

**KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**SUNDAY WORSHIP, OCTOBER 6, 2024**  
**Sermon: “What Will You Do With This?”**  
**Rev. Irene Willis Hassan**

**Scripture Readings**

**Job 42:7-11**

7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. 8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has.” 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver[a] and a gold ring.

**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

9 but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power[a] 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. 10 Therefore 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: What will you do with this?**

I think many of us who attended Na Anela last Saturday were very inspired by Pie Pie’s lecture on “Finding Joy in Chronic Pain/Illness”. Last Sunday after church, folks were talking together about how it related to their own lives. Many of us have chronic illnesses, are caretakers of people with chronic illnesses, or at least know and love somebody with a chronic illness. Her lecture provided insight into what we can do to support and thrive through painful situations that by definition never have an end.

As it was mentioned in the title of her speech, the main takeaway was that it’s possible to find Joy in chronic illness, not just in spite of it, but because of it. Pie Pie’s favorite Bible verse is the quote we read today from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. In this letter, he says the same thing – that weakness isn’t something to be endured, but instead converted into strength and used to increase God’s purposes in our lives. But how do we do that? Anyone caring for someone with Parkinson’s, anyone who

suffers Lupus, anyone who becomes debilitated by migraines knows that the dark episodes of a chronic illness are exhausting. “Joy” “purpose”, “strength,” aren’t the words that come to mind when I am personally suffering from a migraine. Pie Pie described in her speech that her own chronic illness forced her to let go of a lot of things that she held dear, including coaching jujitsu and taking a job that is less than what she dreamed her career would look like.

There’s certainly a time and a place to let pain be pain and not try to rose color it to be something that it’s not. The whole book of Job is a testimony to allowing pain to simply be as it is; God admonishes Job’s friends for attempting to whitewash or justify Job’s pain instead of allowing the mystery of suffering to simply be something that we will never fully understand.

However, even Job knew that pain doesn’t get the final word and that God triumphs over all suffering. Throughout the book, Job remains steadfast in his loyalty to God. He cries out over and over about the injustice of it and refuses to let those around him tell him he deserved his pain. Yet even through it all, he perseveres in believing that God is good and will rescue him from his plight.

Like Job, Pie Pie clung to God for His grace and wisdom during the tender teenage years in which her health and wellbeing began to fall apart. Pie Pie is a bit of an anomaly, in which she was a born and raised church kid that is still in church as an adult, rather than doing what much of our generation did and deconstructing during high school and college and eventually fading out of the church. You’d think that someone who experienced such immense pain and uncertainty during those crucial formative years would indeed be the one to leave God behind, but Pie Pie didn’t let that happen.

According to Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, it’s perhaps because of the weakness that Pie Pie experienced as a teenager that led her to be a strong Christian leader as an adult. Instead of letting the chaos of her struggle and subsequent multiple diagnoses for lifelong pain destroy her and destroy her faith in God, she simply looked to Him with anticipation and asked, “What will you do with this?”

Pie Pie understood that the devil can cause illness, pain, difficulty, but God can always make it right in a new way if we simply ask Him that question: “What will you do with this?” and then let Him do it. There is no problem in this world that God cannot transform. The future that God brings may look wildly different than what we had hoped or imagined, but the beautiful thing is that a renewed future is often better than what was before.

Pie Pie lost a lot. Jujitsu, a normal childhood, aspects of her career and relationships, her health, were all lost or severely damaged. Yet, because she kept looking to God for that hopeful future, she gained a lot, too. She became gifted with the ability to inspire others to courage, hope, and joy through her story. This was evident last Sunday by all the chatter of how her lecture related to our own lives. She became skilled in setting appropriate boundaries while also embarking challenges for growth, and provides a

model for leadership in those characteristics that others can follow. She provides contagious joy that encourages those around her to follow God into the hopeful future for them, too. She met her husband by remaining in the church. She provides valuable and meaningful hope for vulnerable children through her work at Big Brothers and Big Sisters and here at Kailua Christian Church. Instead of crumpling into misery, Pie Pie breathes the fruits of the Spirit into everyone she touches and has been rewarded with a life of leadership and purpose that impacts those around her in an infinite ripple effect of goodness.

Maybe Pie Pie had all those spiritually fruitful qualities before her illness began, but by continually walking with God and asking Him “what will you do with this?” those characteristics are amplified and not drowned by the suffering she experiences from her chronic illness. She took what the devil meant for harm and turned it into what God means for good through her faithfulness.

This is a beautiful story of hope and joy that reflects Paul’s words on repurposing weakness as an opportunity for God to use us for goodness. However, Pie Pie is young and has her whole life ahead of her. What about those of us who are old now, and don’t have so many years left to watch God’s story unfold into the arch of a renewed future? As I talk about the hope and transformation of pain into joy that happened for Pie Pie, you may be remembering a loved one in the past who is no longer the same. Perhaps the person you married or the person who raised you is now a shadow of their former selves, frail and old and sick in a way that will never get better.

When you ask God, “what will you do with this?” in situations like these, you may feel like you know the answer. Your loved one will never be the same as they were, and it’s only going to get worse. You know that’s what will be done with this, you don’t feel like you need to curiously ask God about it because you already know how the movie ends. But the thing about God is that He doesn’t make things new in the way that they were before. This is true for Pie Pie, for me, for any of us who have experienced God’s grace in a time of trial. No, your loved one won’t ever be the person from before again. So what will He do with this?

Maybe He will bring your family closer together – bring adult children home to help you. Maybe He will bring together everyone you know in your life to put a hand into helping you out. Maybe He will inspire medical professionals to research and create new treatments based on your loved ones’ experience. Maybe He will inspire you to put together a memory book of your loved one’s life that you might have otherwise not recorded. I don’t know the answer to where He will place Joy, Hope, and Renewal in your situation, because that is strictly between you and God. But I do know that He will make beauty somewhere in the situation you’re going through if you let Him.

I encourage you all to ask God “what will you do with this?” and look with integrity for the places of Hope, Joy, and Renewal that He delivers to you. It most certainly won’t look the same as it did. Even though Pie Pie is young and has many years of Joy ahead

of her, her life will still be different from what she might have imagined before her illness. And that's true for all of us.

We might not get back to what life used to be, and in many ways, the future could look like a long, uncertain road. But that doesn't mean there isn't still joy to be found. As Pie Pie shared, the joy isn't about pretending that the pain or loss isn't there. The joy is in discovering how God is at work in the midst of it. It's in finding strength where we thought we had none, seeing love where we feared it might fade, and realizing that even when our circumstances change, God's presence and goodness do not.

For those of you walking through the dark valleys of chronic illness—whether it's your own or that of a loved one—there will be days when it's hard to see past the pain. But I encourage you to look for God's hand, to ask that question: "What will you do with this?" And when you ask it, know that you're not asking a distant, uncaring God. You're asking the One who is right there with you in the midst of it, the One who has walked the road of suffering Himself and emerged victorious.

Like Paul wrote, "When I am weak, then I am strong." Because in our weakness, in our moments of vulnerability and brokenness, God's grace is most evident. He shows up in unexpected ways, turning our pain into purpose, our sorrow into joy, and our uncertainty into hope.

So today, as we go back into our lives—whether facing chronic pain, caring for someone who is, or simply wrestling with our own uncertainties—let's commit to being open to what God is doing. Let's trust Him with the question, "What will You do with this?" and wait with expectation for the beauty, hope, and joy He will bring forth in ways we never thought possible.

Amen.