

KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025
SERMON: Stewardship in Community
SCRIPTURE: LUKE 21:5-19
CHAPLAIN (2LT) JACKSON FEIOCK, USAR

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5 Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, **6** “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.”

7 “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?”

8 He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. **9** When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.”

10 Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. **11** There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

12 “But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. **13** And so you will bear testimony to me. **14** But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. **15** For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. **16** You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. **17** Everyone will hate you because of me. **18** But not a hair of your head will perish. **19** Stand firm, and you will win life.

Sermon: Stewardship in Community

Thank you again friends for the opportunity today to preach. Today we are in the 23rd week of Pentecost, just two weeks shy of the season of advent. I know members of the church have been interested in what I might say because I'm a Chaplain in the Army. When I was asked to talk about our Gospel readings today, the theme was supposed to be stewardship. At first I was excited to do this, but that excitement started to disappear as I looked at the section headings in Luke to see it said "Destruction of the Temple Predicted" and "Signs of the End of the Age." Although the reading given today is quite somber, there is still wisdom to be pulled from this. What if I told you that since the first resurrection and ascension of Christ that Christ has already returned to us many times? In 1959 at the Ypsilanti State Hospital, Christ had appeared to us all in three fold! Anonymously named Clyde, Leon, and Joseph, three diagnosed schizophrenic men argued with one another on which one was the real Jesus incarnate. Their debates ranged from topics of spirituality, divination, genealogy, and new revelations. But in the end, over time, each one passed away fully convinced of their own spiritual truths. Then, in 1991, in the form of a woman in China, Yang Xianbin proclaimed herself to be the first true resurrection of Christ. With help from her followers, she formed the group known today as Eastern Lightning (a reference from the book of Matthew). This Christ taught that the end was coming soon, and that God would punish China first of all the other nations because of its sins against God. This harsh view of unbelieving punishment even expanded into publications from the church which include titles like, "Typical Examples of Punishment for Resisting Almighty God." Yang is still alive today and continues to preach the Gospel as the new Christ. Fast forward with me one more time to the late 2000s. A man by the name of Michael Trabessor in New Mexico had a revelation that he was indeed God himself. As God, he established a following who named themselves The Strong City Community which became what we would define as a compound group. Michael was convinced that the world itself would be ending on October 31st of 2007, and that he alone could only save his followers when they returned to heaven. Obviously that day has come and passed because we are all sitting in this congregation now, but Micheal was arrested in 2008 because of his conviction that to perform divine actions required the help of teenage girls. God now lives among us still, but in a New Mexico prison. Now I can seriously talk about this for hours on end, as many people since the death and resurrection of Christ have returned claiming to be Jesus. But how can we be convinced that these are not the real deal?

Going back to our Gospel reading today in Luke to verse 8, it reads “He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them.” The disciples knew their beliefs would be challenged, and that others might also try and convince them they too were Christ. How then were they able to avoid this? The answer comes not from a key lesson, hidden knowledge, or a ritual, but rather, from stewardship. As Christians, when we think of stewardship we might think of people like the disciples, helping one another spiritually and asking each other questions. For myself however, when I think of stewardship I think of my first youth leader Jared. Jared was a super charismatic guy and had such a passion for youth ministry. While the church I was attending at the time was finishing construction on a new building, Jared would invite our group over to his house for lessons. Besides diving into Bible study, Jared would have us explore outside, play in the creek, and later, have us do lessons in the mall to continue interactive and explorative teaching methods. Jared’s goal for the week would be for us to take a deeper look into the scripture talked about in church. Our criticism of the pastor was that his messages were very surface based, never going deeper than a quick analytical look at the Gospel. Jared cared for our spiritual development and wanted us to be strong in understanding why we were Christians. He challenged us too in the way that we live to be examples of Christ. In one of those challenges we had to wear a rubber band for a month and every time we swore, we had to snap it on our wrist. And I’m not talking about a small little snap. If we wanted to be true to the challenge, we really had to make it sting. The challenge did work though, and from it we became happier with our lifestyles. Jared was a great mentor, and I only wish everyone had someone like him in their lives.

In a similar fashion, this is how the early church developed. I was inspired by a recent sermon my old pastor, Dr. McCarty was giving in to inclusivity. He explained that he was revisiting Paul’s original letters to the churches, and in this sermon, it was the church in Thessalonica. Now when we take a second to think about what are the contents of the entire New Testament outside of the Gospels, it’s all about stewardship. Either from Paul or other disciples, but they were constantly visiting the churches or getting reports from others. In the Army, and yes, I will try not to bore you with this part, we have something called PCCs and PCIs. A PCC is a Pre Combat Check and a PCI is a Pre Combat Inspection. The difference between the act. In a PCC, I can walk over to you and say hey, do you have water? That’s the check. I asked, you responded. A PCI is then actually inspected. When I ask, do you have water, I am now going into your water bottle to see with my own two eyes if you

actually do have water. Each is going to be more useful in a different scenario but this is exactly what the old church was doing while Christianity was starting to spread quickly. Paul and other church leaders were making deliberate checks and inspections on the churches because we know from reading that they weren't getting everything right. Stewardship is ingrained into the very fabric of Christianity and our community's model. Our church for example, being of the United Church of Christ believes in a church model focused on the community and building us up. I've only had the opportunity to attend this church for a short period of time, and in that time I can already see many ways the church is growing. A great example is the brief small groups we have in the service to ask critical questions.

Now pertaining to today's lesson, I have two questions I would like each group to ask. The first is to reflect and discuss who is a mentor in your life that you think fondly back to? The next is a challenge for our church in this time of growth. How can we be good mentors to others? How can we make deliberate efforts to check in on one another and help us all grow in Christ? I certainly pray that these discussions would be fruitful and a great chance to learn.