

BISHOP'S MESSAGE – August 2017

Aloha o ke Akua:

I have a secret spiritual practice. When I'm alone in the car, I listen to Gospel music – even Country and Blue Grass Gospel. Yes, I sing along. There is one song that has recently given me pause: “You can't be a beacon if your light don't shine” (by Marty Cooper). It was a hit for Donna Fargo in 1974 (found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYkAJesUP94>). I once heard a version by The Blind Boys of Alabama that was moving, but I can't seem to find it now.

The lyrics are simple enough:

Chorus

*You can't be a beacon if your light don't shine
You can't be a beacon if your light don't shine
There's a little light in all of us by God's design
But you can't be a beacon if your light don't shine*

As I listened again, I was reminded of the Letter of James (1:19-21): “Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. This is because an angry person doesn't produce God's righteousness. Therefore, with humility, set aside all moral filth and the growth of wickedness, and welcome the word planted deep inside you--the very word that is able to save you.”

Verse 1

*How can you ask for the truth
When you do not truthful live
How can you ask forgiveness
When you don't forgive
I don't mean to bring you down or speak to you unkind
But you can't be a beacon if your light don't shine*

This echoes Jesus in Matthew 6:14-15: “If you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins.”

Verse 2

*How can you ask a child to be honest and true?
When he can only judge what's right by what he sees in you
How can you offer vision, yet walk around blind
No you can't see a beacon if it's light don't shine*

And again from Matthew 18:2-6: "Then [Jesus] called a little child over to sit among the disciples, and said, 'I assure you that if you don't turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who humble themselves like this little child will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. As for whoever causes these little ones who believe in me to trip and fall into sin, it would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks and be drowned in the bottom of the lake.'"

In an age of tweets and public mean-spiritedness, the words remind us of the simple practices of a Christian's life. In a time when violence and division are celebrated, the personal habits of telling the truth and forgiveness are essential to following Jesus Christ. It is upon such things that allow us to live in the Kingdom of God in the here and now.

Aloha ma o Iesu Kristo, ko mākou Haku,
+Bob