

**KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
SUNDAY WORSHIP, JULY 14, 2024**

**“THE WAYFINDERS”**

**Guest Intern: Avery Jarosinski**

**Scriptures: Mark 10:46-52 & John 14:5-7 (ESV)**

**Mark 10:46-52 Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus**

**46** And they came to Jericho. And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. **47** And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” **48** And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” **49** And Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.” **50** And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. **51** And Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And the blind man said to him, “Rabbi, let me recover my sight.” **52** And Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

**John 14:5-7**

**5** Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.[a] From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

**SERMON: THE WAYFINDERS**

Growing up, my least favorite subject in school was always history. In fact, I would describe my feelings toward my high school history classes more as a passionate despise. I remember questioning why I had to spend time learning about what the world used to be like when it seemed a whole lot more important to me to learn about what the world was like right now. When I finally got to college, I was so excited that I was finally able to choose what classes I wanted to sign up for so I only had to take the ones I was interested in.

Now, I’m sure you can imagine the surprise and disappointment I felt when I realized that the classes I had to take for my majors in Bible and religion were almost all history classes. I seemed to have forgotten that Jesus was, in fact, a historical figure and that the Bible was, in fact, a book about the history of Christianity. So, as I took these religious history classes, my passionate loathing began to soften to a healthy tolerance and maybe even a little curiosity sprinkled on top.

And thank goodness history and I seemed to work things about before coming here because Hawaiian history is a huge part of this internship. We spent the entire first month being incredibly intentional about fitting as much Hawaiian history into our brains as humanly possible. Doing so has allowed us to view all of our experiences through a much more impactful lens. While all of Hawaii’s history is super interesting and important, the other interns and I have had a special obsession, I mean fascination with the Wayfinders.

This all started when Matt and Pie Pie took me and Eliana to the Bishop Museum where we learned all about the history of the Wayfinders. We watched a video that explained how the Wayfinders had advanced navigational skills which ultimately brought the first Hawaiians here to their island home. They sailed great distances in their canoes using nothing but their observations of the stars, sun, ocean swells, and other signs of nature as clues to know their direction and location at sea.

After the video, they projected all of the stars onto the planetarium ceiling to teach us how to find different constellations and to use our shakas to measure the distance between the stars and the horizon. I left the planetarium filled with excitement and a newfound inspiration. Eliana and I immediately made plans to go to the beach that night to teach Darby everything we had learned so that she could be a Wayfinder too. We were confident that if you put us out on a boat at sea, we could easily navigate home using only the stars to guide us. Because a true Wayfinder can never be lost.

I think that's the reason their history originally caught my interest. See, I am incredibly directionally challenged so I get lost a lot. For example, physically, I've gotten lost in grocery stores, carnivals, and even a few times here while learning the way around Oahu. Us interns have had our fair share of hiccups while biking around Kailua or riding the bus into town. And I've been lost spiritually before as well. I've experienced multiple seasons in my faith where I didn't know where I was, where to go, or what to do next. But lucky for me, Jesus has a history of guiding those who are lost and helping them find the way.

For example, in Mark chapter 10, Jesus had a large crowd of people following Him out of Jericho as He walked passed a blind man named Bartimaeus sitting by the road. Bartimaeus was shouting out for Jesus despite the crowd trying to quiet him. The man cried out "Son of David, please have mercy on me." So Jesus called out to him and asked him what He wanted Him to do for Him. To this, Bartimaeus asked to receive His sight. Verse 52 states, "Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road."

I wanted to read this passage because I think Bartimaeus can teach us a few things about what to do when we're lost. Because before meeting Jesus, he was lost too. He was just a blind man begging by the road; he wasn't even on the road he was just sitting on the side of it. But after meeting Jesus, Bartimaeus received his sight and he followed Jesus on the road. Bartimaeus wasn't just found, but he actually found the way. Jesus said, "*Your* faith has made you well." It wasn't Jesus who did the healing here, but Bartimaeus's faith.

And if we know that Bartimaeus's faith is what took him from being lost to finding the way, then there are a few things we can learn from him. Even though Jesus had a crowd of people following Him, this man's faith was special. It was special because everyone else in the crowd believed in Jesus after they had seen all of the miracles that Jesus performed. But if faith is believing in something you can't see, then the crowd didn't really have a whole lot of faith in Jesus. Bartimaeus, on the other hand, believed in Jesus without ever seeing anything. He had faith in Jesus solely because of what he heard.

Another important thing to notice in this passage is how Jesus told him to "go your way" and immediately he followed Jesus. I kind of laughed when I read this because I imagine it like when my dog is begging in the kitchen so I cave and give him a treat and kind of shoo him away but he keeps following me around anyways. I should clarify that I don't think that Jesus wants to just shoo us away, that's just how I imagine this haha. But the point is that the way of Jesus became his way.

Now, I can't give a sermon about finding the way without mentioning John 14:16, which you may have heard before, where Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." To provide a little context, in John chapter 14, when comforting His disciples, Jesus tells them that He is going to prepare them a place in His Father's house where they can be with Him. Jesus adds that they already know the way there. Thomas is confused by this and says "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" This is when Jesus states "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

I think so often when we hear this verse, we understand it in a way similar to Thomas. We think the way to the Father's house is a route we need to take. A path or a road where we ask Jesus to help us determine where to turn and what decisions to make. But here, Jesus clarifies that He is

the way! He's telling Thomas that he already knows the way because he knows Jesus and Jesus is the way! Just look back at Bartimaeus. When he found Jesus, he had faith that he found the way.

No matter how lost I feel in my faith or how lost I get when exploring the island, I know that I'll find the way. Even though I've never seen Jesus, and even though I am sometimes blinded by my sin and other distractions, I put my faith in Him because I've heard so much about what He's done. This entire book tells us what He did, what He's doing, and what He will continue to do. This is why history is so important. The stories in the Bible are not just irrelevant events from the past; they're testimonies that influence the way we live right now.

By looking back at the journeys of the Wayfinders and the stories in the Bible, we can appreciate the importance of history—not just as a record of the past, but as a guide for the future. The history of the Wayfinders teaches us valuable lessons about faith and preparation. Their mastery of navigation was more than just practical skill—it was a profound trust in the natural world, a faith that the signs they observed would lead them safely to their destination. Similarly, our faith in Jesus guides us through the uncertainties and challenges of life.

Just as the Wayfinders had to be trained meticulously and memorize thousands of star patterns to navigate successfully, we must learn about who Jesus was, what He taught, and how He lived. Studying the Bible, engaging in prayer, and participating in fellowship are essential for deepening our understanding and faith.

When Eliana and I left the planetarium filled with excitement and newfound inspiration, we couldn't wait to share everything we had learned with Darby. We were so eager to teach her how to be a Wayfinder too. This excitement is what we should feel when we find our way in Jesus. Once we discover the path through faith, it becomes our joy and mission to share it with others.

So let us embrace the lessons of history, both ancient and recent. Let us learn from the Wayfinders and from Bartimaeus, and let our faith in Jesus be our guide. In doing so, we honor the past, navigate the present, find our way into the future, and inspire others to do the same.