

Sermon: "When the Spirit Resides in Your Heart" by Pastor Chris Eng
Lectionary Passage: 2 Corinthians 4: 13 - 5: 1, N.R.S.V.
Communion Sunday, June 6, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom
Kailua Christian Church UCC

II Corinthians 4:13- 5:1 New Revised Standard Version

13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. 16 So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. 17 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, 18 because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.
5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

I grabbed my camera only to find I had not recharged the battery and missed taking a photo of the Super Flower Blood Moon on May 26. My iPhone did not do justice to the ridges I could see with my naked eye. Kalei Nu'uhiwa updates the Hawaiian Moon Calendar often in the newspaper or on television. Some consult it for the best time to plant or fish.

2 Corinthians 4 provides advice about the best way to handle a great loss, an over-whelming grief, and death itself. The truth of this emerged as three stories lit up my memory, almost like that super moon illuminated that dark Wednesday night. Consult one's heart to know what one should do when encountering an overwhelming challenge to life.

1. "So we do not lose heart." Some of you know what happened when a local killed a U.S. Marine in Kailua. When I watch David Muir on the 5:30 p.m. ABC news, it seems that so many lives have ended from random and intentional shooting. I can only imagine the sorrow of two families, the Marine and the youth were experiencing. But just as the sun and moon aligned for that total lunar eclipse, pastors and members of Makiki Christian Church reached out to families in distress. Imagine: a bible study bringing the comfort and healing of the Holy Spirit and also laying the ground for a new church, Kailua Christian!

2. "We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence." In 1978, the Rev. Paul Nagano, pastor of Japanese Baptist Church Seattle, introduced me to ministry with those who just lost a loved one to death. Fresh out of seminary, he included me in memorial programs as the reader for this passage. When I

left in 1981 as Nu'uano Congregational Church called me to join the pastoral staff, I had experienced Pastor Paul, formerly of Makiki Christian, give meditations to those who had lost a child, a teenager, a son, daughter or husband, a loving wife or grandmother. He also had been part of KCC's earliest beginnings.

3. "Because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." Last year, KCC called the Rev. Dale Vallejo-Sanderson to be the new pastor. As he has returned "home," his wife Beverly would join the Sunday zoom worship even as she was dying. It was no coincidence that she breathed her last on Easter Sunday. Those with faith in Christ could see that she had gone to heaven, hearing the words, "well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord!"

The secret that Paul shares with the Corinthian church is really no secret at all. I experienced some of this in knowing many of you who were filled with the Holy Spirit and led to make decisions. When we allow God's Spirit to reside or live in our hearts, healing comes from the comfort we experience and the peace that Christ brings. Paul himself was aging and suffering from being in prison, being shipwrecked and the trials he faced, especially realizing that one day he would die.

Conclusion. Read and re-read this passage when you are facing a great loss. Allow God to speak to you, if you or someone close to you is dying. Experience the Spirit in your heart, quieting the questions, the struggles, the pain. Embrace the "same spirit of faith" that others in the Body of Christ extend to you. Or it could simply be the reality of aging and experiencing some of the challenges of life as a human being. Always invite the Spirit into your heart! Like the song, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus," Replace it with the Holy Spirit. Amen.