

Kailua Christian Church (UCC)
Sunday Morning Worship – August 21, 2022
10:00 a.m.
Your Testimony Is Anointed and Powerful
by Pastor Les Araki

Have you ever heard a gifted person tell a story? I have had the pleasure of seeing some of the best story tellers. Wayne Cordeiro, Art Takabayashi, and John-David Araki (15 yrs old son) have a gift at telling stories. I bet some of you do too. Today I will share a bible story and verses that have had a tremendous impact on my life. The hero is a very unlikely person. It is the Samaritan woman at the well. Let's look at her story.

Getting water at hottest time of day because she was an outcast. Meets Jesus. She is the first to hear Jesus say He is the Messiah. He tells her to call her husband. She says, "she doesn't have one". Jesus tells her about her life.

John 4: 13-18

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." 16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." 17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." (She excitedly heads back to Sychar Samaria to tell the people about Jesus.)

Passage: Many Samaritans Believe. John 4:39-42.

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. 41 And because of his words many more became believers. 42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

When I first moved to the Big Island to take care of my grandmother, back in the early nineties, I had just come out of being a youth volunteer for nine years. The ministry I was involved in was great, but we had some practices that was a little off. For one thing we never shared with the people we were leading or disciplining that we had struggles with sin. It seems silly now but that was the way we were brought up. So, when I moved to the Big Island, I considered myself a leader so acted like one. "Me Christian leader. Me Strong." I still remember the first time I went to a Wednesday night service with New Hope in Hilo. Wayne Cordeiro came up after the worship and shared a funny story about how he had just come from the soccer field and got into

an argument with a referee about a bad call he made about his soccer play. He went up to that ref and gave him a piece of his mind. As he was yelling at the ref about his bad call, he suddenly realized that many of the players and fans were watching him blow up. He said the ref was still wrong, but he had to try to regain his composure. He then shared a message about a poor leader named Korah and thirty years later I still remember some of what he taught us. At the end of service in a little church that New Hope was borrowing for the midweek service, Wayne gave an invitation for the people in the congregation to come forward if they had some business to do with God and to be prayed over. In my heart I was going forward, for I knew the sin in my life and areas I was working on in my life. Then I saw something that really changed my life. Wayne asked Pastor Noel to come up to the stage and said that he needed to do business with God and be prayed over too. I then felt broken and humbled by this pastor's humility and with tears running down my face, said a prayer to God that I would never let my pride or position in the church, get in the way of my responding to God.

One day in LUG. Wayne leadership discipleship, he shared a story about a guest that his family had from Japan. She was a young lady who wanted to learn about leadership, so her church sent her. He had had opportunities to get to listen to her and was getting really close to her. He felt he knew her in a way that the other leaders in his church didn't, so he became offended when leaders and even Anna, his wife, mentioned that he may be getting too close to her. He admitted that in his heart, he knew they were right, so had this young intern return to Japan. I was blown away by his confessing but didn't know what to do with that. Then a couple weeks later at a morning men's fellowship, Wayne retold the story to the men at the breakfast. Wow? What is he doing? Then he shared this testimony at a mixed company leadership morning meeting during one of the devotional times. But I was completely blown away when he shared this testimony with the entire church. I asked him what he was thinking and when does a leader know when to share shortcomings to the people, he/she is ministering to. Wayne told me that it was not good for a leader to pretend that they don't struggle with sin or pride. People already knows that we do. But, to as to when and with whom to share struggles in a way that would be encouraging, he shared that he first shares things with his accountability group and also his wife to be accountable. I have been chewing on this leadership advice for decades now, and see that a big part of sharing, is being led by the Holy Spirit.

I met a young man in Job Corps named Vaivai, one evening at Kamehameha School Gym, during a Youth For Christ Volleyball outreach. Vaivai was swearing at the referee because he thought they were juicing the game for the Christian clubs or churches. Job Corps had just lost to Kailua Campus Life, and he was hot. As a young YFC staff member I felt someone had to do something so the situation wouldn't escalate, or the tone of the evening may turn away from keeping God first. I approached his friend, Mapu, and asked him to tell Vaivai, that, I wanted to meet him outside. Vaivai looked me over and had a surprised look on his face. This little guy like see him outside. I going lick 'em. As we exited the back of the gym, my friend Kenny, said "You played a good game." "F You", was his response. God, are you sure you want me to talk to this guy? As soon as I got four feet out the door I sat down and started praying. I knew God

wanted me to talk to Vaivai but I didn't know what I was going to say? I closed my eyes and prayed.... When I opened my eyes Vaivai and Mapu were sitting down. God had answered my prayers. Still, not knowing what to say, I asked both of them, "Uh, hum, if you were to die today are you one hundred percent sure you are going to heaven?" They both accepted Jesus as LORD and Savior that night.

I brought a Bible the next evening to the tournament, but Vaivai wasn't there. "No way were we going to let him come tonight after how he acted last night". I wanted to get the Bible to him, so I went on the only lead I had. He lived deep in Palolo Valley in a housing area. How LORD will I find this guy's house? That's when I remembered Pastor David Wilkerson from "The Cross and the Switchblade". He didn't know how to find the family of a gang and didn't know where to drive so he followed the car in front of him until he saw a woman on the side of the road and asked her if she knew how to contact these seven members of a gang that killed a man in a wheelchair. So, that's what I did. I followed the car in front of me, it took a right hand turn down a hill, then took a left-hand turn, that took me into Palolo Housing. I followed the car until I saw a woman sweeping her porch area. I pulled over and asked her if she knew a young man named, Vaivai? "Why are you looking for him?" she replied. I showed her the Bible in my hand, and said, "I want to give him this". She said, "I am his mother", and pointing across the street at a young man walking in our direction and said, "that's him".

Do any of you know of an evangelistic group named the Power Team? The leader of the Group's name was a huge former College Lineman named, Matthew. After many testimonies of drugs, women, money, and a bunch of other things that was incredible, because of the changing power of God, Matthew spoke. I'll never forget what he said. "I grew up as a kid that went to church. I accepted Jesus as my LORD and Savior when I was young. I didn't do drugs or the things my brothers went through. My mother told me, that the best testimony, is not to have a testimony. I want to follow God, with all my heart, and live for him the rest of my life. That's what I wanted to hear at the time.

Eddie Sumida, Calvin Nakano, Hue Dunn Ernest and Danny, shared with our little bible study as we would meet up at St Louis Hts. tables near the hiking trails, about having a burden to see their fathers come to know Jesus, as their Lord and Savior. That was the passion of my heart, too. Then one week, Calvin, shared that he led his father to Christ. A couple meetings later, Eddie shared that he was used by the Lord, to pray with his dad, to accept Jesus into his life. Then a couple weeks later, Huey shared the same thing. I redoubled my prayer for my dad and brother. When I was a pastor at a church, in Gresham Oregon, my Pastor Gary shared how he was used of the LORD to lead his father, cousins, and many family members to Christ. Those testimonies never left my mind. I knew that's what I wanted also. In my case, God used an uncle, a childhood friend of my dad's, to lead him to Jesus.

One day when I was in line at Ala Moana McDonalds, I felt a presence behind me. You know that feeling when someone is standing too close to you. I turned around and looked right into the

chest of a 6' 4" guy. I looked up and up and up until I saw the face Of Ma'a Vaivai. He gave me a short update on his life. "I'm heading to Samoa to be a pastor at a church so I can lead my people to Jesus." Thank you, David Wilkerson.