

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



Special Episode – Maui Fire Disaster Report

Thank you for joining me for this Special Edition of *Growing in God*. I wanted to take some time and address the fire disasters that have happened on Maui over the recent week. Hawaii is my home. This is the land of aloha and *ohana*, which means family. I was raised in these islands. My Auntie is Hawaiian, her mother was full Hawaiian, and my island family were all locals of great racial diversity. I still live on the island of Maui and have been personally impacted by the situation that is truly disastrous from the storm and fires that transpired. For me, *ohana* and aloha are not merely sayings, they are the spirit over these islands. Right now, we need to exercise the power of love to enforce both aloha and *ohana* as the atmosphere which should prevail over the island of Maui, as well as all the islands, as we recover from this tragedy.

I know that, at this time, many are calling for an accounting from the government officials, and calling for investigations into the details of what happened during the fires surrounding notifications, evacuations, as well as other issues. I personally do not believe it is time for that. We have some 4,000 people who are now homeless. We have well over 2,000 structures which are completely destroyed. There are still untold dead and missing on these islands. It is time that we help, not judge and analyze. I pray that we do not turn this into another politicized issue, which we see so often taking place in this age of anger, hate, and division which seems to have swallowed up our country and our culture. I pray to the Lord that *ohana* and aloha will prevail, and likewise the words of Christ and the spirit of His message that guides our thoughts and actions at a time like this to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is time for compassion, not judgment.

You know, Jesus never said He was performing miracles. Instead, He stated that He was doing the works of the Father. He performed what we all consider miraculous, but these works were triggered by the compassion He felt for the needs of others. An example of this is found in Matthew the ninth chapter, in verses 35-38. I will read just verse 36. It says, "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd." Believe me, there are a lot of people here on Maui, especially in the area of Lahaina, that right now are absolutely in distress; and they are dispirited by what they face and what they have gone through. We know that Christ, through that compassion, performed healings and other works. Again, He did not consider them miracles; He considered them the works of the Father. And besides healing, and ministering to their spirits, Christ fed the multitude out of that same spirit of compassion. For example, in Matthew 14:14, it says, "When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick." Later on, we see that He took the loaves and the fishes, and from that same spirit of compassion, He blessed them and He broke them and fed the multitude, which was about 5,000 men, besides the women and children.

We need such works in Maui today, the ability to feed the thousands that are in need. You know, driven by this compassion, Jesus performed the works of God. He performed the works that fed, that healed, that comforted the needy that were standing before Him. It is time for us, likewise, to do the works of God in Maui. We need to be driven by the compassion of Christ in order to perform miracles to feed,

to house, to clothe, and to minister to the needs of those who must be comforted, who must be counseled, who must be blessed and imparted to. And we can do this with love and aloha, as one ohana at this time.

I know that the news many are watching is focused on the city and the area of Lahaina, and that is as it should be; certainly it has the greatest devastation and has suffered the greatest tragedy. But I would also ask you in your prayers to remember that many areas of Maui, as well as other islands, were also impacted by this storm and fires. In our area, for instance, in up-country Maui, the fire is only 60% contained; many homes have been burned, including many of the homes of the firefighters as they were out fighting to save the homes of others. Let our hearts and our compassion be big enough to encompass the entire need of Maui and the Islands, as they were impacted by this tragedy.

And one last thing: I have been asked by many, from both Hawaii and the Mainland, how to give and donate for the needs during this time. This is always a difficult question to answer, because in such times, there are those who will use the circumstances as an opportunity to abuse donations. I have done some research, trying to answer these questions of which organizations are legitimate and give all or most of those donations directly toward the needs, and not toward large administrative costs. One of the many that I have found is the [Hawaii Community Foundation](#). They have a fund called Maui Strong. We are going to be putting out an email from Hargrave Ministries today, and in that email we are going to include a link to this Maui Strong fund. But you can also go online and just google “Maui Strong Fund,” and you should be able to find it there, under the Hawaii Community Foundation page.

The Maui Strong Fund is providing financial resources that can be deployed quickly, with a focus on rapid response and recovery for the disaster of the fires on Maui. The way that they work is by collaborating with state and county leaders, as well as other nonprofit organizations, and community members, to get an understanding of what the needs are; and then they fund through all and any of these organizations as necessary to support immediate needs, and to get those funds into the hands of those who are really in trouble at this point. They do give financial assistance, and that is given through these other organizations. When you find the web site, if you go to the link called [Donate to Maui Strong](#), it will give you a list of the organizations that they are actually funding. These are organizations that are doing everything that is necessary – they are feeding, they are giving diapers. It does include the Red Cross. It includes a boat service now that is transporting goods into Lahaina, since the roads are not available to be used. It is dealing with mothers and babies. It is dealing with homeless organizations that are here, even churches that are housing the homeless; the Maui Food Bank, and many other organizations, which you can see if you go to the web site. They also have a link for [frequently asked questions](#), which would probably answer most of the questions that you have. So if you are looking to donate, you can give funds, finances, through this organization. They are tax-deductible donations.

Now, if you are looking to donate material goods instead of funds, the Maui Strong Fund does not take material goods. However, they do recommend that you donate such goods to the [Maui United Way](#) or to the [Salvation Army in Maui](#). They will handle these types of donations and gifts. So hopefully, this will help all of you that are looking to donate to this tragic need.

Lastly, I would say, if you can't donate, if you are not here in the islands and you are not able to physically help – believe me, we all need your prayers. The Islands as a whole, Hawaii, need your prayers, need your love, need your faith and your support. So I appreciate your heart for us now. And I do pray: Lord, bring to us this spirit of compassion that rested upon Christ. And through that compassion, let our ohana and aloha be an answer to Hawaii in this time of need.

Thank you for listening and being a part of this. I appreciate all of your help.