

October 11, 2020



Aloha Friends and Family!

It's good to be back after two weeks of vacation. I didn't really go away, due to the current lockdown directives, but some time away from work did allow me to alter the rhythm of life for a little bit. We were

grateful that most of the hiking trails were reopened and also we were able to go to the beach as a family. Getting my boys outside as often as possible does a world of good for them. I hope all of you are able to get outside a little bit. Keeping up with some physical activity is an important part of your overall health. I was amazed how much better I felt with the extra exercise.

As you may have heard by now, Renee Chung passed away last Monday peacefully at her home after a long battle with cancer. Please keep Richard and the rest of the family in your prayers. I will deeply miss those conversations we would have over lunch after church. She was a woman with a sharp wit and a generous spirit. I still have a few of her handmade thank you cards that I think I will just keep instead of send out.

Our renovations continue on the social hall and sanctuary. I think you will be pretty impressed with the bathrooms once you get a chance to return to the church. The tile work has been done painstakingly well. We are also looking into adding security screens to bathrooms that Aged to Perfection uses because we have still been having trouble with break-ins. The current situation with the homeless population in Waipahu is as difficult as I have every seen it, so please continue to keep that in your prayers as well as we work towards meaningful solutions.

-Pastor Makana

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VIRTUAL CHURCH

LIVE Cast Sunday's at 9:30 am on our Facebook or Youtube page. Get there early Sunday with your 'ohana to worship with us! Can't make it? Catch the broadcast later in the day.



A picture from Pastor's vacation as Konrad, Caspar and Silas hiked at Camp Palehua.

“Exodus Revealed: Manna & Quail”

Readings: Exodus: 16:2-15

In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?” Moses also said, “You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.” Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’” While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. The Lord said to Moses, “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’” That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat.”

We return to Exodus this week and find the people of Israel in the wilderness. They have escaped slavery in Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, and now they start a very new chapter in their lives. While life as a slave was bitter, they are discovering that being free isn’t always easy either. They have a lot to learn, and their habit is to revert to their old ways rather than letting God lead them into something new. This is a lesson that we have to learn as well, especially now when we are also finding ourselves in a time that can feel a lot like a wilderness experience. This time is different, even scary perhaps, and it is nature to want to go back to the old ways, but I believe that like Israel, God isn’t calling us to return to the old ways, but to go forward into a new promised land.

That of course isn’t easy. For one thing, it’s always hard to adjust to new surroundings. I know that whenever we have moved it took us about 6 months to get the last box unpacked but it takes even longer for me to get used to looking for things in their new places. Physically I can move into a new place, but mentally I still expect things to be like they were in my old space. While looking for the broom in the wrong closet is pretty harmless, sometimes being stuck in the past is harmful. Too often people end up caught in damaging relationships or unsatisfying jobs because they become accustomed to them. The pressure of those difficult circumstances make it even more difficult to see the hope of what could be.

As Israel is caught in the wilderness, they struggle to see the hope of God’s promise and instead fixate on their past. It almost sounds ridiculous for them to long to go back to Egypt where they were slaves, but you say strange things when you are hungry. I know that’s how it works in my family. About an hour before lunch or dinner everyone’s patience begins to slip and tempers begin to flair as the hunger makes them angry as well. As the fights escalate, I often feel my own patience start to slip as I want to increase the punishments until behavior improves. This never works all that well. My wife often intervenes and instructs us to eat first, and then settle our differences and address our issues. As much as I might want to enforce my authority as a parent, we together are a family first and foremost. We are not adversaries, as a family the only way we get ahead is when we find ways where everyone wins. In this passage, God is demonstrating that Israel is his people, his family. Even though it is wrong for them to grumble against the God who just freed them from captivity, God knows that his children are hungry, so he feeds them. In Genesis, mankind

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is cursed to work to feed themselves by the sweat of their brow, but while Israel is in the wilderness, God shoulders that burden on behalf of this family and provides what they need for that season: 40 years of quail and strange honey bread.

Most of my family wants something different after three days of eating the leftovers of even my finest cooking. The food surely got old for the Israelites, but it kept them alive, and with it the desire for the promised land alive as well. God provides not to induce complacency, but to give us the space to follow him more closely. After Jesus feeds the 5,000, people follow him around looking for another free meal. Jesus then points out that this food was only ever meant to sustain people through a necessary season. Now that these followers have the bread they need for the day, they need to seek the eternal with the opportunity that this meal has provided for them.

Seeking the eternal is hard though. We get so caught up in our daily lives that we have a hard time imagining how things could be any different. This can be just as true if you are comfortable or if are on the verge of a breakdown. When things seems to be going well, you can skate blissfully along without stopping to reflect. When things are difficult, we are so caught up in survival that planning for the future seems hopeless. I think both of those might be going on for us right now. Many of us have found a simple lock down rhythm. It might be lonely and perhaps a little boring, but it's safe and its do-able, something we can repeat day in and day out. Thats good, because we don't know how long this will last for. It could be done in a couple of weeks, or it could take a couple of years to resolve. During this time, know that God is sustaining you in this wilderness, not to be stuck here forever, but because he is preparing you for something more.

You see, I think that in the middle of this pandemic God is preparing us for a coming promised land. When things reopen there will be all kinds of opportunities to make things new. The temptation for many will be to want to go back to some of the old ways, even if those old ways weren't really working all that well. If there has been anything positive that has happened in the pandemic, it's that people have been forced to put so many old rhythms on pause. Parents who have known they need to spend more time with their kids are now working from home, and while that brings it's own challenges, many don't want to go back to the old way. And to the credit of many companies, they are now looking at ways to let parents work from home more often, keeping families together in ways that weren't possible before. For them, this is a new promised land they have been invited to enter. Our worship, the ways that we engage with God and explore our faith, have needed to be different. Already people have told me that we need to keep at least some of the changes we have made, keeping up online services and other format changes. These are good things, but they are only a foretaste of what is to come in God's promised kingdom. Don't lose hope looking for that land, dream of what the future can hold, of what God is calling you towards. Let that hope feed you today, sustaining you in this wilderness.

