



## The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

### Sermon: Year B – Third Sunday of Easter – April 15, 2018, Riding the wave

*Why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus.*

This is the line in this morning's reading from the Acts of the Apostles. It's Peter talking, talking to a crowd of his cohorts after the Resurrection, right after he and John are at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple in Jerusalem and they see a crippled beggar and invoke the name of Jesus. And after many years of suffering, the crippled beggar is healed.

And as a result of the crippled beggar's being healed, the crowd gathers in great throngs because of the miracle they witnessed and their fascination and awe with all of it. That's the scene that's set, and then Peter delivers his sermon to the large crowd:

*Why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus.*

The point of the sermon is to get the large crowd's mind on track and point them to the source of the healing, which wasn't Peter and John or some special sort of magic powers. It was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors who healed the crippled beggar.

And it all makes me think: How do we do what we do? How does this thing that we call the Cathedral of St. Andrew happen? How does Holy Week and Easter happen? How does Christmas happen? How does Sunday happen? How does Evensong happen? How does this sermon happen? Without question, it's the work of many hands and many people; and it's also something more. It's the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors.

People often ask me how I come up with my sermons for Sunday morning. And my response is often: I don't know. But what I do know is that it is not this brain in here that does it. Yes, I read, I pray, I write, I edit, I revise. But the thing I think I do that's most important it is: I step aside. I try to make room for the Holy Spirit to do her thing and come up with what needs to be said. And then when I sit at the computer to write, I'm downloading.

I often say that life in the church and a life of faith is like surfing (even though I've only gotten on a surfboard once in my life—and it was a total disaster).

And whenever I think about surfing, I think about the movie *The Endless Summer*.

## Thrd Sunday of Easter – April 15, 2018, contd.

As many of you know, *The Endless Summer* is a documentary from 1966 about two surfers, Mike Hynson and Robert August, who go on a surfing trip around the world in search of the perfect wave. They follow the summer up-and-down the world going back-and-forth over the equator, making the summer endless.

And, yes, the two surfers do a lot of footwork. They practice and develop the skill it takes to surf big waves. They get on airplanes and buses and cars and go to different continents. They swim in the midst of sharks. They risk landing on rocky shores. They live in to their call to follow their dream of finding the perfect wave.

And then they finally find that perfect wave. It comes to them one afternoon on the shores of South Africa at a place called Cape Francis. The wave isn't all that big, maybe three feet tall. But it has a perfect curl and comes in in perfect sets, and they ride on the wave for what seems like an endless time, an endless summer and they're in perfect sync with a force they know is greater than themselves. And it was their connection to that force that gave them the ride of a lifetime. In other words, it was all due to the grace of God.

And that's Peter's point in his sermon today. It's the grace of God that healed the crippled beggar. Not Peter. Not John. It is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors.

So what does this so mean to you and me today? Maybe it's an opportunity, an opportunity to reflect on the grace that we continually receive from our loving God. Maybe it's an opportunity to take a few minutes to sit and scan the days of our lives and ask God to reveal to us where God has been present and where God has been graceful; and then to sit and savor it, savor it and then marinate it in our gratitude for all we've received.

What are those moments? The births of our children? Our first love? The wherewithal to do our jobs and live our lives? The gift of worship in this Cathedral? Or maybe it's more subtle than that? The view of the white terns as they swirl onto the Cathedral square and land upon the kukui trees. The colors on the walls at 4:30 in the afternoon when the sun shines through the stain glass windows and paints them in God's light. Feeling the Holy Spirit in the wind as it blows through the cloister before we gather for worship. It may be in those simple things too that we find the grace of God and the opportunity to savor it.

And we're called to acknowledge it and to be grateful so that we can ride the perfect spiritual wave for which we strive and search and then find the courage to paddle as fast as we can, catch the wave, stand on the board, and take in that perfect God-filled bliss—just God, the wind, the salt spray, the thrill, the perfect ride, and the endless summer.

*Why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus.*

May we all find the Endless Summer. May we all find the perfect wave.

*Amen.*