

Welcome to our new six week series entitled:
 Before You Say “Yes” to Jesus
“Meeting Jesus” — The Foundation of Relationship

Welcome to our new series, **“Before You Say Yes to Jesus.”**

It’s kinda like when you’re courting someone before marriage—you don’t know everything about your future spouse, but you learn enough to say, *“I’m in,”* and spend a lifetime growing in that relationship. Same thing with Jesus. In this series, we’re gonna unpack what it really means to say “Yes” to Jesus.

- Can you actually hear His voice?
- Is real life change possible?
- What role do others play on your journey?
- And what’s the ultimate purpose once you’ve said yes?

Today, we’re starting with the most important part—**what it actually means when you say “Yes” to Jesus** and begin a relationship with Him.

Even if you’ve said yes years ago, we hope this series fires you up again—to grow deeper and help others say yes too.

Cuz let’s be real—it’s always good to know the basics before you commit, and go all in, right?

But before I go on, I gotta share the God Thing story about coed softball.

Our season has begun even if our record on paper is one win, one loss, we are already champions. Not enough for tell you about it, so watch this!

(Keynote Video: 1:20)

Our next game is. . . Get so much love and uplifting happening out there and we get to hang out with many unchurched people on our team.

The good news is God put together an amazing team of coaches. Coach Lance and Moana had a basic understanding of softball and the league, but they committed to heading the team even without prior experience. When

they did that, Coach Kim Keliiholokai, stepped up to commit to making the line/positioning players. And I still get to play, trying to relive the glory days of years past. And look at the fruits they and the rest of the team is experiencing cuz they committed!

And I hope in this series, for those who are new or have never said yes yet, you'll be compelled to say yes, AND JOIN TEAM JESUS.

By the way, what was it like for you on Tuesday when the Tsunami Threat was sounded? Weren't you all praying God would spare us? I'm sure many people turned to God in that moment to save us. And this is one of the foundational points of saying yes to Jesus, that Jesus saves!

God allows us to face crisis moment to see how we approach him through that difficult time: It could be a natural disaster of a tsunami that causes us to be open to God's intervention. Or it could be a relational rift/pain, a bad diagnosis for your health/cancer/stroke/needing a transplant, facing a job loss, losing a loved one, or going through a break up: we'll all experience moments of crisis and that chance to turn to God. You agree? And it's in these moments, we become open to saying "Yes" to Jesus to save us.

I want to share a crisis moment that opened me up to God. I didn't grow up in church—in fact, when people asked what religion I was as a kid, I'd say "Buddhist" because I was Japanese. But when around my Filipino friends, "I'd say, I'm Catholic". But deep down, especially during intermediate and high school, I used to think a lot about death—and honestly, I was afraid. What happens after this life? Would I just stop existing? That thought scared me.

Years later, as a freshman at UH, an old friend ran up to me and said, “Hey Earl, I’m saved!” And being unchurched, I was clueless what that meant. I asked, “You almost died or what?” He laughed and said, “No, I became a Christian.” Later, meeting his friends, they shared their about their lifechange being saved, and when I told him about my fear of dying, my friend said, “If you believe in Jesus, He’ll give you eternal life.” I thought, *Shoots, I like that!* I repeated a prayer he led me in—and just like that, I believed I was saved.

That started my journey. God kept pursuing me—even when I pulled back from this friend as his church was kinda scary emotional and I felt all they wanted me to do is get me baptized.

I decided to dorm at UH and guess who I was placed with, yes, A Christian. He invited me to his Friday night Bible study and I said I just going once to get my roommate off my back, but that step changed my life as I finally understood the good news. That my wrongdoings separated me from God, but Jesus, who never sinned, died for me to (save me) and bring me safely home to Him. And that gave me the assurance I had been looking for all along. This is one of the first bible truth I learned.

(KEYNOTE)

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18 NLT).

But my journey to understanding the good news didn’t stop there. I remember thinking, this Jesus, I gotta learn more about him being the one who would die for me and save me. I continued going to that B.S and

talking with my roommate. And it was a little later that learned that saying “Yes” to Jesus wasn’t about the destination of heaven, it was about being in close relationship with him on the journey to heaven.

This one truth that Jesus spoke rocked my world on the idea of the afterlife.

(Keynote)

And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth (John 17:3 NLT)

Saying “Yes” to Jesus is more about **knowing Him**—da one true God.

Eternal life no start after you mahke... it start **right now**, when you stay tight in relationship with Jesus. Dat blew my mind cuz I thought I was just saved *from* hell and *to* heaven—but really, I was saved *into* one relationship with Jesus. Dass way mo better than “Fire Insurance”, get out of hell card. Dass life wit God, starting today, and going on forever.

You ever been to Hana Maui driving all the way from Kahului on Maui on this 30 mile journey? If you think Hana itself is the main point, you kinda missed it. The real beauty is the journey—the waterfalls, the hikes, the ocean views, the people you're with. It's not just the destination, it's who you're riding with. If you tell the driver, “just wake me up when we get there” you’ve missed the whole point of going to HANA. And sadly, that’s some people’s view of being saved and being a Christian. The destination of heaven and da dos and don’t of the journey.

Saying “Yes” to Jesus is not like that. It’s not just about trying to be good or getting to heaven one day. It’s about the journey—with *Him*. He’s not just the tour guide, He’s the one who saves us—not only from spiritual separation, but from the daily power that sin has in our lives. And when

you say yes to Jesus, His Spirit comes into our lives and helps us live a new way. That's not just good news for later—that's good news for now!

USE THAT PROP OF MY PDF tethered to my kayak: The point, never take Jesus off. He throws you a lifeline, and that lifeline, that PFD, is his very presence.

It's like this, you realize you need to be saved and you hear the good news of Jesus, and he throws you a lifeline, and you receive it. In fact, he saves us and he says "cloth yourself with me". But after a while it gets uncomfortable you are not free to do your own thing. Remember his very presence saves you again and again. His very presence will give you all the necessary tools for your journey.

For those of you who wanna learn more about this and maybe you're pretty new to all this Christianity, I wanna invite you to register for this class:

BASICs. The workbook is the same workbook I went through when I said yes to Jesus years ago and the truths covered is foundational.

Introduce the class here.

(Keynote SHOW class here)

My journey to being "saved" didn't start with rules or religion. No one told me, "Go church, follow these steps, no do this, do that." But I've learned that even people raised in Christian homes can miss the point—it's not about the forms, it's about a real relationship with Jesus.

Yeah, we're told to read the Bible, but that can feel like just another thing to check off. The truth is, God wants to speak to us—and He speaks our heart language. For me, that's Pidgin. I had to learn all these big church

words—salvation, grace, repentance—but what mattered most was that God was speaking *to me*. And you know what? People in the Bible did the same—they cried out, “God, save me!” Let me read you one short one:

Psalm 13. (**Keynote**)

For the choir director: A psalm of David.

1 O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever?
How long will you look the other way?
2 How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart every day?
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?
3 Turn and answer me, O LORD my God!
Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.
4 Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!”
Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.
5 But I trust in your unfailing love.
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.
6 I will sing to the LORD
because he is good to me (Psalm 13 NLT).

But I like you lissen um in how Jesus speaks to me.

(Keynote Play video 1:30)

Some of you know that I lead Hawaii Pidgin Bible Ministries and I so wanted people that talk and tink jali like me fo hear da good news of Jesus. As why get da audio fo Da Jesus Book. Wat version digital bible you get? Youversion.

Da voice you wen just hear, Dass Ipo Sarpomones and she part of da team. You like be part of da team go talk story wit her afta church. Go see Ipo an check out da shirts, fo point peopo to da translation.

I'd like to call up someone who similarly, had little church background, but God pursued her through a friend jalike me, and how her life is not the same today. Here her story of being saved and living a changed life.

(Sunday services ONLY TESTIMONY 5 minutes) (Mandy Kim - Fu)

Mandy's heading back to Oregon before our churchwide baptism in Sept., but she so wanted to be baptized to tell the world she said Yes to Jesus. Her spiritual mentors from Oregon are here to witness that too. Served with them in Japan as missionaries.

Have **you** said "Yes" to Jesus—not just to a religion, or to trying harder, or to going church—but to a **relationship with him**?

Not just for heaven one day, but for walking daily *with Him*, starting now.

He's not asking you to clean yourself up first. He's offering Himself—His presence, His Spirit, His love—to walk with you, strengthen you, and save you... again and again.

Like we said earlier, following Jesus isn't about just "getting there" like Hana. It's about the journey—with the One who loves you enough to die for you, and strong enough to carry you.

He throws you a lifeline—His very presence. And He invites you not just to wear Him like a PFD (personal flotation device) in crisis, but to never take Him off. He's not your backup plan—He's your new life.

So today, whether it's your **first time** ever considering Jesus, or maybe you've gone through the motions for years and realize you've missed the relationship part—I want to give you a chance to say, "Yes, Jesus—I believe. I trust You. I want You in my life."

Right where you are, would you close your eyes and bow your head?

Paul says this, “⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8 - 9 NIV).

If this is your desire, pray something simple from your heart like this:

“Jesus, I say Yes to You.
I believe You died for me and rose again.
I want to walk with You, know You, and be changed by You.
Forgive me, fill me with Your Spirit,
and help me live for You, every day.
I give You my life. Amen.”

If you prayed that, or if you’re still wrestling but want to learn more, don’t leave here without taking a next step.

Come to the **BASICs Class**—this is the same study I went through when I first said yes to Jesus. It’ll help ground you, and give you the tools for this new journey. Also, go talk story with Ipo after service if you felt something stir in you as you heard the Pidgin audio. That’s the Holy Spirit speaking your heart language. And get a shirt fo point peopo to Jesus.

Benediction: I believe. . . . Let’s sing and declare that we believe in the one who saves us!

Self Reflection and Ohana Group Discussion Questions:

1. Where You At Right Now? "Have I said 'Yes' to Jesus—not just to religion, but to a real relationship with Him?"

- Share your journey. Was it one big moment or a series of small steps?

- If you haven't said yes yet, what's holding you back?

Action Step: Write or voice record your personal “Yes to Jesus” story—even if it's still being written.

2. Are you Wearing Your PFD (Personal Flotation Device)?

"Am I keeping Jesus close like my PFD—or only pulling Him out during crisis?"

- What's one area in your life right now where you need to let Jesus save, strengthen, or guide you?

Action Step: Pray daily this week, “Jesus, help me stay close to You—not just when life get rough.”

3. Is Your Faith Just Destination-Minded—or About the Journey Too?

"Do I treat my faith like one ticket to heaven—or am I walking with Jesus now?"

- In what ways can you make your daily life more about the relationship than just the rules?

Action Step: Choose one habit (like prayer, worship, or reading Scripture) and focus on doing it *with* Jesus, not just *for* Jesus.

4. Who Are You Bringing With You on This Journey?

"Who in my life needs to hear that saying 'Yes' to Jesus is more than religion—it's relationship?"

- Who's your one person God might be nudging you to invite to church, to BASICS class, or just to talk story?

Action Step: Pray and reach out to that one person this week. You don't have to preach—just be real and share what Jesus means to you.