And today, I'll talk about Bringing Church to Friends. But you say, pastor, isn't our role to bring our friends to church for them to hear the good news of Jesus? Well, that's one way we get to proclaim the good news. As we heard last week, transformed lives transform lives. And that's what we want to do at every weekend service. But coming to our weekend service is more like an Open House to the Christian life.

But not all our friends and those we want to proclaim the good news of Jesus want to come to church. In fact, some of those who call NHCO their home church still have a hard time coming back to church services in this long Covid season.

Looking back at my journey to becoming a Christian, attending church services didn't do it for me. This standing and singing was kinda foreign to me. What the pastor was saying went over my head. It was like talking a different language.

However, what spoke to me most was when I first hung out with Christians and saw how Jesus was so real in their lives. And I was attracted to how sincere these Christians were about living life in a pono way. And how accepting they were of me.

They were proclaiming Jesus to one another, talking openly and excitedly about how Jesus was real in their lives. And that's what drew me in initially. And that's what grounded me in my new relationship with Jesus because I wanted to see Jesus show up in my life too. Did I understand what I know today, not even close. But I began to fall in love with this Jesus because all those around me in this new Christian group were proclaiming Jesus to one another.

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And I began telling people about my new found life with Jesus. Our attractive group reached so many because people heard, saw, and more so experienced Jesus in our relationships. I experienced the living Jesus firsthand with and in my Christian friends. That's my journey.

Ohana Group Discussion Q1: Reflect upon your journey to knowing Jesus. What relationship did God use to proclaim Jesus to you?

So yes, we can proclaim one on one to others, but there's an attraction when we can do it together, we are mo betta togedda in proclaiming the good news. I figure, if we wanna learn about proclaiming, why don't we learn from the master himself, Jesus, in how he went about proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. Was his main strategy to bring people to the church of his day? In his day, the Jews met in bible time building called, synagogues. Did he bring them there to share the good news? Yes, Jesus taught in the synagogues, but much of his ministry was done outside the walls of the synagogue.

Jesus took the good news on the road and went out to share the good news and he did it in relationship with his small group. We could take a whole series and talk about what the church is, but in essence, it's not a place. Church is a people being together. So when I ask, "What is the church?" our answer should be, "We are". Paul says it like this,

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16 NLT).

Let me share an account of Jesus in relationship with his small group, his ohana group, proclaiming the good news through a miracle he performed.

You've probably heard this story before if you've been in church. And this story is told in all the four stories about Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John's good news stories, the gospels. But I want you to focus on, this time, how Jesus included his OG friends in this miracle of the feeding of the 5,000. Most of you know it in Standard English, don't you? So let me play um in Hawaii Pidgin. But I like you listen da story cuz den you goin hear how Jesus included his boys in proclaiming this miracle.

¹ Afta dat Jesus dem go da odda side Galilee Lake. (Da peopo call um Tiberias Lake too.) ² Plenny peopo go wit him, cuz dey wen see all da awesome stuff he do fo show who him, wen he make plenny sick peopo come good. ³ Dat time, almos time fo da Jew Passova ceremony. Jesus go sit down on top one hill wit da guys he stay teach. ⁵ Jesus look up an see plenny peopo stay come by him. He tell Philip, "Eh, wea we goin buy food fo feed all dese peopo?" ⁶ You know, Jesus tell dat jus fo check out Philip, cuz Jesus awready know wat he goin do. ⁷ Philip tell um, "Gotta work mo den two hundred days fo get enuff money fo buy bread fo give all dese peopo even litto bit." ⁸ Andrew, he Simon Peter braddah. Andrew he one a da guys Jesus stay teach. He tell Jesus, ⁹ "You know, get one boy hea dat get five small barley kine bread an two small fish. But how dat can feed plenny peopo? No can!" ¹⁰ Had plenny grass

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dea. Jesus tell his guys, "Make da peopo sit down." So dey sit um down. Had bout five tousan guys dea. ¹¹ Den Jesus take da breads, an tell God, "Mahalo plenny." He give um to his guys, an dey give um to da peopo dat stay sit dea. Same ting wit da fish. An erybody eat plenny how dey like. ¹² Wen erybody get enuff fo eat, Jesus tell his guys, "Go get all da lefovas. No good wase um." ¹³ So dey go get da lefovas, an fill twelve big baskets wit da bread da peopo neva eat. ¹⁴ Afta da peopo see dis awesome ting Jesus do fo show who him, dey tell, "Fo shua dis da Guy goin come inside da world fo talk fo God." (John 6:1-14 Da Good An Spesho Book)

Jesus could have thought, eh this one good chance fo talk about the kingdom of God. But he was sensitive to the needs of the people. They were hungry. He could have done the miracle by himself like how God did the miracle of feeding the people who were going from Egypt to the promised land, remember God dropped down manna in the morning and quail for them to eat. Jesus could have done the same thing, dropped bread and fish from the sky. But he didn't.

What did Jesus do, he included Phillip, Andrew, Simon Peter, and I'm sure the rest of his 12 men. I'm sure Jesus didn't do the passing out of the food by himself.

To me, that's a picture of what we can do today to proclaim the good news. No have to do um by yourself. Jesus shared the good news in community with this boys. You gotta catch dis. It was the good news of Jesus lived out with the inclusion of his disciples.

Let me show you one local kine picture of this. How many of you like poke, especially Fresh poke. What's your favorite kine? Not cheap now, over \$25 a pound now for fresh kine. I figure I go make fo you today. This fresh ahi is from God! I never buy um. I asked God to let me catch the ahi on my kayak.

What if I just served you raw ahi. And was told go eat um lidat! Sashimi, but no shoyu, no wasabi, nothing! Hea, eat um. Would you eat um? Most wouldn't. My dog would eat um for sure. Yeah it's good by itself, but ho, what if you mix um with all da ingredients fo make spicy ahi poke. Goin be broke da mouth good.

Poke Illustration: We so wanna proclaim, present, share this wonderful delectable delicacy, this onolicious, broke da mout fish to people, but when we dress it up with the right ingredients, everyone enjoys it! We as a church talk about proclaiming and we can do that individualy to those in our workplaces, neighbors, sports teams, as AGENTS OF ALOHA. But when we proclaim Jesus, as the ahi, the main ingredient and add all the other ingredients, that's you and I, the ahi becomes broke da mouth good!

OG Discussion Q2: What did God speak to you through the Poke Illustration?

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Yes, people can be attracted to Jesus with you presenting Jesus with your changed life. But what if we as a community do that together, each of us representing a part of that ingredient to bring the ahi great flavor.

Yes, we can bring people to the Poke shop, and that's this church service to see the bigger community of believers. But let's take our poke to those who have never tasted this amazing Jesus. Are you with me? And walah, when people taste the poke, they no going stop going back fo more. Now that's the potential in our communities. Each of us accentuating Jesus, jalike the ingredients to make onolicious poke. And as we come together living out the goodness of Jesus in relationships, people will be attracted to taste and see this Jesus for themselves.

Some of you in groups, you keeping your poke to yourselves. Time already for you to bring your poke serving for others to taste and see this Jesus. Why you keeping this to yourselves. And if you do that too long, da buggah come stall your poke dish. Your poke is meant to be shared with others.

Maybe you are here and saying, I'm not in a group with other ingredients around Jesus, I wanna urge you take the next step and be open to getting meaningfully connected with others.

The poke is the proclaimer, that's us in our relationships lived out around Jesus.

Now, I'm gonna have Marc Cabatbat continue sharing about the 1st church community and how they proclaimed Jesus in relationships.

⁴² "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved," (Acts 2:42-47).

I love that, as let me focus on verse 46 and 47, some of you guys were worried I was going to concentrate on verse 45 on selling your things yeah? I joke but seriously if Jesus is leading you then go do it!!

⁴⁶ "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts"

Intentional, consistent, and committed are the words that come to mind when I read this verse. As one of the first OG groups in the bible they were disciplined in all three. They put Jesus first and did it with a sincere heart.

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2 years ago a month before the Pandemic, I started a men's group filled with 12 other brothers. We covered the book "Resolution Men". The book was about how to be men of Godly resolve. I don't know how you women do it but gathering a bunch of men to do a bible study is a bit of a challenge. As we men love to do life side by side and not face to face. However, I had to trust that us men would be intentional, consistent, and committed to showing up. But God pressed on my heart to start this regardless of what I thought the reaction would be and how I probably would be rejected. And you know what? what came out of this was something that I could never imagine. Yes the men were transformed and all the men I asked attended but better yet, we men broke out to started 4 separate Ohana groups. Each now 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The lord multiplied those Ohana groups and I got to see Church being brought in to the homes a month before the Pandemic. Yes, I am not lying about this timeline as I looked it up this past week and one of the reasons why we could not have a final celebration of finishing the class. It was March 2020 that we started to get locked down. But praise God that he allowed us to come together in fellowship and community and start the Ohana groups a month before. Which involved not just us men but our whole families during some of the hardest and most challenging times in history.

However, even though we started off strong as Ohana groups we all were navigating the difficulties and challenges during the Pandemic. What was normal was no longer normal and our lives were turned upside down. Mentally, Physically, and spiritually and even my Ohana group withered as the pandemic continued to drag on. It was difficult wasn't it. Couldn't even find toilet paper remember? Church didn't look the same, and meeting on zoom or attending church online was getting more and more comfortable. Easy to go to church when you can roll right out of bed right? I know I was there, no need even brush teeth! Remember I mentioned being intentional, consistent, and committed. That is what I am discerning we need to be right now, Church, as we are discovering what the new norm is. Like Mark Tubbs proclaimed in our church we are entering in a new season and a season of birth and growth.

You can't do it alone and it would be foolish to think you can. It really takes a village to raise your keiki, as this is the season Becky and I are in the "Keiki Season" and what our OG looks like today. (Show and stand up in the congregation). And we are still open for more people if you want to join. But in our OG we are all there establishing relationships, continuing our spiritual growth, creating accountability for each other, and proclaiming Jesus in our community. "It's easy to leave the church but harder to leave a relationship". Do you have a small group or Ohana group you are connected to? If not, I encourage you to see P. Earl or myself after and we can talk story and get you connected to one.

OG Discussion Q3: What next step commitment do you need to take to Proclaim Jesus to friends?