

Kailua Christian Church  
Sunday October 19, 2025  
Pastor Dale Vallejo-Sanderson  
“Last Talk”

### **Jesus Way of Making Meaningful Moments**

#### ***John 15:11-17***

*“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.”*

Good morning, it is great to be here this morning with you again. Over these next three weeks I am with you, I will be sharing a three part sermon series called “Last Talk”, ‘Jesus Way of making Meaningful Moments.’

Last month I was visiting my middle son, Andrew for three weeks in Colorado. One day, I was driving two of the grandkids home from school, Emilie, 12 years old and Fynn, 8 and 1/2 years old. As she often does on our way home, Emilie will roll the window down and quietly look out the window, a time for her to reflect and be alone in her thoughts. After about 10 mins I asked her if it’s ok to talk with her for a moment, she said, “Sure Grandpa.” So I shared with her, “I really admire the way you are very engaged with your friends at school, at home you willingly help with babies, helping siblings with breakfast and cleaning up, and talking with all of us.” And I went on to say, “I appreciate how you will also take time to sit on your own, get lost in a book and be still.” Then I said, “That is a good rhythm in your life. I wish I learned that when I was your age.” She said “?Thank you Grandpa.” Then she asked if that is why I go to the coffee shop in the morning to journal and write. I told her it is, exactly. “I appreciate the quiet time with God and my thoughts.” Then she asked “Are you writing a book?” I was surprised and grateful she asked, I told her I have been working on a writing project. “What’s it called?, I told her, “At this point I’m calling it “Last Talk”. “What’s it about Grandpa.?” She asked. In a sentence, I said, “I’ve been thinking, what if in every conversation with someone I treat them with the same presence and intention as if it was my last time to talk with them.” To my surprise, Emilie said, “I get it Grandpa, I really like that, you got to write that book.” I was so touched and wonderfully encouraged by Emilie's words and enthusiasm. It was a meaningful moment. Just then we pulled into the driveway of their home. Then from the back seat Fynn says, “Hey you just had a great Last Talk right here in the car.” Emilie and I looked with surprise at each other, then turned to Fynn and enjoyed the moment he added from himself. It was such a great moment and affirmation of this way of Jesus making meaningful moments in our lives.

As we look at the way Jesus lived with intentional presence with those in His life, I pray that you and I will gain insight, encouragement and deep joy and love of Christ in our own lives, with others and through others.

**Jesus helps me make meaningful Last Talks  
by...**

**I. Welcoming the gift of enjoying each  
other.**

*“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15:11*

Life and even the people in our lives are not always easy. Yet, when I welcome Christ's presence with me, He helps me to listen to others, accept others and to even enjoy them for who they are, where they are. Some people are easier to enjoy and receive joy from. I find often that when I am open, grateful in life for Christ's love and a welcomed place in my heart, thoughts and way, I come across surprises of joy through others. If I tend to be focused on what is wrong, difficult and irritating in life and people, I am less likely to find much joy in life. I'm not dismissing the challenges and pains of life at all. Yet even in my most difficult of times, joy sneaks in from some often small moments before me and surprises and refreshes me with joy. Here is a question for you to think about, maybe even reach out and thank this person for bringing joy to you.

A. *Who is someone you enjoy being with? What makes them so enjoyable?*

**Jesus helps me make meaningful Last Talks  
by...**

**II. Sharing a loyal and devoted care for each other.**

*“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. “ John 15:12-14*

The most meaningful “Last Talk” I hold in my heart was with Bev. It was a long week, starting with Bev being very tired. It was difficult for her to stay awake or even get up so I could wheelchair to the car and from the car into the Dr's . Office. We met with the Dr on Monday and went into the next room for infusions. Which she had every day that week. The first two days she slept through it all. But by Wednesday she was awake and even able to walk to the bathroom down the hall at the office. The rest of the week she was awake and able to talk and engage. The Dr thought she might have another few weeks. I was kind of surprised, yet open day by day. Saturday our grandkids and family came over, with our niece and her I year old for a time of enjoying some good food and being together. Bev was up at the table for most of it, or resting on the bed and welcoming anyone to gather around her to talk. The grandkids gave her great joy and encouragement as they talked with her and played close by. That night after everyone had

gone home, Bev was sitting on the bed getting ready to go sleep. I sat next to her and she said, “Well I guess the cancer won.” It’s hard to hear her say this, but I had been learning to not react, rather listen, ask questions before I respond. So I simply said, “Oh is that how you see it?” She kind of shrugged and then asked me, “How do you see it?”

And then words that had been stirring in me for a few days came to mind. “You remember when you worked for UH sports information, how there would be a great game, like UH against BYU. At the end, BYU had the most points, but UH played with their whole hearts, gave their best, that in another sense, they also won.” She nodded. I went on, “That’s you. Cancer has done what it does, Drs have done what they could, but you have stayed the course, you have loved our grandkids so well, our sons and daughters in law, me and our family and friends, and in it all you have let God love you and you have loved God. You won in the most meaningful way.”

Bev quietly sat with these words, that surprised even me, as words from God. Her body relaxed and she looked at me and said thank you so much. Then we went on together thanking God for the wonderful life we have, the family we are blessed by, the friends that enrich our lives so much. The special church families we got to be part of and serve with; Kailua Christian, Waimea UCC, Kauahao Church on Big Island, New Hope, and Wellspring. The many travel experiences we enjoyed and on and on with such joyful gratefulness for our lives.

It was a spontaneous amazing “Last Talk” though we did not know at the time she would pass peacefully the next day. I am so humbly moved by the meaningfulness of our last talk. It has shaped me to be more present in the days and times I have with anyone as best as possible. It is a beautiful enduring gift Bev gave to me.

***Take a moment and remember someone who is a good faithful friend in your life.***

*B. Who gives loyal and devoted care to you? Do they express that? How do you express loyal care?*

**Jesus helps me make meaningful Last Talks by...**

### **III. Sharing an honest vulnerability of what matters most.**

*“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” John 15:15*

A few months after Bev passed, I flew to Florida to be with my Dad whose health was failing, though his mind was fighting it all the way. I think a big part of my Dad living to 93 was a great deal of his sheer willingness to do all he can. It’s admirable to a great degree. Yet, when I got there he was in Rehab and angry, giving the Dr’s and nurses a hard time. His frustration comes out in some unkind and harsh words. When I got there I worked hard to get my Dad and

step-Mom to agree to go to a Senior living place for better support and care. All the family had gone through the hard conversations of resistance, yet the reality is they both needed a lot of support. My Dad had made an amazing expression of welcoming Jesus into his heart about a month before with the encouragement and prayers of his care giver. Before I came Dad and I talked and I consider it a special miracle, especially after the many years of his resistance to even talk much about God. Yet the past few years he welcomed prayers and little talks.

I was exhausted while there for a week, just a few weeks after Bev's celebration of life service. On my last day there, I was with my Dad in his rehab room at the hospital. He was frustrated with the Drs and staff. The Dr came in and my Dad snapped at him that he wanted to go home. The Dr explained to him and me that as soon as he can sit up on his own and stand on his own, he can go home. My Dad tried fiercely to sit up, but he couldn't, much less get out of bed to stand. That's when the quiet words that had been stirring in my mind came to me as a good time to share. I said to my Dad, "I can understand why you are frustrated and angry. It makes sense." He looked at me, as I continued with these simple words, "Dad, the thing I want to share from my heart is, you are trying too hard." Dad looked at me and said, "Well I don't want to give up!" I responded, "I hear you, I'm not talking about giving up, rather give in to God and His care for you and His peace for you." I went on to say, "You are trying so hard that even God can't help you much. It shows because you have no peace." The words come gently and freely to my surprise. Dad got real quiet, not usually that open. Then his whole body relaxed and he said, "I think you are right, thank you." He extended his hand to me, I took hold and then he said, "I love you son. I know you have to go take care of your Mom, thank you for being here." It was a meaningful vulnerable moment like none other with my Dad. I flew back that afternoon to help my Mom with her dementia acting up. My Dad passed away a couple of days later, peacefully. I gratefully hold this Last Talk in my heart.

### **Here is a question for you to consider for your life**

*C. Who is someone that you can be vulnerably honest with? What about them makes that possible?*

### **Jesus helps me make meaningful Last Talks by...**

#### **IV. Encouraging each other to share who they are to bless others.**

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other." John 15:16-17*

My Last Talk with my brother was eight years ago on Oct. 17, 2017. I called him on Tuesday morning, as I often would to catch up. My brother had deep passions and convictions

for doing good and doing what was right. This focused on how he thought life should go. He carried a lot of the stress and pressure of these qualities within himself. Our first half hour or more of most talks were letting Dave vent his frustrations dealing with our Dad, demands of my Mom's health and family challenges that he was helping with. I learned to listen and realize he was not in a place to hear much till he could vent out his stress.

After a bit, then he would ask about me and we talked. This particular day, he was just three days from leading a group on a cruise through the new Panama Canal. Something he dreamed of for a few years and now their cruise would be one of the first to go through the new canal. After talking a bit, I needed to go. I felt moved to leave him with these words, "Dave, when you get back, you and I can work on these things needed with Dad, Mom and all the others, I will continue working with you. For now, I want to encourage you to get on that ship, go up to your cabin, set your bags down and go out to the lanai, sit down, leave all this behind you for now and allow yourself to freely go into the journey ahead and enjoy." It was a beautiful thought that just came in the moment. Dave thanked me and we told each other we love you and said goodbye.

That night at about 7:30 my time, my sister called to say my brother suddenly died of a stroke. It was a terrible shock. As I processed that day, I had no idea that would be my Last Talk with Dave. I hope my words gave him some peace in his last moments. Yet, if I did know he was going I would have said something similar of letting go of all that he holds in this world. I would encourage him to go forth into the new life and home Jesus has for him. Last Words are not often with someone we know is going to leave soon. "Last Talk" is really about being present to encourage, bless and care for others in the moments we have, as Jesus teaches us and guides us even today.

*D. Who is someone you can give encouraging words to for who they are and how they are?*