

## That They May Be One

April 13 – 14, 2024

Welcome back to Wk2 of our series entitled One – Community Series. Where we are creating a culture change in our church regarding what it looks like to grow at NHCO. PMark shared this picture of the Two-Winged church, our weekend service large gathering teaching settings where it's the open house for our Christian experience. But it doesn't stop there, it also the other wing where in smaller group settings people turn their chairs to share, care, and grow, and do life together.

God's Plan A: Community and Connection are what we were created for and how God transforms us. So our church's vision is for everyone to have a place where they can turn their chairs toward one another, take off our masks, and be real, and learn to care for and be cared for by one another, learning to love each other up close and personal. Cuz Jesus came to earth to be with people up close and personal, don't you think that's what he wants his church to be as well.

Today/Tonight, **I'll make a case for community.** In other words, not just talk about the nice, optional idea of God's people living out their faith in a small group community but NEED to have, a gotta be, a part of the being God's family, value for each person who calls themselves Christians.

The culture we wanna create is of both weekend services and small group life as essentials to our faith. We want conversations happening, in like what group are you in? I'm in a group with families with kids, the men's group, I'm in the married couples, the 20 Somethings Group, I'm with such and such. How about you? I'm not in a group? Huh? Well are you between groups? Are you looking for a

group? Let me help you find a group. That's the kind of culture we wanna establish in our church.

We only can grow so much from afar. We gotta draw near and dear to each other. And yes, I'm the connections pastor, but we'll all should be connectors for Jesus. Tell the person next to you, You're a Connector for Jesus, I'm a connector for Jesus!

How can we live our lives as One from afar. How can be united from a distance. Gotta be up close and personal. It's like saying I'll marry you and commit my life to you and be one with you, but you live in Hawaii and I'll live in New York? We'll have a long distance marriage. You'd say, Huh? No ways! Maybe for short season, like a month or so, but that can't be the permanent situation.

Or, you could say, I love you, Jesus, but I don't like your bride. What? We're saved into something, to be a part of God's ohana. So many things that Jesus teaches can't be applied going solo. Many of the letters Paul wrote were teaching for Christians to people living in community.

Or, we'll be one strong sports team you say! We'll win together, but you practice on Monday, Wed, and I'll go to practice Tu and Th and we'll play together on Sat. Is that being united? No ways! Gotta practice together to be united! How you going be on a winning team being like that? You going be one Loser!

Hey, I went out with my kayak fishing hui on Wed, no solo adventures no moa.

Let me show you a short video preview of what happened on Wed. **SHOW VIDEO**

Let me tell you what happened on Wed. The weather has been bad for the past week, but from last week, the forecast was for great conditions on Wed, so me and my kayak fishing midweek hui went out, NS, well, I caught plenny akule and

opelu, and was hoping to turn that into a bigger fish. Well, I didn't realize that that bigger fish turned out not to be a fish, but a whale. We send out our live bait about 250', and we slow troll um. Then I hear this "Huuuuuuu" sound and look back, No joke, an adult humpback surfaces and swims toward me and I yell, but I don't panic. But right den and dea, my reel screams and my line peels out. And Hanapaa, the whale was on. What do you think I did then? I was praying hard, "don't flip me". "Jesus, save me" I'm not ready to die yet. I didn't wanna loose my line, but I was ready to cut it when I went slack. Obviously I'm here, so I didn't die. I wish I had captured it on my Go-Pro, but it happened so fast.

So what's my point of this story? We are clueless on the hour or the day, but death will come for us. But let's pretend for a moment that we knew the day we were going to die. Probably our last act would be to pray to God. Like I did, thinking I was gonna die? What would you pray for? Yes, probably that God would spare you, for a little longer. But what else would you pray for? Can't pray for a better job, a better married at that point, that new car you always wanted. That would be crazy. What would you pray to God for? Your legacy! That people would remember you well, that people would truly miss you cuz you were special to them. Try think, what would you pray for?

Do you know that our Jesus knew he was gonna die and how he'd die? And we can get a glimpse of what was important for him in hearing what his prayer was. You ready to hear what he prayed? Let's read a portion of it here in John 17.

**(KEYNOTE)**

After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. . . I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love

me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! (John 17:1, 20 – 24 NLT)

Did you catch what Jesus prayed for? Our master? Our leader? The one who wants to be in charge of our lives? Did you hear his heart's desire? He prayed that his disciples would be "ONE", Just like you, heavenly father and I are one? Why? So that the world will believe you sent me.

You wanna know how we can best share Jesus other than opening up our mouths to share? It's through our oneness with each other. It's being mo betta togedda! It's living in unity. Let me read um in Pidgin: **(KEYNOTE)**

Afta Jesus tell dat, he look up to da sky an tell, . . . "Faddah, time awready. Now, show da peopo how awesome I stay cuz I yoa Boy, so den I like show dem how awesome you stay. . . I stay tight wit dem, an you stay tight wit me. Den dey goin stick togedda to da max. Cuz dey stick togedda, da peopo inside da world goin know dat you da One dat sen me hea, an dat you get love an aloha fo dem guys jalike you get love an aloha fo me (John 17:1 & 23 DGASB)

In Pidgin, dey going stick togedda to da max!

If that's what Jesus prayed before he'd die, don't you think that that's so important for us to live out today? And I don't think Jesus meant just having a personal relationship with him. It's having a relational relationship with God's people as well.

Who you stay tight with? Yeah, you and your ohana! That's good. And maybe it starts there, but how about with others? Who can you be real with, take off your masks, feel safe with, share you dreams, bear your hurts, hear your disappointments and still accept you, but you'd be open to taking correction from them? Do you have people in your lives like this? We all need people in our lives like this. AND this was Jesus heart's desire. That's what he cried out to his

heavenly father in his last hours before he'd go to the cross, suffer and die. He died for you and me for community, for COM-UNITY.

**OG and Self Reflection Q1:** Reread the Jesus' last prayer before he suffers and dies. Discuss what was his heart's desire.

**OG and Self Reflection Q2:** As you reflect on your spiritual journey, have you been in the kind of community that Jesus is contending for? For those of you who have, how has that experience been for you?

Do you know the Hawaiian term for Unity or Oneness? Ho'okahi or Lokahi. I figure those who grow up in Hawaii, learn to count to 10 in Hawaiian? In 4<sup>th</sup> grade we all take Hawaiiana. So you should have learned this. Let's count to five, ready go! **Ekahi, Elua, Ekolu, Eha, Elima.**

Have I introduced you to our dog? He came to us as Chucky. But he's not Chucky no moa. Do you know what we named um. Lokahi, or Kahi. When we lost our last dog, we were all buss up sad. My son shares on social media our loss. Then, his classmate says, Clarke, would you like to adopt my uncle's dog. He died unexpectedly and no one wants him. Well, I get the news while kayak fishing with a video of him, my daughter, and wife showing me him. And I said, let's discuss this after I come in. I don't wanna be bothered catching my yellow fin tuna. Well, a couple hours later as I'm paddling in with my fish, I get another video, and guess what this dog is being welcomed into my home! **SHOW VIDEO** (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> one)

I hated him, no joke, I told my family, I don't want this dog, pooping all over my living rm, biting me with his puppy teeth and drawing blood.

But look, how much Lokahi has brought us. Does he mess stuff up, nip at me at times when I wash him, bark loudly when I want quiet, yes, but life is so good with him. That's what life is like when we invite others into our worlds. Others are messy, they an nip at you at times, can be too loud, but life is good.

Now just think of our God. We have one God, but three forms of God. Our Christian faith is monotheistic. One God, but what makes Christianity special is that we have three persons of God? Huh? Yes, we have God, the Father, we have God the Son and we have God, the Holy Spirit, the Good an Spesho Spirit. I know it can be confusing when we see Jesus speaking to his father and then speaking of the Spirit to come. We Christians believe in this theology called the Trinity, we have a triune God. Some other cults may say, there's no word trinity in the bible. That's true, but this teaching is all over the place in the bible.

Each in relationship with each other. Some people say, well, Jesus is half God and half human. Is he human? Yes. Is he God, Yes. So is he hapa/half half God and Man? Is he hapa God and hapa man? No, it's mysterious, no can really understand, but he's fully God and fully Man. And Jesus relates to his heavenly father. He prays to him. And then he speaks of God to come in the form of the Holy Spirit who also is God. They are in relationship with one another. And if our Triune God is in relationship with one another, don't you think that's what our lives should represent as well? Our lives in relationship, up close and personal relationship with one another.

How's my case for community going? Compelling? Are you convinced for community? Our savior prayed for that! Our Triune God represents that! And Jesus models that in his relationships with his disciples. Jesus could have just taught and healed from afar, spoken exclusively from the mountain to the crowds, but he got up close and personal with his disciples! He got down and dirty with them.

It's so clear what our master's heart was to reach our world. He wanted to reach our world through community. Let's see his masterplan! **(KEYNOTE)**

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons (Mark 3:13 – 15 NIV).

So you catch our master's masterplan? It was to reach the world in and through relationships. He called his disciples primarily to be with him. Do you need any more proof in my making a case for community?

**OG and Self Reflection Q3:** After hearing Ry and Kaylie share their story, what can you take away as examples for your own spiritual journey?

In our following wks, you'll hear more people testifying for the call of community! And how being with one another, God's Plan A that brings unity is transforming their lives!

And, for those of you between groups, not in a group, just starting on your journey, relax, let the Holy Spirit guide you and he may even speak through others, so keep your heart open to however he speaks. Just be obedient as he does.

Let me ask you this question. Where were Jesus' closest disciples when he was arrested, went to trial, and was sentenced to death? Did they stay tight with Jesus? This is what happened. **(KEYNOTE)**

"Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." Then everyone deserted him and fled (John 24:48 – 50 NIV).

His closest friends, his constant companions, instead of being by their master who came close to them, abandoned Jesus, scared that they too would be arrested.

So after Jesus comes back alive, don't you think he'd decide to choose others who would be more faithful to walk with him through his most darkest times instead of going back to those who abandoned him. You didn't pass the test. You chickened out. Pantied out, Peter! But no that wasn't his message.

Do you know what happened to Peter right after Jesus death? I go read um in Hawaii Pidgin: (Keynote)

An den, afta dat, Jesus let his guys see him one mo time. Dis happen by Lake Tiberias, da Galilee Lake. Dis wat wen happen: Some a Jesus guys come togedda. Get Simon Peter, an Thomas da guy dey call Da Twin, Natanael da guy from Cana town Galilee side, an Zebedee two boys, plus two odda guys dat Jesus stay teach. 3Simon Peter tell da guys, "Eh, I like go fish!"

An dey tell um, "Yeah! We like go too." So da guys go down to da beach, an dey go inside one boat. But dat nite, dey neva catch notting. Den wen real early in da morning wen get ony litto bit light, Jesus stay standing dea on top da beach. But his guys, dey neva know was him. Jesus tell um, "Eh! Wat you guys catch?" Dey tell, "Whitewash! No mo notting!" (John 21:1 – 5 DGASB).

Peter went back to his old life of fishing. He gave up on the call! But Jesus didn't give up on Peter.

Let me continue the story: (Keynote)

Me, I was dea too. I da guy dat Jesus get plenny love an aloha fo. I tell Peter, "Eh! Dass Da One In Charge!" Wen Simon Peter hear dat, he put on his shirt dat he take off befo he go work, an den he jump outa da boat fo swim quick to da beach, 8cuz da boat ony stay bout hundred yard from da beach. Wen da guys jump outa da boat, dey spock one charcoal fire on top da beach. Get one fish on top da charcoal an get bread. 10Jesus tell um, "Eh, bring some a da fish you guys wen catch ova hea." So Simon Peter go back inside da boat an help da guys drag da net on top da beach. Had choke plenny big kine fish inside—hundred fifty three! An you know wat? Da net neva even broke, no matta had choke plenny fish inside. Jesus tell um, "Come on, you guys! Breakfas stay ready awready!" (v.6 – 12).

Then, listen up what Jesus does to Peter.

Afta dey pau eat, Jesus go aks Simon Peter, "Eh Simon, John boy. Tell me dis: You get mo plenny love an aloha fo me den dese guys get, o wat?" Peter tell um, "Eh, fo shua, Boss. You know I yoa fren." Jesus tell um, "Kay den. Feed my bebe sheeps." Den Jesus go aks um one mo time, "Eh Simon, John boy. You get love an aloha fo me, o wat?" Peter tell um, "Eh, fo shua, Boss! You

know I yoa fren.” Jesus tell um, “Kay den. Take kea my sheeps.” An den one mo time, Jesus go aks um, “Eh Simon, John boy. You my fren, o wat?” Den Peter come all hurt inside, cuz now three time awready Jesus go aks him. He tell, “You my fren, o wat?” So Peter tell um, “You Da One In Charge! You know eryting! You know I yoa fren.” (v. 15 – 18a). . . . Den Jesus tell um, “Stay tight wit me an be my guy.” (v. 19b).

After all that Jesus did to invest in that relationship with Peter and all that Peter did to deny and abandon Jesus, Jesus doesn’t give up on Peter. He redeems him. And says, you get love an aloha for me, Peter tell, Jesus I your friend. Other translations tell, I love you, Jesus. Well if you my friend, if you love me, what does Jesus tell Peter to do. Feed my lambs, Feed my sheeps, take care my sheeps. Three times he tell um dat. You denied me three times, **I going reinstate you, three times with the call to Community!**

Sheep are flock animals, not solitary animals. They need a shepherd. And he’s calling Peter to care for the sheep. I believe there are many Peters in our church today that need to respond to the call of Jesus and be with the sheep! And we do this together! Taking care each other in as the flock of God being led by shepherd leaders who lead us to Jesus, cuz we are “Mo Betta Togedda”.

**OG and Self Reflection Q4:** Pastor Earl contends that we are all Peters in some way. How would you respond to Jesus’ question to you, “Do you love me, You my fren, o wat?, your name? And how would to Jesus’ call to care for his sheep?

I hope I’ve made a case for community today, that that is God’s Plan A for you and his church. But it starts with all of us being in God’s family first. God invites you to be his kid, his special kid if you accept invitation fo be his kid.

But erybody dat come tight wit him an trus him, God give dem da right fo come his kids cuz dey know who him (John 1:12 DGASB).

Come back next week for another compelling message by PLori as she shares how Sharing, Caring and Healing happens in Community, where we turn our chairs toward one another, take off our masks, and be real with one another as we are mo betta togedda! Dass it!