



Ku'uhiapo K.V Jeong, KS Hawai'i '18

E noho mālie, a e 'ike ho'i ē, 'O wau nō
ke Akua.

E hāpai 'ia au i waena o nā lāhui kanaka;
E ho'oki'eki'e 'ia ho'i au ma ka honua-
Nā Halelū 46:10

He says, "Be still, and know that I am
God;

I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."- Psalm
46:10

"Boy! Did he really choose us?". This was my exact text message I sent out when my brother in Christ and travel partner for the trip, Jameson Sato, informed me that Kahu Kaunaloa did indeed select the two of us to be the two lucky students from the KS Hawai'i's Deputation Team to be a part of the Tri-Campus Annual Kalaupapa trip. It had been a dream of mine to be one of two students selected to be a part of the annual trip ever since I first heard about it from Alexa Bader (former Keiki Kahu during my freshman year) when she shared about her experience during chapel. And from hearing about other experiences from every Keiki Kahu that came after her, I was given the impression that it is a life-changing experience to be given the chance to go -- and I wanted that. Let me rephrase that: I needed that.

The night that followed finding out the good news, I returned home to tell my father of whom been waiting to hear from me about it all day. Little did I know, I was coming home to a big secret he has been keeping from me all this time. "I- I had family who was those who were quarantined on Kalaupapa due to Leprosy?", I asked with a sunken heart. " 'Had', and 'have'. You still have family living there to this day, Hiapo. Two of the few last living patients of Kalaupapa. Your Uncle Boogie Kahilihiwa and Auntie Ivy Kahilihiwa". I was stunned. At first, I wanted to go to Kalaupapa for personal (and admittedly selfish) reasons. I'd been dealing with emotional tribulations in my personal life. And to add to that, I was slacking with my relationship with God. I hoped to go onto this trip receiving answers for my own life. However, finding out this made me understand that the questions I had weren't they own things that needed closure. "I really do believe this was meant to be as I was waiting for the right time to tell this, so I'm

telling you now – you need to go, son. You need to learn about what happened in our family.”, my father said boldly.

Kalaupapa, with its majestic cliffs surrounding it and beautiful oceans, met us with a sense of peacefulness but also a tinge of sadness that you could taste. The eerie silence of the area reminded us, fresh landers, that behind all the beauty is a dark history saturated with tears of the fallen and those who were left to die due to Leprosy. It felt heavy, to say the least. The first, big chunk of the trip was nothing more than fun, relaxing, educational, and spiritually healing. Kahu Kaunaloa, Jameson, and I met up with the other deputation students from KS Maui and KS Kapālama as well as Kahu Kalani. We got to know one another, played volleyball, took many trips to the pier, cooked together, and just had a grand time relaxing in such a peaceful place as Kalaupapa. No longer than two days, all of us ‘deppers’ were bonded for life. Although there were fun moments, we also served our time learning about the area, talking to the last living patients still residing there, doing yard work, and getting deeper with God. Even through those things did our bonds between us ‘deppers’ grew stronger. The most fulfilling thing on that trip for me was being able to talk to my Uncle Boogie, of whom I’ve known my whole life but only recently found out the secret my family kept from me. I was able to also learn and visit where my family is laid to rest there. It was fulfilling indeed. Now, although I was getting a lot of closure I never knew I needed, there was still stuff on my mind.

The smaller chunk of the trip for me was filled with emotional discouragement. I had begun separating myself from the group, not because something happened nor was it because I wasn’t having fun but rather, I snapped myself back to reality and remembered why I was there in the first place: to receive answers. All of the questions I had about my family were answered, but not to my troubles. God brought me to Kalaupapa for reasons, so I believed He was going to talk to me for sure. I have already been talking to God throughout the trip with the group, but I wanted time alone with Him.

One night while the rest of the group went to the jam night, I stayed back with Kahu Kalani to talk to God. “Already three days into the trip and I haven’t heard from You yet, God,” I prayed silently in my head while looking out of the door into the black of the night, “Why am I here? Why did you choose me of all people? Please talk to me! I’m here! I’m listening!” Nothing. I was discouraged, and that’s how I was for the rest of the trip. Of anything and everything, I was frustrated at God that night. I came all the way to this spiritually rich place, receiving answers I never knew I needed but yet felt denied understanding my situation by God. I felt discouraged and confused. However, that night, Kahu Kalani sat me down and talked to me about my concerns I was facing. I’m not sure what happened but he told me something that made sense, and it continued to make more sense after I left for Kalaupapa as a sign that the Holy Spirit was speaking to me. Like God Himself speaking through Kahu Kalani, he counseled me that it seemed like I was putting a time clock on God. Read that again. I was putting a TIME on God, who isn’t bound by this world and even time itself. I was telling Him to answer me at this time

because I felt like it was the right timing. After all, I was brought to Kalaupapa “for a reason”. I was finally connecting the dots and realizing that all along, God needed me to trust Him and his timing, not mine. And to add to that, He had been talking to me this whole time, however, it was I who was foolishly covering my ears to His voice and lessons.

His voice can be as loud as thunder, but also as quiet as the breeze you feel. He can talk to you through your best friend and even your worst enemy. Luckily, that time, it was through a person I admired. Ultimately, His voice is heard the loudest through His Word, the Holy Bible. By learning more about Him through the Bible, we continue to learn more about how He tends to speak to us. Most times, you might not hear from Him, but it doesn't mean He doesn't hear you. At times, it's not Him not picking up the phone but rather you are cutting the line from your end and still expecting Him to talk to you through your phone. It's a hard truth to swallow, but He is constant, and His love will never waiver. Remember, God knows all. He knows what you are going through, he knows the situations you are facing and the rough patches you are dealing with. But also remember that you not understanding something He already knows is a blessing. It keeps us humble as His children and reminds us to put our trust in Him. And who knows, maybe He is protecting you from something He knows won't be good for you.

So, did God answer my question during the trip? The simple answer is yes. Not to my troubles but to why I was there. He showed me that even in the still, still of the night, He is the Lord and He is listening. He speaks like no other and that's why He is the Almighty.

My question to the reader is this: Do you know His voice when He speaks? And when He finally does, are you really listening or are you foolishly covering your ears as I did in Kalaupapa? I think about it.

(In the banner, Hiapo is wearing a red shirt and Uncle Boogie and Aunty Ivy are wearing green shirts.)