

Listening like Jesus. Abiding in Ohana series

May 25 – 26, 2024

Welcome to our week three message in our Abiding in Ohana, staying tight with ohana series where we are sharing about some key teachings on how we can be the best ohana for Jesus. We learned in wk 1 from PMark that what sets us as different as followers of Jesus is our love we've experienced for Jesus where he loves us without any conditions, and because of that we have the power to love each other with that same kind of, what kind of love, is it? Yes, apage, agapeo love. And last week, we had a master class on one of the keys of abiding in ohana values, it was about Forgiveness and Reconciliation. If you missed it, go online and listen to PT's great teaching on this. In fact, you can find all our past sermons online and you can even get the transcripts of the sermon with Ohana Group and Self Reflection Qs for you and your OG.

Tonight, today, I get to speak on a gift we get to give to one another and this gift of love. It's the gift of using our ears and heart in tandem, as we learn about listening like Jesus.

I'm gonna be speaking on Active Listening, Listening like Jesus, but instead of modeling that, I'm expecting and trusting you to be actively listening to this message.

And ironically, we can take speech classes, communication classes, writing classes, but when was the last time you heard or even taken a class on Listening. Maybe it's a part of a communication course, but I think we lack being taught well about listening. There's so much that I could share about this, but much of what it takes to be a great active/emphatic listener is caught rather than taught.

In other words, you learn from experiencing someone who is actively listening to you. it's a highly relational skill. Learned as you in relationship with another. And when you experience someone who gives you this gift of listening, especially when you are going through a difficulty, you know how much of a gift of love it is. They that person is giving you a gift of their time, their attention, and their caring heart.

You guys excited to learn about this gift? Den lissen up real good!

I think you can recognize when someone doesn't listen well to you when you wanna share something important.

Let's watch this video (**Keynote**): It's an interaction between this couple and try identify what the problem is. (Turn to someone next to you and talk about what the problems are)

What's this guy's problem? He'll not only distracted, but he's selfish. Does he identify with his friend's, probably his wife's issue/feeling? So when he finally figures out what she's dealing with, what does he try to do? Fix it! So selfish!

Do you know people like this? And I laugh and honestly, I can be like this too! He's so full of himself. And as I reflect upon my life, I know there have been times I've been so full of myself, so distracted by my own stuff that I've failed to be fully engaged in listening with my heart to those in my life, those especially that deserve my best active listening and caring heart.

Our bible has much to say about someone who doesn't listen well: Let's read. (**KEYNOTE, all the scripture noted below**) this proverb, a wise saying.

Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions (Proverbs 18:2 NLT).

It's stupid and embarrassing to give an answer before you listen (Proverbs 18:13 CEV).

This is how it's translated into Hawaii Pidgin.

Anybody open dea mout befo dey hear eryting, dis jalike dey go all out fo do stupid kine stuff, an nobody goin get respeck fo dem (DGASB).

Do you know people like this? How about people like this, who are more interested in talking and airing their opinions rather than listening. Let's read this proverb.

The wise are glad to be instructed, but babbling fools fall flat on their faces (Proverbs 10:8 NLT).

People that babble, they go on and on, not even caring how you feel. Speak to the hand people!

My daughter, Kanoe, taught me this. She said to practice W.A.I.T. And ask myself, Why Am I Talking? And if we are not careful, we can be more interested, and me included, in getting across our opinion than being interested in listening to others. Reflect upon that. That's why, we all need to W.A.I.T. And W.A.I.T is asking . . .

That's why we need a master class on listening. Jesus after teaching the crowd about the story of the seeds, takes his disciples aside and tells them,

Jesus warns his boat buddies, "Therefore consider carefully how you listen!" (Luke 8:18 NIV). **(Keynote)** In HP, Jesus says, "You gotta lissen good". Jesus refers back to verse 10, where Jesus explained that the purpose of His parables was both to *reveal* truth to the spiritually responsive, those who have ears to hear and to *conceal* truth, hide the truth, from the spiritually superficial, those people who no like learn nothing. And that's not you right! Tell the person next to you, that's not you!

Therefore, we must take care how we listen, so that we respond well in obedience to Jesus' teaching. Jesus doesn't want wisdom to go in one ear and out the next. He wants to give you a gift of wisdom so that you can change and be more like him.

And this is Jesus' teaching about listening to him. And we can also take care how we listen to each other.

That's why God made us with two ears and one mouth. You know why?

There are so many stories where Jesus listened with his heart. The lady he meets in Samaria when she was going for water. And he actively listens with his heart and sees her need beyond the physical water she is looking for. And offers her living water. Remember that story. He allows her to speak, a woman, a low status woman, and then, responds in love.

And when Jesus hears his friend Lazarus died, he listens to those who are so sad at his death, mourning his loss. And Jesus responds to Lazarus' sisters, Mary and

Martha's grieving heart, by crying with them. Jesus shows empathy, compassion. He identifies with their pain. That's our master Jesus.

Do you know when you go through something, he doesn't stand over you and say, "you'll get over it!" No Jesus hears your cries and feels your pain, your anger, your emotions of your situation. And yes, he knows the bigger picture of your situation, but he still feels with you your pain and suffering. And we can be people like to those around us. If we choose to listen and love like Jesus!

Even dying on the cross, when people are mocking him, get off the cross if you are the king! Jesus's accusers threw the title of "Savior" in his face—surely he cannot be the Christ or the King of the Jews if he can't even save himself!

And listening to them and being humiliated on the cross, do you know how Jesus responds? Jesus says, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." That's our Jesus. Even while being killed, he listened and responded with compassion. I need that kind of power in my life when I'm a conflict with, getting into a heated discussion with someone. Father forgive that person.

Jesus was fully present with those he engaged with. You never see him rush around, although he was busy going from one place to another, or not too distracted to care for those around him. Whenever he interacted with people, he was fully engaged, fully emotionally invested, and fully cared for people. He actively listened to them beyond their words. That's our master.

And listen to me well, because we've been listened to well, cared for well, ministered to well by his loving care of listening to us in our problems, our struggles, our hurts, and he doesn't condemn us, blame us. CUZ OF WHAT WE'VE EXPERIENCED, WE HAVE THE POWER TO DO THE SAME.

How many of us wanna **learn and practice** this amazing gift that we have experienced and can apply in our relationships with others?

So I'll leave you with this L.E.A.R.N acronym for Active Listening. It's not my creation, but something I learned. (Keynote with Blanks, list the Acronym)

L: Jesus says, to Listen good

James says it this way, My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:19 NIV).

E: **Empathize**, A person who listens with empathy tries to see the big picture of the other person's feelings – identifying not just what they feel, but also reflecting upon they feel that way.

A: **Ask Questions**: A good listener will ask a few open-ended to seek further understanding of what you said. You said this. . . or I sense you feel this way. . . try tell me more how you feel. Then, the person can hear what they are saying themselves. Maybe for the first time, they get to articulate, how they feel. I feel betrayed, I feel taken advantage of,. I feel no one cares. Hmmm. Yeah, that doesn't feel good, does it!

R: **Recap/Acknowledge**: similar what I shared. Try to identify what the person is feeling. Find some way to acknowledge the other person's point. We can be so quick to talk, give our opinions, when the person is really needs to be validated, feel like you understand how they feel. So instead of giving an immediate response, find some way to say, "That's a good point," or "Yes, I can see where you are coming from, because ..."

N: **No Judgment**: This is super hard, but you may see the world differently than that person, but try to be open-minded.

Then when the person feels they've been heard and validated for how they feel, then you watch, they'll be way more open to hearing what you think about their situation. Remember Jesus and the Samaritan woman. She was so open to Jesus after she felt listened to and validated.

So practice L.E.A.R.N in your active listening: What is it again?

Now Listen to this. where do we practice this kind of love, Actively Listening, to one another? At our weekend services? No, it's a lecture. And I didn't do well in lectures in college as I'm a relational learner. And God made us to be relational. So, it's in our small groups, Ohana Groups, where we turn our chairs to one

another and actively listen to each other, allowing each to speak life into one another.

I have a story of some friends who listened to me well in my cross roads decision-making of my future plans. And because of that gift of listening I'm here today as one of your pastors. I've shared this before, so for those of you new, this is what I was struggling with in my decision for my future and I had some friends who actively listened to me and my wife Gayle. After teaching English in Japan and being a missionary there, I came back to Hawaii, got married to my H.S sweetheart Gayle, took on a masters program in English as a 2nd language, graduated, had my kids, saw my parents, and brother come to know Jesus, and now it was time for me to head back to Japan, equipped and ready for me to save Japan for Jesus. But Gayle, wasn't so excited about that idea even after having lived there herself for 10 months. Her concern, who would help our kids in school, what would she do, who would we partner with, she knew I could speak Japanese better and fit in better.

And as I was sharing my angst about this, my friend modeled to me how I was sharing. He said, "Earl, it seems like you are so convinced this is God leading you, with clenched fists" Are you open to "Open Fists" to God? Don't you think that if God wants you there, he'd open Gayle's heart too? That was such a gift that my friend offered me. He allowed me to speak, heard me and Gayle out, and allowed me to reflect upon my life. There was no judgment, just loving care. And the rest is history. And that's one reason I'm here today.

I'll end with a great story of Jesus actively listening well.

Show Video: (Keynote) Road to Emmaus:

Jesus is willing to go the distance with you and listen well. And when we are open to him when we cry out to him, he'll show up like he did to the men if you are open. Today, let's start by actively opening our lives to our master and know that he listens and cares for us. And as we experience his listening and caring heart, watch and see how he transforms us to be that kind of people in the world.

Self Reflection and Ohana Group Questions:

1. What was one of the biggest take aways from the sermon?
2. After watching the Skit Guys video, does this reflect upon your or anyone else's listening patterns you know? Please discuss.
3. Read the story of Jesus interaction with the Samaritan woman in John 4 with the focus on how Jesus actively listened to her. What can you learn about listening from our master?
4. Take this self assessment: <https://www.mindtools.com/ai4ff5e/how-good-are-your-listening-skills> to assess your active listening skills. Share your results.
5. Review L.E.A.R.N and discuss each aspect of Active Listening and evaluate how you are and others are that model these skills.
6. Ask God to help you with one or two applications from this message and pray with someone in your group about these applications so that you can show agape love to those around you and in your ohana.