

Kailua Christian Church (UCC)
Sunday Morning Worship, July 2, 2023
Rev. Ruth Peterson

Sermon Title: “Freedom in Christ”

Theme: Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ’s grace is sufficient for us as we are called to serve those in need.

2 Corinthians 12:5-10

⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Sermon Outline:

- 1) The Meaning of July 4th.
- 2) The original call was to remember the signing of the Declaration of Independence as a time of “*national repentance, humility and heartfelt prayer.*”
- 3) Original founders of our Country had humility: The Preamble to the Constitution reads: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union”
- 4) Humility: that is a good word for us who seek to follow Christ in our life today. The Reading from Corinthians brings home the point that **no one** is perfect but God.
- 5) This letter was written by Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ. It is one of the 14 books in the New Testament attributed to him.
- 6) But when we first are introduced to him, his name is Saul of Tarsus: A Roman Citizen. He was also a Pharisee, a member of the Tribe of Benjamin, and someone who was zealous in hunting down the radical group of zealots who called themselves followers of a misbegotten Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth.

- 7) We read of how he persecuted early Christians in the Book of Acts of the Apostles. Look at Acts chapter 9:1-18.
- 8) Especially interesting is verse 13-16: *“But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”*
- 9) In spite of his apprehension, Ananias followed God’s command and was instrumental in Paul’s conversion.
- 10) By the time we read what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he is Proclaiming a very different theme. No longer persecuting Christians, but having converted to the truth of the Gospel, he has completely changed his life and is one of the most prolific spreader of the truth of Jesus Christ.
- 11) The reading today focuses on what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Even in the midst of suffering we are called to serve others.
- 12) Who are we called to serve as followers of Christ? Look at two scripture readings: Matthew 10:40-42 and Matthew 25:35-45
- 13) The freedom we have as Christians is freedom to live for others.