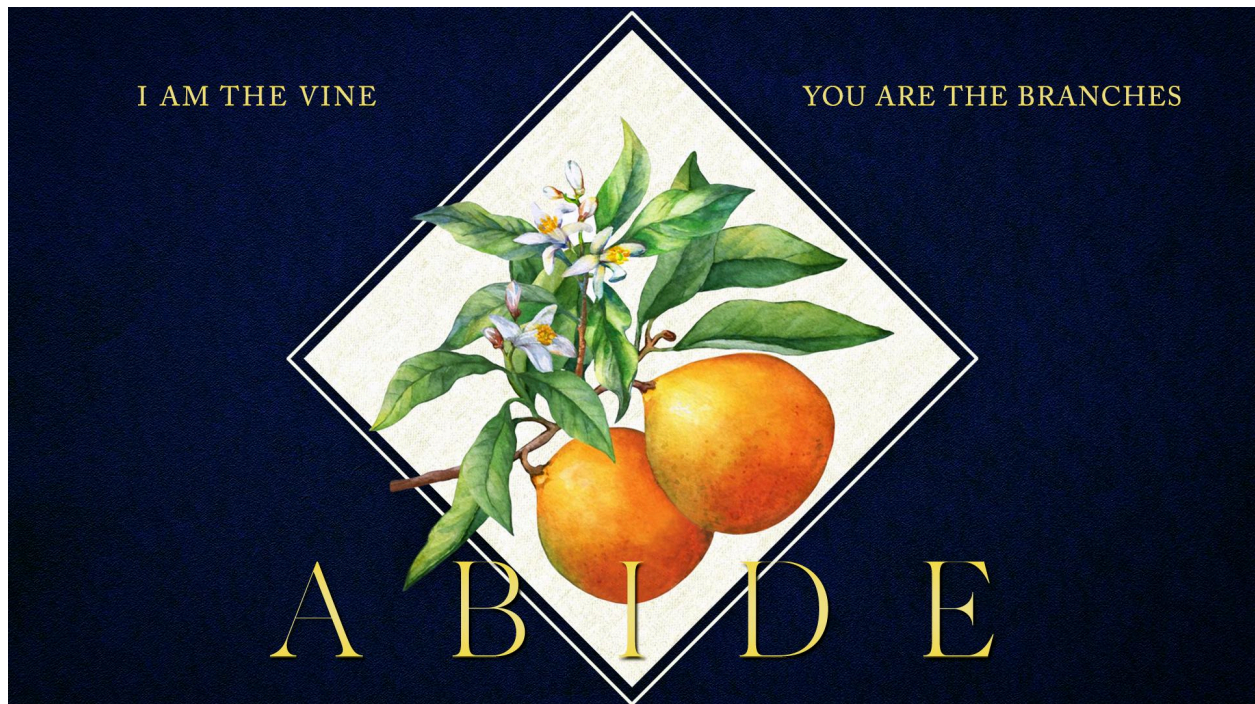


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(Abide Title Graphic) Practice the Way

February 3-4, 2024

Mike Palompo

My bathing suit told me to go to the gym, but my sweatpants were like, "Nah girl, you're good."

There are three kinds of people in this world: those who are good at math and those who aren't.

Spell check has got to be my worst enema

Money may not buy happiness but I would rather cry in a Lexus than a bus

Three wise women would've asked for directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, and there would be peace on Earth.

Last one

When I die I want my last words to be, "I left a million dollars under the..."

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How to end the 40-Day Fast & Pray?

As we come out of our 40-Day Fast and Pray this coming Saturday, Feb. 10, here are some important things to consider:

You've reclaimed some important mental and spiritual territory from Netflix, social media, and bad diet, the last thing you want to do is surrender all that back to the Devil.

You've developed a fresh new love for God's Word and new discipline to study the word everyday, don't throw it all away!

When it comes to Spiritual maturity, it's more about subtraction than addition. We subtract distractions in order to clear space for God. That's why we read that Jesus slipped away from the crowd. We have just cleared some valuable space for the Word and prayer. Don't fill it back up with trivia!

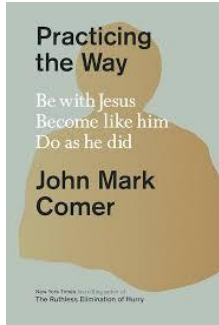
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The Jesus Way plus the Jesus Truth leads to the Jesus Life.

In a couple of weeks we will start a powerful new series called "Abiding in God's Word" but today let me comment on the Jesus Way.

A few of us are reading...

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In this book, author John Mark Comer, contends that following Jesus is not a 3-step formula but it is a 3-step progression over a lifetime. And step one is our meditation for 2024: ABIDE: Be with Jesus. Then as you remain mentally and spiritually fixed on Him, His Word, His voice, and obey Him, then you will, step 2, become like Him and finally, 3, you live as He lived.

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“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).

Comer reminds us that the discipleship process was not originally Jesus’s idea. Jesus grew up in a culture where everyone went to synagogue school and learned under a teacher. And if you were a good student, you went on to Bible College where you would practically memorize the Old Testament. If you weren’t picked for Bible school then you dropped out and got a job fishing or farming or something. But if you were the top student in Bible college, then a Rabbi would invite you to be his disciple. This was an extremely prestigious thing in their culture. It’s like getting a full-ride scholarship to Princeton! Rabbis were very selective on who they picked because this reflected on their reputation. So if you were a teacher of teachers, the best teacher in the land, we think Gamaliel from Acts may have been one of these elite teachers, then you were hot stuff, the number one draft pick!

That's why it was mind- blowing that Jesus picked fishermen, tax collectors, assassins, and even women to follow Him. These guys were not on any Rabbi's list for discipleship.

That's why Peter was like, "Get away from me, Master, I am not worthy to be your student. I will ruin your reputation! You picked the wrong guy."

Maybe we feel like that.

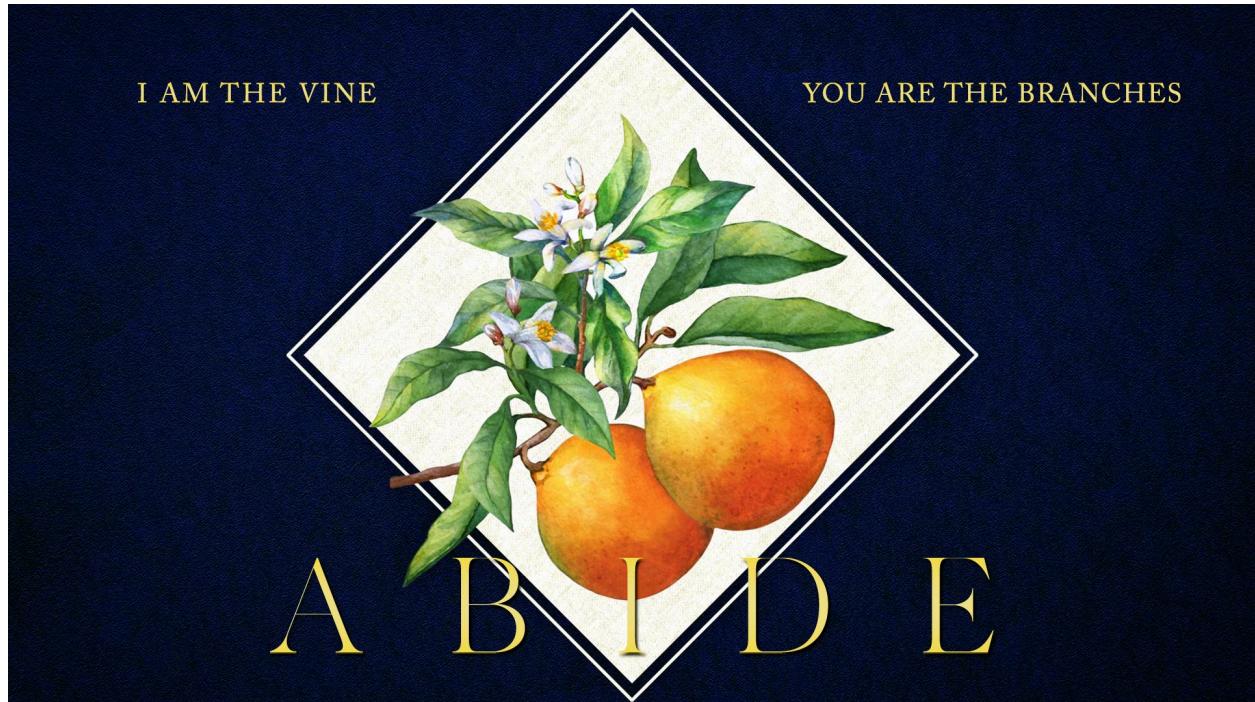
But the Lord insisted, "Follow Me, Peter, and I will make you become a fisher of men!

In an attempt to clarify the Gospel, we (pastors) have reduced the Gospel from what Jesus intended it to be to a set of propositions you simply need to agree with.

We think we are Christians because we AGREE that Jesus loves me and gave me the free gift of salvation. The pastor said all I had to do was say yes to Jesus and I avoid an eternity in hell and go to heaven.

How many of us are ready to go to the next level?

In our church devos, Dr. Brian asked a great question: What kind of word is ABIDE in the original Greek?



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“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5 TLW).

[slide]

μένω MENO

remain, continue, stay, live, dwell

Present Indicative Participle Verb

In John 15:5, the word "abides" functions as a present indicative participle verb. It conveys continuous action, emphasizing the ongoing relationship between the individual and Jesus. The use of the present participle "abides" suggests a continual, active connection, highlighting the idea that remaining or dwelling in Jesus leads to the fruitful outcomes mentioned in the verse.

Since ABIDES is in participle form it's functioning both as a verb and a noun. So the Lord is not only teaching us what we need to do, He's showing us!

What I find crazy about this is that Jesus did not make this a command. Mona and I could stay married without a true, authentic, heart to heart connection. She can do her thing and I can do mine. But is that the kind of marriage you want?

Jesus is saying we could live at a distance if that's what you want but He's inviting us to the more.

[Monty Python guards video]

Here's the Hebrew equivalent

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“One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple” (Psalm 27:4).

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The Hebrew word for dwell/abide is Yashav יָשָׁב.

Mary chose to sit (yashav) at the feet of Jesus which Jesus said was the best part.

How many of us find it really challenging to sit still? It's so hard because there's so much to do. I can't stand it when something is left unfinished. In school I wasn't very disciplined at first, so I would have to stay up all night to finish writing a paper. So I have a responsibility, an assignment, a job to do, I cannot stop to spend time with the Lord!

But if we're going to ABIDE in Him, we have to continue to spend time with Him in solitude.

For how many of us, Spiritual things like church, Bible, and ministry is kind of like going to the gym or eating healthy? We know we should. It would be

good for us. But we would rather take the path of least resistance. It's so much easier to sleep in, go through the drive-thru, go beach rather than go school. One hand on da sand, da adda hand Heineken.

Saying no to the flesh and yes to the Spirit is hard. I get it. But listen, it doesn't always have to be hard. After 40 days, is it not your heart desire to spend more time with Jesus?

Now, in order for us to keep excelerating and growing, I want to spur you on to keep doing what you have already begun...

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Shift from Trying to Training

Honolulu Marathon 1989

26.2 miles! I was 31 years old and in the best shape of my life. All I wanted to do was finish the race. After all that training, I still just barely made it! I have never been that exhausted in my life!

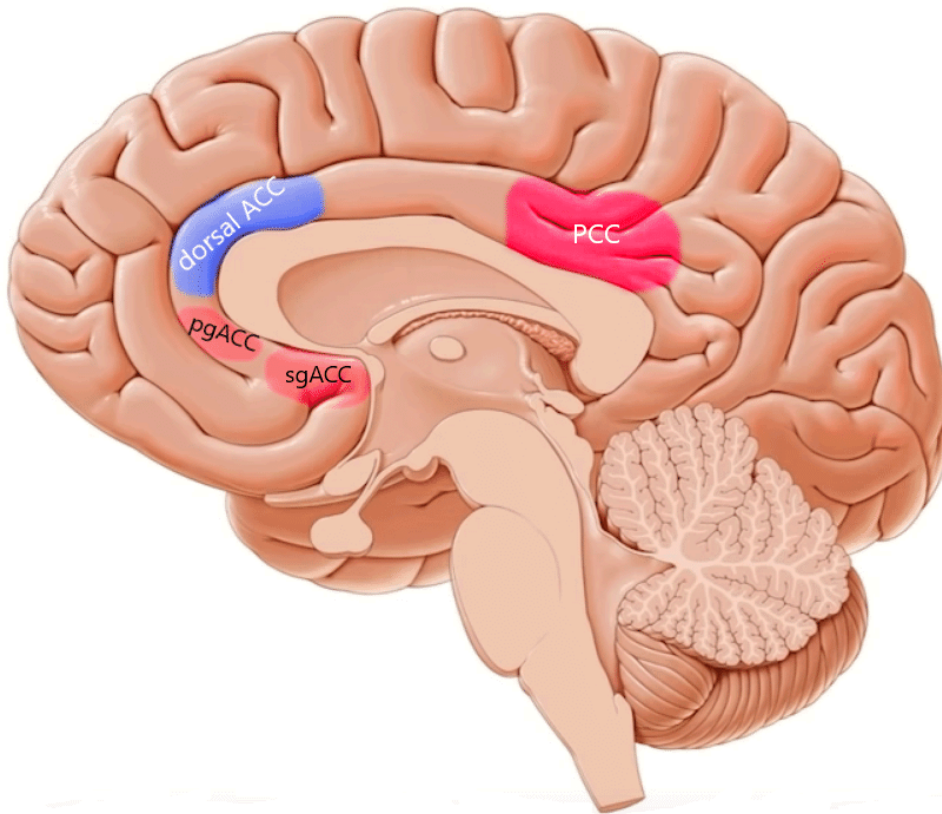
Mycah playing piano

Can you TRY to be a quarterback in the NFL and become the next Patrick Mahomes or Brock Purdy?

Years of Pop Warner, then high school ball, college football and then maybe there's a teeny tiny chance you could be drafted. The NCAA reports only 1.6% of college players get a chance to play in the NFL.

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The anterior Mid Cingulate Cortex (aMCC)



From Chat GPT

The Anterior Mid Cingulate Cortex (aMCC) is a region in the brain located in the cingulate cortex. It plays a role in various functions, including cognitive control, decision-making, error detection, and emotional processing. The aMCC is involved in monitoring conflicts and evaluating outcomes, contributing to our ability to adapt and learn from experiences.

In other words, when you do anything against your will, like go to the gym, go to school, go to church, read the Bible, this part of your brain has a rush of blood flow and lights up like a Christmas Tree and grows larger. But every time you stay home, eat whatever you want, suck em up, self-medicate, watch TV, then your aMCC remains teeny tiny.

Neurologists have discovered that the aMCC is huge in professional athletes and highly successful people but it is tiny in lazy people.

So remember we said, there's actually no such thing as "spiritual growth." Your spirit is instantly perfect by the grace of God. So all our growth is actually in our bodies and in our souls, so our brain and our minds.

Think of the Holy Spirit as a computer programmer, re-writing the code in our brains. So you want to stay home, suck em up but the Spirit says go church, study the Bible. The more you listen to the Spirit, the stronger your aMCC gets!

So keep shifting from trying to live the Christian life to training to follow Jesus as a committed disciple of Jesus!

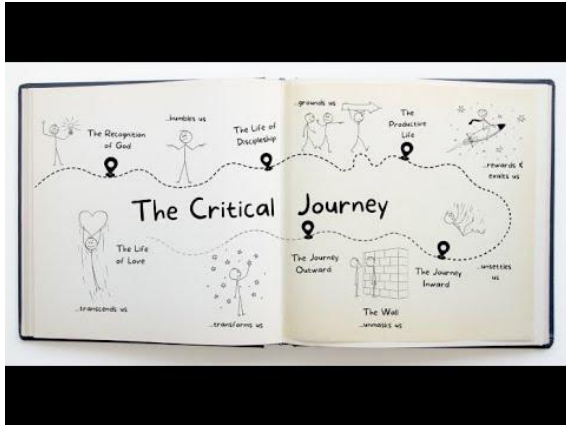
But here's what you need to know:

Sunday church will only get you to the first 3 critical stages of life. Don't hear what I am not saying. You need to come to church! Hebrews says do not forsake your fellowship together. And here at New Hope Central Oahu, we have an excellent weekend expression centered around, not a celebrity personality, but the Manifest Presence of God. In terms of Sunday church, it doesn't get any better.

Mike, you said the first 3 stages. What are the other stages? Glad you asked!

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The Critical Journey of Faith by Janet Hagberg and Robert Guelich



So if you have said YES to Jesus, what Sunday church can do is point you to your next stage. And so I will.

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Life of Discipleship

You will need to find a mentor and begin to mentor others. You need to connect with Spiritual Friends - Intimates and Friends —people who truly know you and you know them. And these people will become some of the most important people in your life!

How do you do this? Let's look at how Jesus did it and follow Him!

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“It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

— Luke 6:12-13

Jesus went into solitude, prayed very intently and had a conversation with the Father about who to invite.

Father how do you feel about Simon Peter? He's kind of a big mouth, speaks before thinking. Should I ask Him?

Yes.

How about Nicodemus? He knows the Word, studied the Torah diligently for years.

No.

So I did this years ago and that's how we got the pastoral team we have today.

A couple of years ago, I felt the Spirit's compulsion to pray again. And so I have 16 guys I meet with once a month.

Braiden

[slide]

The Life of Discipleship

Braiden-Devin

You're thinking wow that's quite a commitment, a significant investment of time! Yes it is.

There's a cost of discipleship for sure. But do you know what will cost you even more? NOT following Jesus!

Listen to Jesus...

[slide]

Unforced Rhythms

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—**watch how I do it**. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Matthew 11:28-30 MSG

I think the next Great Awakening for Hawaii and our nation will come from a people who are peacefully RESTING in the ABIDING PRESENCE of the Vine (Divine 😊), not from political activism or social justice social media warriors fighting from carnality. Awakening will spring forth from messengers who simply cooperate with the Spirit Who quietly whispers to them the next seemingly random act of kindness that He wants performed.

In this passage from the Message Bible, I hear the Spirit beautifully reminding me through the voice of my old mentor (now in glory) Eugene Peterson about the “unforced rhythms” we find ourselves in when we “take His yoke.” There is a music we dance to almost unconsciously, like a song stuck in our hearts. We’re not “preaching,” we’re singing. These unforced rhythms come from Holy Spirit Who abides within us because of the original Song of the Lamb who because of the joy set before Him gladly and willingly endured the Cross.

Let’s stand to get our Spiritual direction on what to do next.

The Jesus Way plus Jesus Truth = The Jesus Life

Questions for Discussion and Meditation

1. What was your biggest Spiritual gain after 40 days of fasting and praying?
2. What is your plan to keep progressing and not go backwards?
3. How will you acquire the Jesus Life?
4. What are your greatest obstacles to advancing in your Christian life?
5. Honestly, are you trying or training to follow Jesus?
6. Do you have a Spiritual mentor? Are you mentoring anyone?
7. If not, how did Jesus prayerfully approach His own discipleship ministry?

