

Aloha! This is Sunny Ahn, the Senior Pastor at Kona United Methodist Church on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am glad that you are with us this morning. Let me start today's message with a short story.

[Story] There is a story about a burglar that broke into a house one night. As he was stealing the stereo, he heard a voice saying, "Jesus is watching you." He froze for a moment in fear, shined his flashlight around, and saw a parrot over in the corner. He said, "Did you say that to me?" The parrot said, "Yes! I'm trying to warn you." He said, "Warn me? What are you talking about? Who are you?" The parrot said, "My name is Moses." The burglar laughed and said, "What kind of people would name a bird Moses?" The parrot said, "The kind of people that would name a 150 pounds Rottweiler Jesus."

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Today is Reformation Sunday—the day to remember the reformation of the brokenness in church about 500 years ago. It is the day, commemorating the fire of the Holy Spirit, moving in the hearts of people like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Knox. About 500 years ago, these men stood up against the corruption of the church that was selling lots in heaven for monthly mortgage payments.

They could no longer stand by this broken church and let the gospel of Jesus Christ be ignored. And so it was, 500 years ago that the Reformation began when Martin Luther nailed his 95 thesis to the church doors—*sola Scriptura, sola fide, sola Gratia, solus Christus, soli Deo Gloria*... Scripture alone, faith alone, Grace alone, Christ alone, and to God alone Glory! This is the fundamental theology and praxis of reformation out of the brokenness of the church. From there, people began to hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ once again.

It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that is as true today as it was 2000 years ago. We fall down, and Jesus picks us up every single time. That is the one thing that connects us all. Whether it was 2000 years ago, 500 years ago or today, everyone suffers from the same thing, we are fallen. We are all broken. No one is unbroken, even the persons like David who was a man after God's own heart.

The author of today's scripture, Psalm 34, David, suffered many heartbreaking circumstances. David had not yet been crowned king when he wrote Psalm 34. He was being ruthlessly hunted by the current king of Israel, Saul, who once loved him so much, and whose son, Jonathan, was his best friend. King Saul sent men after David to kill him because of his jealousy (1 Samuel 19). In a moment of rage, King Saul launched his own spear at David to kill him (1 Samuel 19:10). David barely escaped and fled from King Saul. He was on the run for life from the person who once loved him so much. It's almost like our best friend became the worst enemy. At this heartbreaking moment, David wrote Psalm 34:18 saying, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." He clung to the Lord, and expressed a confidence in the love of God that every believer should have: "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all" (Psalm 34:19).

One of my life mottos is "Don't fix it if it is not broken." Unfortunately, brokenness is everywhere, all around us, and also in us—broken relationships, broken hearts, broken bodies, broken social constructs, broken power systems, and broken church. There is literally no area of humanity untouched by brokenness. Brokenness is a reality of the universe we live in, and a reality of who we are.

Especially, this is true for many of us this year 2020 as we have been exposed to COVID-19, racial injustice, and the brokenness of democracy in America. In addition, sadly I cannot hide the brokenness of The United Methodist Church over human sexuality. Locally speaking, the traditional way of worshiping God at Kona United Methodist Church has been broken also. Because of the brokenness, the people of Kona United Methodist Church has left the "traditional way" of doing church, and we have reformed the ministry that "fits" the new reality, the new norm created by and through the pandemic. Next Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will experience the latest development of reformation at Kona United Methodist Church. So, buckle up, everyone, and be ready! God is doing new things with us through our brokenness in this pandemic!

Through brokenness, reformation has come to us because our gracious God is close to our brokenness and we have been cooperating with God to reform and transform our brokenness. Through this reformation, we are able to worship our awesome together from a distance online for 32 weeks so far as of today. This is a miraculous work of God through our brokenness. I am personally very thankful for this unexpected

opportunity. However, dealing with brokenness is very stressful, if I am honest about it. Maybe it is for you also.

No one volunteers to be broken. Brokenness follows us and finds us. It doesn't matter how good we are. It doesn't matter how talented we are. It doesn't matter how much we work on ourselves. There is some times when things will not go right. There are times when anything that can happen, will happen. Life happens. Brokenness happens. The unexpected, the uncalled for, the unintentional things happen.

We have been damaged emotionally. Damaged spiritually. It may be your business. It may be your heart that is broken today. It may be the number in your bank account that is screaming, "You are broke." We break physically. We can break mentally. We can break our heart. We can break our spirit. All of these will leave us a mark. But the mark they leave can be the mark of victory. Or it can be the mark of defeat. It is staying with the breaking that produces the blessing if we cling to the Lord who is close to our brokenness.

It is not what we go through that determines where we end up. It's who we listen to. In our brokenness, we are walking through a valley between two voices. One is wisdom, one is worry. One is gratitude, one is grumbling. One is blame, one is faith. Every time we are broken, we have a chance to give up and fall apart...and also a chance to take on the opportunity to get stronger, and get smarter, and get faster, and get tougher, and get more stable, and get more resilient, and get better. We, the children of God, take the chance to take on the opportunity in our brokenness because our God is close to our brokenness and God will reform and transform our brokenness.

We claim the victory over our brokenness because our God's closeness to our brokenness. The only way we can live through the brokenness of the world is to cling to God who is with us. So, let us walk with Him, and talk with Him. God will take care of us.

God never failed any of God's people when they cried out to Him in their brokenness. God may not always answer exactly in the way we would like, but God answers according to His perfect will and timing. And, while we are waiting for the answer, God pours out God's grace upon us which is sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9). Imagine the grief God the Father endured as He witnessed the crucifixion of His Son on the cross for us—the broken people. That same God is close to our brokenness and waiting for us to allow Him to reform our brokenness. So, let us trust the Lord and let Him reform our brokenness today. Amen.