

Kailua Christian Church
Sunday, February 12, 2023
Guest Pastor: Pastor Les Araki
Passing on a Legacy: “Your Own Daily Bread”

Psalm 119:17–24 (NRSV)

- 17** Deal bountifully with your servant,
so that I may live and observe your word.
- 18** Open my eyes, so that I may behold
wondrous things out of your law.
- 19** I live as an alien in the land;
do not hide your commandments from me.
- 20** My soul is consumed with longing
for your ordinances at all times.
- 21** You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones,
who wander from your commandments;
- 22** take away from me their scorn and contempt,
for I have kept your decrees.
- 23** Even though princes sit plotting against me,
your servant will meditate on your statutes.
- 24** Your decrees are my delight,
they are my counselors.

Notice vs 18 *Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your Law.*

When I first learned to dive for Tako (octopus), my friend Eddie Sumida took me to his favorite diving spot on the East side and told me that there were a lot of Tako out there. He told me that when you go Tako diving then I had to focus on looking for Tako. As I followed him out to the spot, I saw a lot of small fish. When I was taught to dive on the Big Island I was taught to look as far ahead as I could to see the Big Uhu (Parrot Fish), Papio, Moana, and other fish. Now I had to focus on looking straight down and scan the reef by looking back and forth. Eddie dropped his Weight, connected to his floater, and said there was a Tako hole within ten feet from the weight and the Tako is home. I didn't see a thing. I stuck my three prong spear into every nook and cranny. Eddie told me that the Tako was in the "obvious hole." I wanted to spear him "the obvious hole." They all looked the same to me... then I saw it. There seemed to have been signs pointing to a bid X that marked the spot. Angels sang the Hallelujah chorus, hallelujah! Hallelujah! There was a hole that looked different, and it went deeper into the reef than the rest. Eddie told me to spear it, and I learned to tickle it, then spear it. He pointed out the crab shells and rocks that looked out of place. I was beginning to see what he was talking about.

Then a week later, my good buddy Maya Uyehara took me diving out Sand Island by the Old Reef Runway airfield and I found my first Tako on my own. I dove other places and learned what Sand Tako holes looked like, and flat holes without the mountain of rocks outside the holes. I still don't have Da Tako eye but can find some Tako on a good day.

When I first started reading the Bible, youth pastors, pastors, and mentors told me there were nuggets of truth in there. I learned the importance of doing a daily "Quiet Time" From Dale Sanderson and Gerald Chenin when I was in Jr High up on Camp Keanae Maui. My Sunday School teacher Martin Hironaga gave

me a Navigator bible study that told me to look up a bible verse and to answer the question. He told me “Les, if you really want to grow in your faith, then you have to read the bible on your own. I heard pastors and experts tell me that I needed to read through the Bible in a year. That only work that one time when I didn’t want to be the average Christian. Get up in the morning with a bible notebook and pen. Find a quiet spot in your home, go out into nature, go to a favorite book and read through that book before going on to the next book. None of these things worked.

They told me that “this passage has truths about Assurance of Salvation”. You can know that you re going to heaven because of what the Bible says. Read this passage and you can learn the Assurance of Answered Prayer, the power of the Bible, the importance of worship, the power of the Holy Spirit for Evangelism. How to have victory over sin. I shared about my dyslexia in a previous testimony, but the Holy Spirit still taught me lessons in those early days.

I struggled with doing “devotions because it took me so long and I didn’t know exactly where to find stuff and even if I was in a great passage, I didn’t know what to do with it.

I was told by pastors, youth ministers, friends, Sunday school teachers that reading the Bible on your own and learning something was called a devotion or Quiet Time, and that it can help me in my walk with God. It never worked. I didn’t know where to start or what to look for.

Remember I shared a little about taking care of my grandmother on the Big Island and being an intern at New Hope Hilo under Wayne Cordeiro.

One day he called me into his office and asked me how my devotions were going. Not too good was my response. When you do a devotion how long does it take you? A half hour or hour. That is your problem, he said. It takes you too long. Try this. Give yourself twelve to fifteen minutes max. Open the Bible and read only one section and pick one verse. Write the verse down and write something about it. This is the secret: pray to the Holy Spirt to make one of the Bible verses shine truth to you like a neon sign. Then journal on that verse. Neon sign? What neon sign? That had never worked before. I thought I’d give it a shot, read a short passage and ask God to show me one verse to focus on. That day something happened. A verse jumped out at me, and I journaled on it.

One week later, Wayne asked me how my devotions were going. I only did it twice. What?!! That is great Les. That is a 200% improvement from what it used to be. I said: Oh, oh, yeah, and it was good too. He let me read them to him, then told me how proud he was of me. What a motivator. Because of Wayne’s encouragement and the power of the Holy Spirit, I did get into the habit of journaling regularly.

Read devotion/journal from 2/3/23 *I Like Be One Spesho Talka guy for God.*

Over the years I have journaled on good times and times that sucked. Victories and failures. The birth of each of my children. How hard I tried to be a pastor and how we closed our church. Not enough money to keep the lights on and so much money that we could give money to others in a tight situation. In short, my life is in these books. If my children want to know how much mistakes I made in dating, its in there. Temptation to do drugs, peer pressure, the excitement of one day becoming a chaplain, applications to over twenty companies on mainland and only one in Hawaii. The joy and celebration of getting the job I have now. Lessons on not perfect but usable by God, importance of reading the room, and many other life lessons are in here. (Hold up my old journals)

When I go back and read my journals, I am encouraged by the things I have experienced and learned and relearned. I am blown away by the way the Holy Spirit has spoken to me, just what I needed to hear, at the right time.

Have you ever seen a devotional like this? This is called My Daily Bread. It has a daily reading, a highlighted passage, a short story related to the passage, and a thought or prayer at the end. God has used this and the Upper Room, and other similar devotional books to inspire so many people across the world. Wayne Cordeiro taught me to make my own Daily Bread booklet by journaling regularly. He has gone on to help tens of thousands of people start regular journaling and self feeding. He tells us that eating once a week is not enough. Church is like a potluck with a lot of food but if you only eat once a week you would starve. He tells how journaling has picked him out of depression, saved his marriage, made him a better father, pastor, and person.

Wayne has the ability to encourage people to do what they want to do by keeping things simple. He put together something called a life journal. This little book that I hold in my hand is called Life Journal: Small Group Edition. I've brought enough for each of you to have one. Let's open these up and take a look at one person's way of doing daily Devotions/journaling.

On the front page write your name and today's date.

The next page has instruction steps 1-5.

Check out the sample that Wayne put in called "Marching Orders".

The Next Page is Classic Reading with date and assigned reading.

A few pages over is the express reading assigned reading.

Let's look at today's date for reading. Too much for me. Let's look at Psalms 13.

Under the seats near you are pew bibles. Open the Bible to page 484. I used the Table of contents for Thirty years before I got the order of books down (I blame my Dyslexia but I'm glad to know where to find the books I don't know is.

In a minute I'm going to start my timer and give us 5 minutes to Read the six verses in Psalms 13. In that five minutes, read Psalms 13, and let the verse that jumps off the page and flash at you like a neon sign be the verse or verses that you choose.

Write out the Bible verse word for word.

If you have time write an observation

Or application.

Write a short prayer.

Go back and give your writing a title. Title normally comes last because it's a summary of your journaling.

Can I please have someone read your verse. Any other verses?

Did anyone get further than picking and writing out the verse?

In conclusion

I have found that when I pray Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things in your word and read a short passage until something jumps out at me – write down some thoughts, a prayer and give it a title I get a lot out of it. I also like the idea that these journals are an old school way of leaving my deepest personal thoughts to my children and grandchildren should they choose to read it. If nothing else, I got to write out my own Daily Bread.

The End.

Psalm 13

¹ How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I bear pain^[a] in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider and answer me, O LORD my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep
of death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

⁵ But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the LORD,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.