

“Who Is Jesus To Us Today”

12th Sunday after Pentecost

August 23, 2020

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**Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20**

Poem: *“If Jesus Came to Your House”* by unknown Author

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two,
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you’d do.
Oh, I know you’d give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you’d serve to Him would be the very best.
And you would keep assuring Him you’re glad to have Him there,
That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare!
But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door,
With arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they’d been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn’t heard-
And wish you hadn’t uttered that last, loud, hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder – if the Savior spent a day or two with you-
Would you do right on doing the things you always do?
Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace?
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read,
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you’d planned to go,
Or would you, maybe change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they’d stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do
If Jesus came in person to spend the holidays with you.

Throughout our lives – we have come to know or have studied about prominent people in our human history – Socrates, Alexander the Great, Joan of Arc, Moses, Mohammed, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and so many others. Maybe each of us can name people from history who have made in profound impact in our lives or that we have found fascinating. Maybe our own parents or relatives have made a big impact on human history and record books. What about the history of our own Iao Church? Do we know some names that have made or had a large impact for each of us? Lillian Maeda; Pastor Jack Belsom – the longest serving Pastor. But do we know who Genzo Egami is – the first Pastor in 1895 as the founder of the Japanese Christian Church where we originated from? How about Tamasaku Watanabe – Pastor who was arrested and put into an Internment Camp during WWII? How about Theodore Chandler Jr. – Pastor who died in a drowning accident in 1965? Do our children or youth know any of these history makers of our Church? Who are these history makers to us today?

What if we ask this question of a man over two-thousand years ago – who is Jesus to us today? Who do we say he is today? Not the historical Jesus of the Gospel – who is the Jesus in us today? If we, like Peter answer “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” – we know what that says in words – but what does that actually look like in action Iao Church?

There is no one else in history that we remember or invoke in our minds more than Jesus – Son of the living God. But do we invoke him in our hearts as well? We have always been told to believe that Jesus and God are at a place that is unreachable – untouchable because we are to assume that they are at a different level than we are as human beings – wretched that we are! That could be true physically, but how about spiritually? In order for us to restore our relationship with God and Christ – we

must do something like pray 10 hail Mary's in my old context. The other way of thinking is that there is nothing I can do to restore my relationship with God because through Jesus Christ we are saved by the grace of God's goodness – Amen and praise be to God! Deep in our hearts, we know what is right – we know the “pono” thing to do. We feed people because of who Jesus is in us – because that is the right thing to do. We call our Kupuna because that is the right thing to do – not because we want to open up some kind of communication line with God – but we do so because of who Jesus is in us today.

Last week, the unnamed woman kept shouting – “Lord, Son of David” – I know you – I know the history of your lineage – the prophecies foretold by the prophets. I may not know these prophets personally, but I know about their prophecies. Today with Peter – “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!” Again, I may not know the prophets personally, but I know about their prophecies as given to them by the living God. And yet beloved community, we can establish a personal relationship with Christ himself.

What does this mean for us in today's context Church? Maybe many of us have lost loved ones or friends because of political discourse. Maybe we did not choose the proper words during this discourse that we might have – pastor included. I wonder what Jesus was thinking when he got angry and overturned some tables in the temple. What was he thinking when he called people “hypocrites” or “brood of vipers?” Who was Jesus to the poor, both in socioeconomics and spiritual, or anyone in need in his time? Who was Jesus to the elite – the establishment? What if we asked those same questions in our context today? Who is Jesus to the poor and needy in our world today? Again, Jesus sure had it right when he said, “you will always have the poor with you.” But why is that church? After more than two-thousand years, why have we, as a society, as a human race, not been able to solve this dilemma? When

we distribute food to those in need here on Maui, do they see and experience the Jesus in us Church? Are we doing the food distribution to get “right” with God or are we doing this ministry because of who Jesus is in our lives? We know it is the right thing to do, but is Jesus moving us to do what is right? Are we complacent when it comes to injustices or are we, like Christ – calling out the hypocrisies of the establishment? Who is Jesus in us today Church?

Let us close with this. Regardless of what we are facing -- drug & alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, family issues, political turmoil – what is it that the Jesus in us is calling each one of us to do for our world today? How are we taking the historical Jesus of the Gospels and bringing out the Living God through our actions today? For over two-thousand years, Jesus and the Bible have meant different things to different people. Throughout our human history, Jesus and the Bible have been used for both good and bad in our world. The constant is that even after two-thousand years – Jesus is still just as significant in our lives today as he was to the early followers. When we realize who the Jesus in us is in our lives, we reflect that through our actions in our time. We feed people, we call our Kupuna, not because we want to get “right” with God – only grace can do that, but because it is the “pono” thing to do. People around us in our world – especially at a time such as this, need to see the Jesus in us – through our hands and feet, and our hearts – Jesus must be seen through our actions.

Amen, Amene, Ashe, A-ho, and Alleluia.