



NEWSLETTER  
June 4, 2023

## *We Serve The King of Kings*

ONE DAY, I talked to Eugene.

He's our regular waiter who serves us breakfast when we hold our Feast at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC).

Because a lot of crazy important events take place in PICC, Eugene told me, with great pride in his voice, "I've served four Philippine Presidents."

Whoa!

Eugene doesn't just see himself as a waiter-- but a waiter of Presidents.

Dear friend, may I preach to you?  
This is how blessed we are.

We don't just serve Presidents.  
We serve the King of Kings.

Never belittle what you do for God in your family, or in your job, or in your ministry. Never say, "I'm just a housewife," or "I'm just a nurse," or "I'm just a salesman," or "I'm just a teacher," or "I'm just an usher" or "I'm just in the kids ministry..." You are a Servant of the Almighty God.

Have a powerful Feast today!



May your dreams come true,

**Bo Sanchez**

**WELCOME to the continuation  
of the Feast Talk *Wilderness*,  
series on the book of *Numbers*.  
Talk 5: *Celebrate Your Appointment***

## What Do You Do?



THAT’S one of the first questions people ask when you’re just getting acquainted. Usually, you’d mention your job, your career.

What do you really do in life?

Last Sunday, our Grand Feast, we celebrated Pentecost Sunday—that glorious day when the Holy Spirit came down to the apostles, inaugurating our Church.

If we need to know what we should really be doing in life, Fr. Albert Garong, leading our Pentecost celebration, directed us to three lessons from the Holy Spirit, *page 3*.

If you really want to know your appointment in life, be at The Feast this Sunday because that’s precisely the topic of Talk 5 of our Feast series, *Wilderness*. Bro. Bo Sanchez introduces the talk, *page 1*.

As you can see in this photo, Bro. Bo is with Feast Builder Bro. Alvin Barcelona. That’s a shot from a video message they sent to our Grand Feast which they could not attend because they had an appointment in the United States, *page 12*.



Appointed preachers for our Grand Feast were Bro. Audee Villaraza and Bro. John Ben Rodriguez who tackled Talk 4 of *Wilderness*, which is also about finding out what you should really be doing in life. The message: *Listen to God’s Voice*. *Flashback* starts on *page 16*.



Yes, if you know how to listen, you will know a lot about life. Listen to Bro. Didoy Lubaton as he welcomes us to our Grand Feast, *page 10*.



And speaking of listening about appointments, Sis. Jelly Cordoto learned some good lessons as she became a scholar of our Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation, *page 38*.

So, what do you do? Hope you’re doing well!

All for God’s Glory,

**Randy Borromeo**  
Media Ministry  
Executive Director

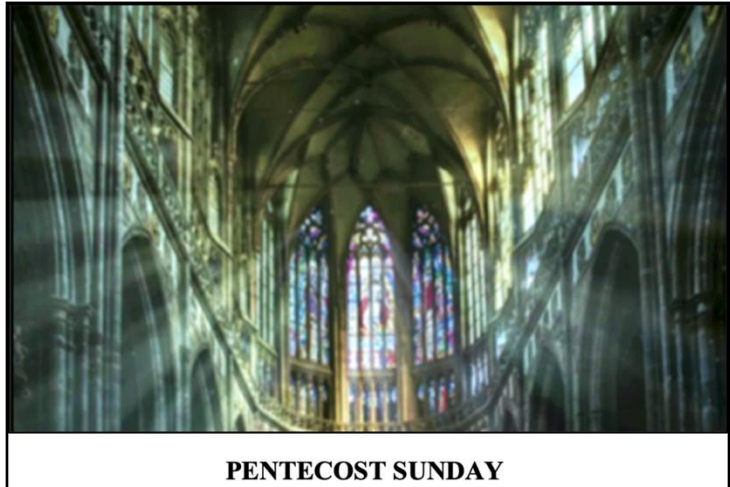




# FLASHBACK!

## MAY 28, 2023

### Holy Mass



PENTECOST SUNDAY

**REV. FR. ALBERT GARONG**  
**REV. FR. PAOLO ASPRER**  
**REV. FR. MARK DEMANUELE**  
Concelebrants

### Gospel Reading

**FR. PAOLO ASPRER:**

#### **Pentecost Sunday Gospel – John 20:19-23:**

*<sup>19</sup> It was late that Sunday evening, and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors, because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities.*

*Then Jesus came and stood among them. “Peace be with you,” he said.*

*<sup>20</sup> After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you.”*

*<sup>22</sup> Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> If you forgive people’s sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.*



## Homily

**FR. ALBERT GARONG**

on the Gospel: John 20:19-23

*Jesus Appears to His Disciples*

Excerpts:

GOOD MORNING, Everyone!

What a glorious, glorious day!

Happy Feast of Pentecost!

Today is the birthday of the Church.

It is our birthday!

Today, we commemorate that special moment when the Holy Spirit came to the apostles in a special, unique, and permanent way, because the Spirit makes the Church.

The Lord can do many things. We can do a lot of things with the Lord's help.

The Lord continues to work everywhere around the world, but no one else can claim that the Holy Spirit is with them in *that* special, permanent way—except the Church.

God can move outside the Church but it's in a special way that the Holy Spirit is with us.

In the same way, we as the Church can do a lot of things. We can be a lot of things without the Spirit. We have your Mercy Ministries; you can do that so excellently that you can help hundreds of thousands of people and you can become a great charitable organization. We can receive awards and change the face of the country, eradicate poverty, well and good.

But without the Spirit, that is not Church.

Charitable organization, sure. But not Church.

We can study the words of the Bible. We can memorize the Gospel and continue to understand what the Bible says-- but without the Spirit it is still not Church. Perhaps, it is a fans club for Jesus. Perhaps, it is a school of thought that follows Jesus-- like stoicism or utilitarianism, and so on.

Perhaps, we can be just like Swifties who memorize Taylor Swift's songs. Or for the others, Noranians or Vilmanians-- for people who love the movies of Nora and Vilma. Fans club, sure, but not Church—not without the Spirit.

It is the Spirit that makes the Church-- because the Spirit is with each and every one of us.

Now, I'd like to offer three important messages about what that means.



## 1. The Holy Spirit Is Power

Do you feel powerful?

With the Spirit comes immense, world-changing power. But how do you tap into it? How do you activate the Holy Spirit?

You activate the Holy Spirit through one action. You unleash it.

What holds back the Spirit is-- 100% of the time-- because we don't want to unleash it. Instead, we want to control it. We want the Holy Spirit to abide by what we want to do:

“Lord, activate my plans for my business!”

“Lord, activate my plans for my family and our good health!”

“Activate *my* ideas.”

Paano gagalaw ang Holy Spirit? —How will the Holy Spirit move?

You want to feel the power of the Holy Spirit? You unleash it. Let it go! Let it run rampant. Let it be the fire that will burn what needs to be burned, that will ignite what needs to be ignited, that will warm whatever needs to be warmed. Let it go.

And I tell you, you will be astounded by what the Holy Spirit can do.

Unleash that power.

A month ago, for the first time, I went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And I was the leader of the pilgrimage. It was my first time to be in a pilgrimage—and I was the leader. Well, there was a Feast Builder, a leader of The Feast, with me.

To me, when you say you're the leader, it's about crafting these prayer moments and experiences. So, I studied a lot, I read books, made a module, and so on.

We were told that we would be having Spring weather there. But when we arrived, there was a typhoon. It was so cold.

On our second day, we were supposed to visit Petra (a historic and archaeological city in southern Jordan). We were so excited. But because of the typhoon, Petra was flooded and so it was closed to visitors.

Nevertheless, we had a fruitful pilgrimage.

Because our Feast Builder, Bro. J Paul, told us: “Let's not control this pilgrimage. Let go of our plans and simply let the Holy Spirit lead the way. It seems, He has a better plan for us.”





## 2. The Holy Spirit Is Already Inside

So, every day, we walked into whatever it is. We just followed whatever it is.

We had an amazing experience.

It's really like that. If you want the Holy Spirit powerful in your life, stop controlling it. Unleash the Holy Spirit.

But the question: Unleash it from where? Where is the Holy Spirit?

You unleash Him from where?

Where did we last find the Holy Spirit? As tongues of fire over the apostles.

The Holy Spirit that descends into the heart of every believer.

That is so important. Allow me to bring you back to the Creation story.

In *Genesis*, we read God creates everything, and everything is perfect.

Absolutely perfect. The Lord's enemies, the devils, wanted to destroy God's Creation. But they could not defeat the Lord because He was very powerful.

In that Perfect Creation, however, there was humankind—granted free will.

And this was where the enemies found an opportunity to overcome the Lord.



### Reading I: Acts 2: 1-11

*1 And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.*

*5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue.*

*7 And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans? 8 And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, 11 Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.*



## Ground Zero

How did the enemies change, destroy Creation?

By entering the heart of men. And from that first sin, death, sickness, destruction, all came forth.

The human heart in the Genesis journey became ground zero for sin.

The Lord is very good. Because the time came to fulfill His plan of Salvation.

And where did He choose to start the restoration and the healing of Creation?

The heart. Not outside, not in some designated place, not in some temple, not in a building— but in the heart.

In Creation, the heart was ground zero for sin. On Pentecost, the heart became ground zero for grace and mercy. That is how it was designed, my dear brothers and sisters.

The Lord will renew the face of the Earth. But where does it start?

In renewed hearts. Not the heart of your neighbor, not the heart of the one beside you-- but your own. That's where all these will unfold from.

When He heals you and restores you, He doesn't just patch you up and tape a Band Aid on you. Or just say, "You're now okay. You may go."

No. He will get into the source of your ailment, your vices, the very source of your sins, the very root of everything that's pulling you down-- and that's where He starts. That's where He begins the healing so that it will be complete, it will be whole.

### **Reading II: 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-7, 12-13**

*3b No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit; 5 And there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord; 6 And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. 7 And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. 12 For as the body is one, and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ.*

*13 For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink.*



### 3. The Holy Spirit Is Restoration

It's renewal. It renews everything.  
But it must begin with renewed hearts.

So, that's the first place where you unleash the Spirit: *sa puso—in the heart*,

So, you unleash the Spirit from the heart,  
(then) where do you unleash Him to?

To the world. The Lord wanted to change the whole world. But how?

*Not as individuals but as Church. Church community is an essential part of this plan of Salvation.*

This is not “*Jesus my Lord, my Savior.*”  
*Just the two of us.*

No. Once you unleash the Spirit, the first thing He does is to unite you in the Body of Christ. Because that's where you belong and that's how we all will give the Blessing to the world-- so everyone of you is really a part, a block of the Church, even though we're not perfect.

That's why in the Gospel, when Jesus breathes the Spirit on the disciples, His first message to them: mercy and forgiveness. Because mercy is the glue that will hold the blocks together.

We're not perfect. We wound each other. We're terrible with each other. Even among us here in church, we do a lot of terrible things to each other. We commit a lot of sins that harm and damage each other and also ourselves.

We priests commit a lot of sins against each other.

We're all broken and if all blocks are broken, the church building will crumble. Church will crumble.

So, what keeps our Church standing? —Mercy. Mercy is what glues the Church together because this Church is not for the perfect. It's for the broken. It's where we tell people, “*Punta kayo dito! Kasi dito, pwede maging sira.—Come here. Because here, you can be crazy.*”

Isn't that relaxing? We like to pretend that we are okay, that we are perfect. *Wow, perfect!* If you're perfect, you're already in Heaven. *O, you want to go first?*

No. We are not perfect. And we're not required. Hindi tayo perfect and we're not required to be perfect for God to build His Church. No.

That's why, what keeps us together? His mercy. Every time.





## Come, Holy Spirit...

You know, in the Gospel, the apostles were given the power to forgive. That power is transferred-- bishop to bishop, until today it is transferred to us. That's why we do confessions.

I am often asked, "Father, why do we have to confess to a priest? Isn't it okay to confess directly to the Lord?"

You see, every sin weakens not just you—but the entire Church.

No matter how private it is, no matter how internal that thing is, the moment you sin, it's not just you who is broken-- but the entire Church. Because you're a part of it.

The reason we are in Confession is to say that, "Hey, aayusin natin ito, as a Church, as a Community. — We will fix this together—as a Church, as a Community. It's not just between you and the Lord. That's not what He wants.

Aayusin natin ito together! — We will fix this together. That's what we're there for—to represent the Church. Every time a priest gives the absolution for an individual penitent who is truly sorry for their sins, after that, the Church is literally strengthened -- because that one block was renewed!

When you see a long line of penitents, and after two hours you see there's no more line because they had all confessed to the priest, *praise God!*

The Church was literally strengthened. Lahat tayo makikinabang dun. — All of us will benefit from that.

So, let's not be shy. Let's accept our transgressions and let the Spirit of Mercy be able to heal us and restore us.

My dear brothers and sisters, the world needs the Church, and the Church needs you-- is in absolute need of every single one of you. No talent is wasted here. Not even just talents—no weakness is wasted here. Kasi kahit kahinaan, kayang gamitin ni Lord. Kaya magpagamit tayo.—Because the Lord can make use of a weakness. So, let the Lord use you.

Unleash the Spirit. Activate Him by letting Him go—letting Him rule in your heart, and through your heart let Him renew the face of the Earth. Amen.

God bless us all.





**DIDOY LUBATON:**

Good Morning, Everybody! Let's give the Lord a big hand for a beautiful celebration of the Holy Eucharist. We always say that the Eucharist is the heart of The Feast. Happy birthday, Church! Happy birthday to us! It's a beautiful celebration! We recognize that God is here, the Holy Spirit is moving!

So, as we go along, we recognize everybody. I've met a lot of people who came from a lot of far places just to be here, to be part of our celebration. We recognize you. Those people who are watching online, we recognize you as well.

This is our Feast Bay Area. This is our home. You are loved here.

Welcome home!

Thank you that we have this one big gathering, this one big celebration of our Church today!



## Love Offering

This is a beautiful opportunity to present our requests. I want to encourage you to write your prayer requests and thanksgiving for answered prayers. We do read them. We do pray for them.

This is our church-building effort as well. So, I pray you give with abundant joy today.

I'd like to encourage you through the Word of the Lord.

I remember this Bible story about the time of the apostles. Imagine how it must have felt when the Church was starting... The 12 apostles gathering on Pentecost Day. And the Church grew and it grew, it moved from Jerusalem to other places, and eventually throughout the whole world.

I'd like to quote from the Letter of St. Paul to the people of Corinth in Greece.

In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul says: *"Now, I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in His kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity."*

Indeed, we may be pressed but not crushed. We may be persecuted but not abandoned. We may be poor in the world's standards but we're never going to be poor in Spirit because we have the abundance of joy in the Lord!

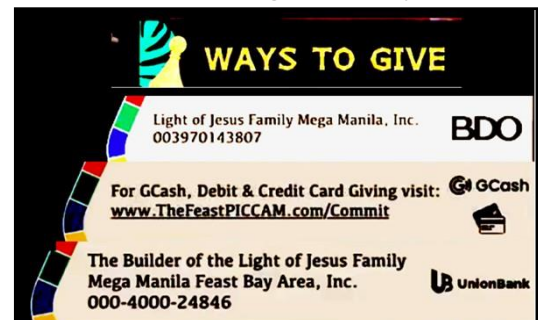
And Paul goes further:

*"...For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do."*

These guys were very poor. They were in Macedonia. They had many troubles, and yet they were still filled with abundant joy which overflowed in generosity...

Friends, as we give our Love Offering to the Lord, we give Him not just money. This Offering is a symbol of us, our time, energy, effort, our love, our family's contribution to the bigger family of Christ...

It is God who founded this Church through the Holy Spirit... So, our Offering is a Happy Birthday gift to the Church today, with abundant joy and glorious generosity and thanksgiving. Amen!



## Special Video Message



### **BRO. ALVIN BARCELONA:**

Hello, Feast Bay Area! Greetings from here in Jacksonville, Florida—in our ongoing *Breakthrough US Concert Tour* with Bro. Bo Sanchez and the K5.

I would love to be there at our Grand Feast today -- yet we have so much confidence in our builders and leaders and we know that you'll have a great Feast today!

And speaking of leaders, here's Bro. Bo to greet you too!

**BRO. BO SANCHEZ:** You know what? I just wanted to tell you a story.

Last night was our concert here in Florida and after the concert, we were signing books and people just came and their stories—overwhelming!

There are lots of couples.

There's this one couple who told me, "We've travelled four hours to come here..."

Our concert... we end around 9 o'clock. They were to still drive home.

I asked them, "Will you stay here?"

They said, "No, we just came here to watch the concert, then we're going to drive home."

So many people travelled so far to listen to God's voice. And you know,

it humbled me... I was tired but I was imagining all those people who were tired, went out of their way, and that's the attitude. And I know you're doing this too in our Grand Feast today. You also went out of your way, you travelled, so that you could listen to God's Word -- and that's the attitude.

We need God. He is our oxygen. He is our source of life.

And so, keep on doing that for the rest of your life. Hope to see you soon!

**BO SANCHEZ & K5**  
**BREAKTHROUGH**  
**U.S. CONCERT TOUR 2023!**

Featuring  
**BO SANCHEZ**

ALVIN BARCELONA  
OBET CARRILLAS  
ADRIAN PANGANIBAN  
JON ESCOTO  
ARUN GOGNA

**SAN DIEGO, CA**  
05-13-2023  
PERFORMING ARTS  
CENTER, SOUTHWESTERN  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
900 OTAY LAKES RD  
CHULA VISTA, CA

**TEXAS**  
05-20-2023  
AARC  
8401 CAMERON ROAD  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

**FLORIDA**  
05-21-2023  
HOLY SPIRIT PARISH  
HELSIN HALL, 1966  
FORT CAROLINE RD.  
JACKSONVILLE,  
FLORIDA

**NEW YORK**  
05-27-2023  
MONSIGNOR BOYLAN  
AUDITORIUM OF ST. JOAN  
OF ARC CATHOLIC CHURCH  
82-00 35TH AVENUE  
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY

**MARYLAND**  
05-28-2023  
ROCKVILLE  
HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM, 2100  
BALTIMORE ROAD  
ROCKVILLE, MD

# Worship!

## EXHORTATION



**TONY VALENZUELA:** God is smiling on you right now. Today's an exciting Sunday! Because it's Pentecost Sunday!

And it's our birthday! And because it's our birthday, I believe God wants to give you a gift today!

Question: What gift are you asking from the Lord today? Not a gift that this world can give... No. It's not that gift! It's a spiritual gift! It's an eternal gift!

John 16:34 says, *"Until now, you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you will receive and your joy will be complete."*

Let's worship our God! Hallelujah!  
Our joy is complete!

Lord, we praise Your Name! We praise Your Presence here today! There's no one like You, oh God! No one compares to you! You are eternal and unlimited!

Jesus, right now, every heart, every mind in this place, in the Reception Hall of PICC, Pasay City, Metro Manila, these people are seeking Your love, seeking Your Presence.

Brothers and sisters, I know some of you may be coming here with burdens, crosses, doubts, uncertainties, asking, *"Totoong may Holy Spirit ba?— Is it true that there is a Holy Spirit?"*

The Spirit confirms that Jesus is here!

Matthew 28:30 says, *"Go forth to all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them all that I have commanded you."*

And here's bottomline from the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus says: "I am with you!... "I am with you until the end of the age!"

This is not just history lesson 2000 years ago. Jesus is with us to this day!

And the Spirit confirms that. The fact that we are here only indicates that God is alive. Put your hand over your chest. We continue to worship God and declare: Jesus, You are here!

From the mountains peak  
To the valleys low  
From the ends of the earth  
All creation sing  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
From the skies above  
To the depths below  
Every season and time  
All creation sing  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah



God of my present and future

Unbounded by time

Unchanging forever and ever



Let every breath

Declare all Your glory and power



Jesus Your Name is salvation

All creation sing  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah



# NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE **DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE**

**AUDEE VILLARAZA:**

Altogether, lift up your hands and say this with me:



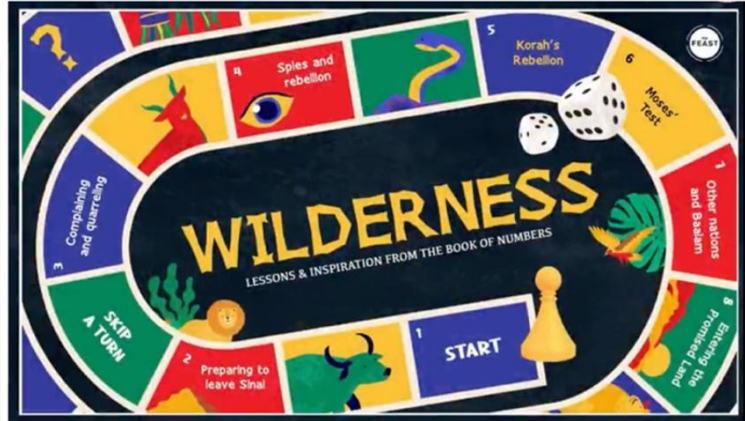
Today, I receive all of GOD's love for me.  
Today, I open myself to the unbounded, limitless,  
overflowing abundance of GOD's universe.  
Today, I open myself to GOD's blessings,  
healing, and miracles.  
Today, I open myself to GOD's Word  
So that I become more like JESUS everyday.

Today, I proclaim that I am GOD's beloved.  
I am GOD's servant.  
I am GOD's powerful champion.  
And because I am blessed,  
I am blessing the world.  
In JESUS' Name, Amen.



*Thy Word is a Lamp  
unto my feet  
And a Light  
unto my path.*

## Talk



I WANT to give to you our big message today. This is the message that we want you to take home, we want you to chew on, and digest, and we hope, by God's grace, it will produce fruits in your life.

Friend, *Listen to God's Voice.*

Today, God is going to speak over your situation. I don't know where you come from, where you've been, where you're going—but I believe that God has a Word for someone here, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will use this to convict you, to change you, and ultimately to transform you.

This is our prayer, in Jesus' Name. Amen.



One more time:

*Thy Word  
is a Lamp  
unto my feet  
And a Light  
unto my path.*



## Two Ways of Questioning

I want to lay down the foundation of our talk for this morning.

The message is: *Listen to God's Voice.*

Just a quick story:

If you visit our home, and you sit down with my wife, our kids, and me, this is the usual conversation that happens in our home every day now...

We have a five-year-old son—very curious, very inquisitive, somebody who likes asking questions.

So, he would often come to me, ask me a question. And it never fails that after he asked me a question and I gave him an answer, he would turn to his mom and ask her, “Mom, is that true? Is Dad telling the truth?”

Raise your hand if you've got a dad like me whom you always doubt if he's telling the truth. If you have a parent like that—you've got to have a second opinion with the mom. There always has to be a confirmation: “Mom, is that true?”

See, that's the season that we're in. And I think that's a good habit—of wanting to check if that's really the truth.

A very wise man by the name of Jon Escoto -- he's one of our Feast Builders—said this to me a long time ago:

“You know, Bro., there are two ways of questioning. The first is you question because you want to challenge the integrity of the statement of that person. You want to argue, you want to debate. But there's a second type of questioning. You question simply because you want to appreciate, you want to understand better...”

And so, a lot of people oftentimes get offended when somebody questions them because they think the person wants to argue with them. They think that they want to have a debate. The person wants to challenge what they said-- not knowing that the person really wants to ask questions because the guy just wants to understand what they are talking about.

I believe that it's good to never settle for the surface level – to continually seek for the truth. Because that's how we develop wisdom—when we try to find the truth.





## Check Out the Source

You see, I believe that in trying to find the truth and seeking for answers, we also need to look for the right source—you need to talk to the right people. Because if you end up talking to the wrong source, you know how in the Internet, when you visit a site that's unverified, it will give you a warning: *Untrusted Source*. You've got to watch out for people like that. You've got to use your head—discern if you're talking to the right people. Because sometimes, the source is bad.

And that's what happened to Eve in the Bible.

Here's the backstory in Genesis 3:1-4:

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" 2 "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. 3 "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" 4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. 5 "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

Genesis 3:1-4 NLT

Here's the thing: To begin with, Eve should not have been in that conversation. I mean, if she only knew: the Serpent was not to be trusted. It was unverified source.

Here's a lesson for all of you today: You need to stay away from conversations where you know that the other person will do anything just to win the argument—even resort to fabricated truth.

You know the term *victim mentality*? How some people feel they're always the victim and it's never their fault-- but it's always the other person's fault?

You need to stay away from conversations with such people.

## Study the Instructions

When the wolf tells the story, the shepherd is always the enemy. When the villain is the one telling the story, the hero always becomes the bad guy.

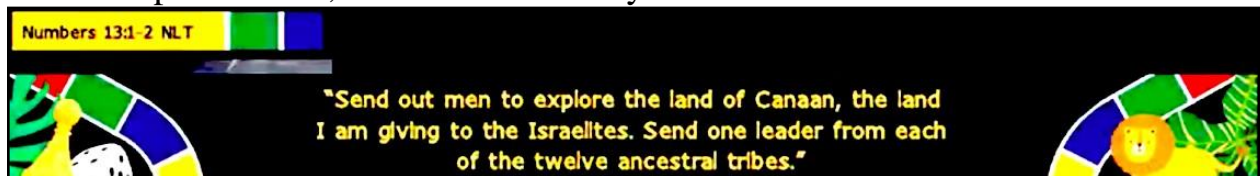
So, always remember: When you're talking to somebody and you feel like this person is trying so hard (to insist his version of the story) you already know that it's not good. So, you walk away from conversations like that.

And this happened to the Israelites.

We're going to switch now to the book of *Numbers*.

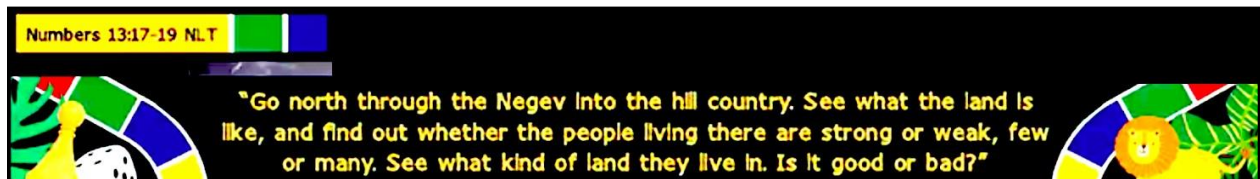


In Chapter 13: 1-2, this is what God says:



So, Moses sends out some spies to the land of Canaan.

And here are Moses' instructions:



You know, when I was reading this, it reminded me of every Filipino mom. You know, when a Filipino mom tells you to do one thing: "Child, I will just go to the store, or I'm going to work, so, can you cook the rice, while I am gone?"

Then clean your room. Sweep the floor. Then wash the dirty clothes. Then go to Aling Pepay's store and buy patis (fish sauce) ...

Who has a mother like that— dumping a battery of chores for you to do?

As in your mom sees your hand this way:

"Mom, I'm just one person in the universe. It's not a multiverse. There's no one here with me!"



## Watch Out: Don't Get into Trouble

Moses was giving all these instructions which reminds us of Genesis 3.

Moses instructs the spies to go around the land and then he asks this question: “Is it good or bad?”

God already promised this land to the Israelites. But then, Moses, somehow, needed a confirmation. Moses was saying, “In your eyes, is the land good or bad?”

This was the same trick that the Serpent did. He wanted Eve to determine whether the apple was good or bad—based on her own judgment.

See, that's the problem with a lot of us. We get into trouble when we try to define good or bad-- according to our own terms.

And so, now, we're thinking, “Is it really bad? I mean, everybody else is doing it. Maybe, it's not that bad. Everybody seems to think that in this company, this is the culture that they're doing. So, maybe it's not really bad. Maybe it's acceptable...”

So, now you're justifying as good what God said was bad.

Because somebody told you five weeks ago that it's not bad-- that you should steal a bit of bond paper from your company.

Or maybe because daddy and mommy say a white lie every now and then—so, maybe now you're thinking, maybe lying is not bad. Because mommy and daddy are doing it.

Or my best friend is cheating on her boyfriend—so, maybe it's okay to cheat. Maybe it's not so bad, after all.

So, what's happening is that now, we're so confused and we no longer trust what God says is bad and what God says is good.

*Listen to God's voice.*

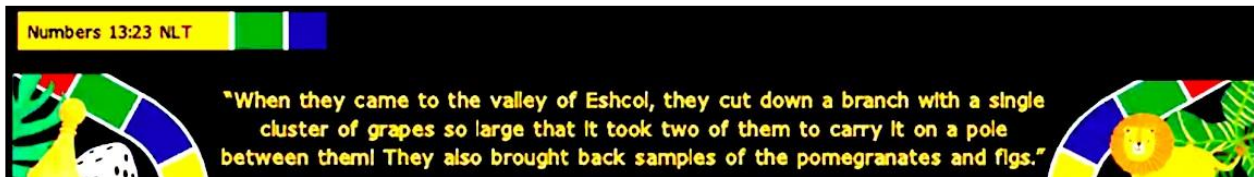
That's the message for today and we're going to give you four sub-messages that I pray you will receive.





I know you've been praying that God would lift that burden from you. But stop praying that it would be easy. That's the message.

Moses sends out the 12 spies to explore the land. Here's what they found out:



And then after surveying the land for 40 days, this is what they reported:

**“But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak!”**

Numbers 13:28 NLT

In life, there's a lot of *but*s: I am blessed *but*... I'm happy *but*... I'm good *but*... I mean, won't life be just amazing if you just said: "I'm blessed," period?

The reason we feel like we're not fully blessed is there's a *but* right after your *good* sentence. You declare the goodness of God but there's always a reason for us to complain. That was the Talk last week, right? How we always have this habit of complaining.



## Accept It: Life Is Difficult

Life could be good but there's always something missing. What if you learn how to live your life knowing that yes, life is difficult. But that's the way of life.



Bruce Lee said this: “Don't pray to have an easy life. Instead, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one.”

That's beautiful. Stop praying that you would have an easy life. Because the truth is the only way that God can deepen your faith and strengthen your resolve is if you have to face a few giants here and there. Amen?

The only way for God  
to shape our character and deepen our faith  
is through a few giant problems.

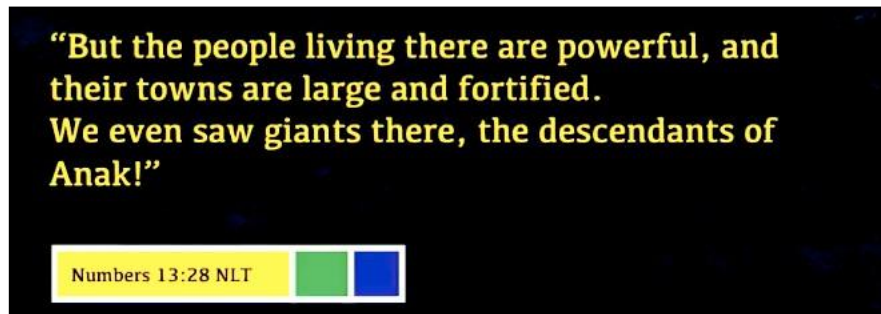
You've got to go through a little problem here and there. Otherwise, you'd have a weak life. If you never have to go through problems and your life is just full of rainbows and reindeers and unicorns and all these good stuffs, you'll never have a strong life.

But when life is hard, that's when you know you're strong. Because you've been through some stuffs in life.

So, don't pray for an easy life.



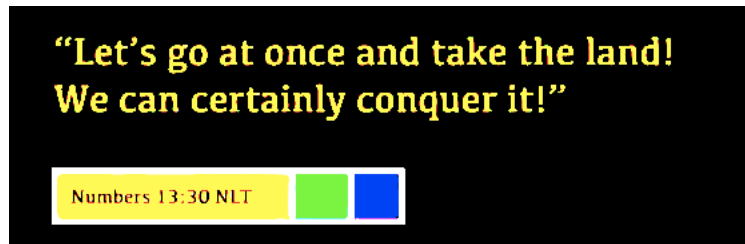
Let's continue with the verse:



You see, the Anakims, they are giants.

The spies were saying the land was filled with milk and honey but the people living there were powerful.

One of the spies hearing this report, about this complaint-- there's a guy here named Caleb, he's a bit different from them. He says:



He's a little more courageous than the other people.

Here's the thing: This is a lesson for some of you who are listening to this: Caleb is just one person. The majority is saying that the land cannot be conquered.

See, when the majority speaks, when the mob speaks, they have a loud voice. And even if it's the wrong voice, it can be a loud voice and it can swing you, it can influence you; it can impact you.

## Listen: How God Speaks

Meanwhile, there's only one guy by the name of Caleb saying, "Let's go and take the land. We can conquer it!"

See, the way God speaks... God will hardly speak in a loud voice. God often speaks in a whisper. Just like He whispered to Elijah.

Because it often means that God only needs to whisper because He's that close to you.

That's why you have to train your spirit, train your soul to listen to God's voice. Otherwise, if the mob is too loud, and the noise of the world is just too loud, it's going to drown out God's voice.

So: *Listen to God's voice.*

And then because of fear, the other spies say:



**"We can't go up against them!  
They are stronger than we are!"**

Numbers 13:31 NLT

Instead of focusing on the land flowing with milk and honey, this is what they say:

**"The land we traveled through and explored will devour anyone who goes to live there. All the people we saw were huge.**

**We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak. Next to them, we felt like grasshoppers, and that's what they thought, too!"**

Numbers 13:32-33 NLT

You see what they were doing? They were focusing on their fear. How many of you know that what you focus on *grows*. What you focus on flourishes. So, when you focus on your fear, your fear grows. But what you need to be doing right now is you focus on your faith so that your faith will be the one to rise up.



## Let God Shine

Speaking of giants...

Once upon a time, there was a guy named David. David faced a giant named Goliath

Everybody, when they saw Goliath, said: "He's too big to kill!"

You know what David thought?

And this is just my version:

David said, "He's not too big to kill. He's too big to miss."

In that situation, everybody thought it was an impossible obstacle.

But to David, it was an incredible opportunity for God to show His strength and goodness.



<https://pixabay.com/images/search/david%20and%20goliath/>

When you come upon your giant this week-- I'm telling you, this message is for you: Don't look at it as an impossible obstacle.

Instead, you say: "This is an incredible opportunity for my God to shine."

So, instead of looking at it from the lens of fear, look at it from the lens of faith—and watch how your Almighty God will melt away your fear.

God bless you.

I'm going to call on my very, very good friend who will preach the rest of the messages.

Please welcome John Ben Rodriguez!



### **JOHN BEN RODRIGUEZ:**

GOD is good. I particularly love it here at The Feast because we are never afraid to do the hard conversations. Do you love that? Because I believe that if there's any place where we have to talk about the truth-- even the difficult and hard truth—this is the perfect place to do it. Because we are in the Presence of God. And the truth that we get to absorb in the Presence of God and in the presence of the Community that is anointed by God, will help us navigate Life—so that we will end up victorious.

We can all be victors because today God sent again His Spirit to empower us.

So, let's move to the third message. The third message is this: *Don't switch God's labels.*

I love the discussion of Bro. Audee earlier because he was talking about the intricacies of how we develop truths—good and bad—in our mind. But to put it simply now, the goal of the enemy for you to fail in your life is this simple: He wants you to eventually call a bad thing as a good thing, and to call a good thing a bad thing.

So, if we go back to what the spies were saying, it's like the switch – what God promised is for the Promised Land.

In the Genesis 3 language, the spies were saying, “Do not eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life--which is God's Promised Land—or you will die.”

Does that sound familiar? Where have you heard it? In the Garden of Eden. But did you notice the slight fabricated difference?



In Genesis 3 language, the spies were saying:  
“Don’t eat the fruit of the Tree of Life—  
which is God’s Promised Land—or you will die.”

A brief review:

Genesis 2: 9 says there are many trees in the Garden of Eden-- with delicious fruits. And Adam and Eve may eat any of those.

In the middle of the Garden were two trees—one is the Tree of Life, and the other is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

In Genesis 2:16, God particularly said Adam and Eve may eat the fruits -- except the fruits from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

So, what the spies are saying now, they may not eat from the Tree of Life. But in the original context, God was saying they may eat the fruits from the Tree of Life.

So, you see the inversion. The spies are telling Adam and Eve: “You cannot go to the Promised Land—because you will die there.”

Remember what the Lord did in *Genesis*? Back then, in Genesis 3, the challenge was simple: God was forbidding them to eat something—they must not eat it. But they failed—they ate it. Now, the challenge is different: God is giving them something to receive – but they don’t want to receive it.

Receive it. Receive what God is giving you today.

That is what Message No. 3 is about. When people successfully interchange the labels, they become easily deceived.

So, warning: It’s easy to be deceived.

I heard of a story—a very sad story—of a couple. Both husband and wife are leaders of a prayer group. The husband is even serving as a Eucharistic lay minister.

One day, the husband tells his wife, “I’m leaving you for a younger woman.”

After 23 years of marriage.

The wife is confused: “What happened to you?”

The man answers, “Because I’ve been praying for this and I have never felt love so strongly like this for this woman. And I believe God wants me to be happy. So, I think this is God’s Will.”

Hello! It’s easy to say to the person, “Hello, are you drugged?”



## **Black, White, Gray**

Another story:

It's about siblings Bill and Mildred. Bill is a billionaire. Mildred is a millionaire.

So, one night, Bill approaches Mildred and tells her, "Mildred, I think things are not fair between us-- there's injustice between us. But to settle this, just give me a portion of your business."

Backstory: Early on, Mildred started a business and the business became humongous. So, now,

when Bill, the billionaire, is already asking for a portion of the business he does not even own, Mildred is confused.

She asks Bill, "Why are you even asking that? You're ten times richer than me. Why do you need the money?"

And Bill answers, "It's not about who's richer. It's about what's right and what's fair. You started your business with a little help from our parents. So, technically, we both own the business."

Mildred says, "No. I used the money I saved when I was working to start this business. You were never involved."

Bill insists, "Regardless. It's impossible that you built the business on your own. You got help from our parents. Anyway, give me a portion of your profits from the business."

You know what happens next?

Just to have peace in the family, Mildred gives a portion of her profits to Bill.

Yes, in Bill's mind, he was doing the right thing. The enemy had successfully deceived Bill to finally think: "What I'm doing is for justice. What I am doing is right."

I'm sure most of you here will say, "Bro. JB, that will never happen to us. Your stories are so absurd."

But I believe that is the very thing that the enemy wants to exploit within us—our confidence as we think we're right.

Because the reality is this: I want you to lean on this, to chew on this, because this is very important: Reality? Switching labels does not happen in an instant. It's a slow fade—black and white that are clearly separable become muddled. They become gray. You no longer recognize them as separate entities.

It's the little things that you allow the enemy to feed you that transition you to this path.

## Slow Fade

Very classic example: How does adultery begin?

Every husband here-- I'm sure that you chose your wife. You chose her because—as in a beauty pageant, she was Miss Universe for you. She was top among the contestants in your life, and you zeroed in to this one special and beautiful person – now your wife.

And I don't think, guy, you will just suddenly say, "I'll leave my wife. I will look for a new one."

It's always a slow fade. One day, in your office, a new colleague comes in, a beautiful woman, turns out to be your type, and she sits at the empty cubicle beside you. And she becomes your teammate, you are together during team meetings.

So, the enemy starts pouring ideas into your head.

The enemy will say, "I think you should get her phone number so that in case there's an emergency, you can text her... Oh, it's raining outside... she's going home... She has to be safe... Why don't you accompany her? Aren't gentlemen supposed to do that?"

And if you listen to that and give in... That is the enemy slowly trying to change your labels. And before you know it, as you say yes to those inversions... Boom!... One day, it's already full-blown adultery.

That's why I love this song by Casting Crowns—they are a Christian rock band whom I listened to several years back.

The song goes: *Be careful little eyes what you see. It's the second glance that ties your hands as darkness pulls the strings... Be careful little ears what you hear when flattery leads to compromise. The end is always near...*

Be careful with even the flattering comments you give to people of the opposite sex. Okay?

*It's a slow fade—when you give yourself away... It's a slow fade when black and white have turned to gray. And thoughts invade, choices made, a price will be paid... When you give yourself away. People never crumble in a day...*

*Families never crumble in a day...*

*It's a slow fade.*

Source: [Musixmatch](#) Songwriters: John Mark Hall Slow Fade lyrics  
© Sony/atv Tree Publishing, My Refuge Music



## Labels Shifted in Slow Fade

So, my warning today, another hard truth is this: Watch out if you are always justifying your actions. It's a sign they may be wrong already. Your inner conscience is revolting!

I believe that our conscience is always linked to the Holy Spirit, stirring us up and disturbing us when things are not okay. Because our mind will always find reasons to justify our actions.

Classic example: Death.

I don't believe any person here would want to be in consumer death as a plan: "Okay, 2023. This is my new goal to max out all my credit cards. I will start this way: Month 1-- Credit Card No.1; Month 2—Credit Card No. 2...

No one plans like that. But how does it happen? It's a slow fade.

You're tired after office work and then the enemy whispers to you: "You deserve that, girl... Splurge a little... You are sending your sibling to school... You are supporting your parents... You deserve a rebond.

I'm not talking about whether you have money that you can spend—if it is within your budget. I'm talking about spending money that you don't even own: "You deserve that... That's self-love."

It's not. Because the enemy can even use beautiful things—craft, minor inversions... Eventually, you end up with twisted meanings already.

The sad thing is this: When you have successfully shifted the labels in a slow fade manner, the enemy will begin to rejoice. Because you have switched successfully without you even knowing.

Let's help each other to guard each other's heart.

I love that Bro. Audee also talked about Adam and Eve in the Garden. Because I believe that even in the way we understood what happened with the Serpent and the tempting of Adam and Eve-- when I was reflecting on this, I was telling myself: Were Adam and Even that gullible? Just one urging by the serpent—"Eat this, it's okay"—they ate the fruit right away.

I don't think they were that gullible. Because first and foremost, they were made in the image of God.

I'd like to believe that the Serpent came to the Garden not in a form of a vicious and vile creature. Not like that. I believe the Serpent entered the Garden in the form of an unassuming kumare (co-godparent) to Eve-- with infinite levels of bad influence, and as a Marites (as a gossip).





### **Maybe It's Okay...**

So, one day, Eve goes to the Garden, ready to harvest the food for the day...

And here comes Mareng Serpent, saying: "Mars, good morning. What's your dish today? Mars, the mangoes are already ripe. Pick them up. Here, there are talbos ng kamote (sweet potato peels) ...Hurry, get some... Hey, Mars, look, this tree already has fruits... look so delicious... Have you tried a fruit? Try it."

And Eve will say, "Mars, cannot eat that. The Lord said we may eat everything — except the fruits from that tree."

The Serpent urges, "Mars, look, the fruits are very big. And they look juicy... Maybe it's okay to eat them... Fruits— healthy..."



<https://www.shutterstock.com/search/adam-eve-serpent>

So, I believe Eve had the integrity to say on Day 1, "No."

Day 2, Mars Serpent comes, telling Eve, "How are you? What's your dish today? Look at the fruits... Why don't we try them?"

And the days went on, and the days went on... until finally, Eve says, "Mars, let's try the fruits already."

You are not gullible. But still, you have to guard your heart.

This leads me to the fourth Message of the Talk today...



Let's go back to the story in Numbers 14:1-4:

"Their voices rose against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in Egypt, or even here in the wilderness!" they complained. Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle? Our wives and our little ones will be carried off as plunder! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?" Then they plotted among themselves, "Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"

Numbers 14:1-4 NLT

Be careful. I know you have good intentions. There's even this saying: "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."

So, be careful because if you share this message to others, you might be like the unassuming Marites Serpent who is already leading people astray.

Like these spies... De ja vu, like in *Exodus*. When they were grumbling in the wilderness, bad news spread. So, it's horrible to be back to Egypt and become slaves again. But I think it's more horrible to lead others back to slavery again.

So, be careful as to whose voice you echo.

As a preacher, I face this No.1 temptation—when it comes to arguments with my wife: I'm always tempted to use (preaching) language, telling my wife, "This is from God."

So that would already end our argument.

But I know I cannot do that – because I cannot muddle black and white. Because I want to still recognize black as black, and white as white.

Wouldn't it be nice if I just say to my wife, "God told me that you should not fight with me."

You know... and she will just obey me. Ha-ha.

No. That does not happen.



## Be Careful...

So, if you're giving advice to people (like somebody who is angry at someone), I believe you should really pray, "Lord, may I speak Your truth. May I not just fuel the anger, the hatred of this person."

And I want to remind you of this truth: There are always two sides to a story.

So, be careful. You might be hearing just the story of this person—and so you might be giving a not-so-true, a biased, advice. You need to hear the other side. You might be presented another view.

Especially if you're giving advice to a married couple.

Pray, "Lord, may I be Your instrument as I talk to this couple, so that their marriage may be strengthened by the advice I would give them."

Because sometimes, we tend to take sides.

Like, a wife comes to you and complains, "My husband does not appreciate me at all."

And you're like, "Hey, men are like that. Yes, go, leave him."

So, be careful. Which flame are you keeping ablaze?

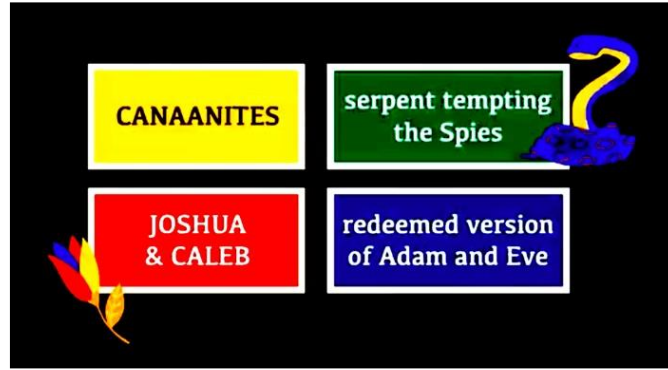
But there is Good News. You know, in the story in Numbers 14: 7-9, it's providential that there were two spies who echoed God's voice—Joshua and Caleb.

Here's what they said:

**"The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey. Do not rebel against the Lord, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the Lord is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"**

Numbers 14:7-9 NLT





## Back to the Garden

Quick hyperlink with *Genesis*—so that you appreciate the technicalities of the verses we’re reading now.

This is like, again, a *re-creation* of the challenge in the Garden.

The Canaanites—the giants the spies saw-- represent the Serpent. And Joshua and Caleb are the redeemed version of Adam and Eve—telling the people the truth from God.

But you know what happened? The people did not listen to Joshua and Caleb. Actually, the whole community began to talk about stoning the two (Numbers 14:10).

Then, the glorious Presence of the Lord appears to all the Israelites at the Tabernacle. And He tells Moses He would disown the people and destroy them with a plague (Numbers 14:19).

But Moses intercedes for the people, asking God to pardon them.

And here’s what God says:

“I will pardon them as you have requested. But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the Lord’s glory, not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again, they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice.”

Numbers 14:20-22 NLT

Now, that’s the main reason that the Israelites’ journey, instead of taking just 11 days-- from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land (Canaan)-- took them 40 years.

It’s because God did not permit them to enter the Promised Land. They wandered in the wilderness until they died. One generation lasts 40 years. So, that entire generation did not make it to Canaan. Only Joshua and Caleb were able to enter the Promised Land.

It’s like a replay of what happened in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve.



## Back to Egypt

But have you ever asked: If the Lord is good and loving, why did He not allow this generation of the Israelites to reach the Promised Land?

As I was reading this, I was asking the same question.

But if you go back, early on, the people were saying, “Lord, we want to go back to Egypt. We don’t want to go to the Promised Land. Our wives and children will be carried off as plunder and we will die.”

So, God was telling them, “Okay, if that’s what you want, go ahead.”

I think this is a reminder for all of us: And I love that we get to read verses like these.

**Be careful with what you want.**

Because honestly, when I first read them, I felt, what happened seemed harsh. Did you also feel that it was a bit harsh?

But I as was reflecting, meditating on the story, I began to realize that here, we see the maturity of God. Out of His love and respect for all of us, for our free will, He will allow you to do what you want...

God loves you and respects you. He respects your free will. But always remember this: free will and freedom have consequences that you must be responsible for.

## The Powerful Truth

I love what we're doing now—that when we're reading the Bible, we're looking at the entire context...

Like Exodus 34: 6-7:

"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."

Exodus 34:6-7 NLT



Is that right?  
Yes, it's right.  
That's how God is.

The continuation of that verse is this:

"Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

Exodus 34:7 NLT

Simply put, what are these verses saying?

God is saying: "Because of your free will, and the respect and love I have for you, I will let you do what you want to do. But I will not prevent the consequences of your bad decision from happening to you."

And God will forgive. We all know that.

But precisely because He loves us:

Wow. Isn't that powerful truth? Freedom has consequences.

So, I want you to really pray to God now, "Lord, whose voice am I listening to?"

Are there distractions in your life right now?

Maybe, like the voice of the Serpent telling you that you'll never be enough. Is the pressure of the world sounding so loud in your head that sometimes you find it confusing?

God will forgive, but precisely because He loves us, He will allow the consequences of our bad decisions— **so that we change.**

**Whose voice are you listening to?**

## The Good News



I'm here to bring you Good News today: We have something that the Israelites did not have back then-- that prevented them from entering the Promised Land.

Back then, remember, if you wanted to connect with God, you had to be at a certain level of cleanliness. You had to offer a sacrifice, you had to know the Presence of God. God had to be in the Tabernacle so that He could speak with you.

But today, we have Jesus.

God sent Jesus so that 24/7, you have easy access to Him. Whenever the enemy mentions something in your ear, you have easy access-- you may say: "Lord, I want to hear Your voice."

Imagine if you're like the Israelites-- and Jesus is not yet there—you hear an enemy whispering, "You have to get out, and find the Tabernacle, and pray."

No. Now you have easy access: That is Jesus.

That's why God sent Jesus to become in our form—the form of man-- to finally understand what we're going through... So that when we call out to Jesus, He will answer us and He will listen to us. But the promise is this—I want you to pray for this deeply today: You must be able to recognize the voice of Jesus-- amid the clutter of noise that you hear.

In John 10:27, we read:

So, today, we'll do things a bit different. We'll sing a lot of songs; we'll dwell more in the Presence of God. But I want your prayer to remain, and ask God, "*Lord, may You hone the ears of my mind, the ears of my heart. So that even when there are loud noises, or pressure of sin, of lies, of worries, of doubts, of fears, of traumas, I can recognize You.*"

I will now call Bro. Didoy to lead us to Ministry...

Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice..."

John 10:27 NIV

# Ministry Time



**DIDOY LUBATON:** On our Church's birthday, we would like to encounter again the Spirit...

The Spirit manifests in many, many ways...Some gifts of the Holy Spirit are through people...

So, we're going to have prayer stations around the venue. There will be prayer ministers, prayer leaders...

We are having this extra special time in this extra special celebration of the Church.

Fr. Albert said, *without the Holy Spirit there is no Church.* Through the Holy Spirit, there is Church...

Fr. Albert reminded us to unleash the Holy Spirit... You will never ever get to know what greater blessings God through the Holy Spirit is going to pour unto your life. Unleash the Holy Spirit today.

From Acts of the Apostles II: "The Holy Spirit comes on the day of the Pentecost...All the believers are meeting in one place and suddenly, there is a sound from Heaven like a roaring of a mighty wind storm and it fills the house where they are sitting... Then what look like flames or tongues of fire appear and settles on each of them and everybody present is filled with the Holy Spirit and begin speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability."



Holy Spirit You are welcome here



Pour Your Spirit out

Come Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit, we invite You, we invoke You...

We listen to Your voice. Come Holy Spirit. We need You. Come Holy Spirit, we pray for a new refreshing feeling from You. Come with Your strength, come with Your power, come with Your peace and gentleness. Come in Your own special way. We unleash You into our Feast... We unleash You, Your mighty work in our life. Come Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit...



## MERCY MINISTRIES

*“So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
but the greatest of these is love.”*

–1 Corinthians 13:13

### PAG-ASA NG PAMILYA FOUNDATION PART 1

## *Graduating with Honors*

By JELLY CORDOTO

WHEN I was in junior high, I cooked and sold puto (rice cake) in school to fend for myself because at the time, I was living alone in our family home in Antipolo City.

My father passed on when I was but a baby. We are six in the family—I have three sisters and two brothers. On her own, our mother struggled to raise us. Eventually, she got to have a new family and she transferred with them in Palawan. Two of my sisters were adopted by relatives in my mother’s side. One of my brothers was with relatives in my father’s side. The rest were with my mother.

So, I needed to live independently.

Looking back, I can say God has always been with me throughout those trying times, well providing my needs.

First, by His grace, I received financial support from a Christian organization.

Then, second, I learned about Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation. It happened that when I entered senior high, I became president of our Supreme Student Government (SSG). Our adviser, Ma’am Jeanne Marigondon, saw that my co-officers and I needed financial support so we could go on to college. She helped us find scholarship grants.

And so, yes, by God’s grace, I became a beneficiary of Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation.

I went to the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa, Manila, to earn a Bachelor of Science degree, major in Education.

PUP is far from my hometown, so I had to rent an apartment unit in Manila. With my Pag-asa grant, I didn’t have to spend much for my schooling. So, funds for my studies I was able to use for my rent and other expenses for my daily needs



## Pag-asa Honors

In high school, since I sold rice cakes, I was practically a working student. Looking forward to college, I planned to also be a working student— I hoped to find a job in a fast-food restaurant.

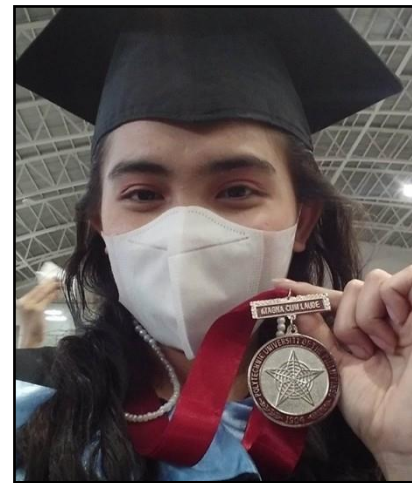
But with my Pag-asa scholarship, I didn't have to work. So, I was able to focus on my studies.

I worked hard to prove that I deserved the Pag-asa scholarship.

At the time, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID) Pandemic broke out. It happened that my classmates and I were working on this all-important research paper, a major requirement for graduation. The project cost money. And with my Pag-asa grant, I didn't have to worry much where to get the cash.

And bonus: In between my classes, I even enjoyed extra-curricular activities. I was able to join the College of Education Student Council as deputy secretary and as vice president for education and research of the SEED Network, an environmental organization in PUP.

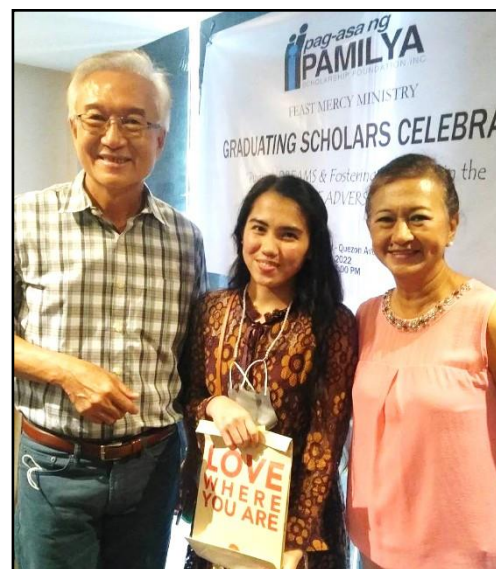
But of course, my priority were my classes. Yes, with not much financial burden, I was able to concentrate on my academics, So, little did I know, I was gaining high enough grades that come graduated time, I stood onstage with honor -- as *magna cum laude*.



In 2022, I received another honor.

Pag-asa honored my batchmates and me with the exciting Graduating Scholars' Celebration.

*At right*, during the awards rites, I am so blessed with this photo-op with Pag-asa Director Bro.Sam Uy and his ever-supportive wife, Sis. Marin.





## Blessings Amid COVID

Aside from surviving college, I count two major blessings during the COVID onslaught.

### First, Love

I met Anthony, the love of my life, during the Pandemic. You know, because of the lockdowns or quarantines to curb the spread of COVID, as employees work from home, students also learn from home—or what’s called school from home (SFH).

Among those students were the son and daughter of Anthony’s sister. And I happened to be their in-home tutor.

Anthony is a graduate of Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering and he works at the Antipolo City Hall.



### Second, Survival

At the time I was in college, my family got to be back to our home in Antipolo.

Amid the deadly virus and the economic crisis, my family survived. Not one of us got sick. And we managed to have food on the table and enough income for our daily needs.

*Ay right, here we are celebrating my graduation, from left: Anthony; my sister Cyra Mae Elig; yours truly; my mother Normelita Cordoto; my little brother Cybert Almine, and my older brother Kienlee Cordoto*

## Multitasking

Yes, Pag-asa is instrumental to our survival. We are deeply grateful.

Moreover, Pag-asa not only saw me through my school days. It has also inspired me to prepare for a brighter future. Yet, a priceless honor, I must say.

Pag-asa's advocacy has taught me that poverty is no obstacle to a better life-- that there's not just one but various ways for gainful living. So, I've grown to be a multitasker, very much on the go to embark on livelihood skills development.

When I was about to finish college, I applied for a National Certificate Training at the government managed Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). And I earned two certificates: my Bachelor's degree diploma from PUP, and a National Certificate in Dressmaking.

After I graduated, I quickly enrolled in a review center for the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers.

I attended the class during my free days-- Saturday and Sunday. While reviewing, I also applied for a teaching position at the Holy Spirit Integrated School here in Antipolo City.

I passed the LET exam and now, I am preparing to apply as a teacher in a public school. I am also trying to enroll in a masteral class, God willing.



## The Greater Honor

Since childhood, I've always talked to God as my parents taught me about His power and love, and that He would never leave me alone. I experienced this to be true through Pag-asa.

Since the Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation is a Mercy Ministry of the Light of Jesus Family, I naturally learned about its faith gathering, The Feast. And I've been blessed to attend The Feast, particularly the online session or Feast at Home, during this Pandemic.

During the prayer meetings, I've learned so much from the talks, and I even felt that the devotional messages are addressed specifically to me.

Now, I see that those challenges I've faced in life have been here to mold me for who I am now— with fervent faith in God and deep love for Him.

Yes, I graduated with honors. But my greater honor is my spiritual renewal. I pray my spiritual renewal will encourage others to trust and hope in Him, to realize He is really, first and foremost, our Pag-asa.

To God be the honor and glory forever!





## Thank You!

The Feast Family, now organized as the Feast Mercy Ministries, is a spin-off ministry of the Light of Jesus Family founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez. Earlier named as Kerygma Family, The Feast Family is a unique online, non-physical, borderless, international community of friends who support each other's personal growth.

Partner beneficiaries of the Feast Mercy Ministries flourish because of your generous support.

Thank you for being with us. We pray that you find your daily source of inspiration from the resources that we send to you. We pray too that you may consider giving to The Feast Mercy Ministries. No gift is too small.

Thank you very much in advance for your gift. Our prayer is that God will continue to reward you as you give.

### **FOR EXISTING DONORS:**

Thank you for the Love. Your monthly donation helps us continue extending support to our Light of Jesus spin-off organizations, including our partner beneficiaries. Your gift will sustain our operations and, we hope, help us reach out to the persons our Lord has called us to make disciples and give them renewed hope.

Be a Feast Family member. Write or call us. Now.

Email Address: [jocelyn@kerygmfamily.com](mailto:jocelyn@kerygmfamily.com)

Website: <https://kerygmfamily.com> Telephone Numbers: 8725-9999/

Fax 725-1230

# Our Partner Beneficiaries

## Jeremiah 33 Foundation

is a shelter for minor girls particularly victims of sexual abuse.



## Grace To Be Born

is a halfway home for pregnant women in crisis.



## He Cares Mission

provides shelter and pastoral care for street children.



## Pag-asa ng Pamilya Foundation

grants scholarships to indigent students.



## Jesus Christ Cares for Cancer

provides financial assistance and pastoral care for indigent cancer patients.



## The Light of Jesus Pastoral Care Center

ministers to those who are emotionally and spiritually wounded.



**H.A.I.L. MARY** is acronym for Healthcare Assistance for Indigents and Lepers of Mary, adopting the Blessed Mother as the patroness of its mission to eradicate leprosy in Abra within 8–10 years.



## The Light of Jesus Disaster Recovery

Ministry provides evacuation assistance, relief goods, financial aid, and other needs of calamity victims.

## The Light of Jesus Prison Ministry

brings Jesus to the Correctional Institution for Women to give them hope for a new life of dignity.



**Anawim Lay Missions Foundation** provides a home for poor elderly who have been abandoned by their family and have nowhere else to go.



## CHOOSE HOW YOU WANT TO GIVE

1. Donate ONLINE (through credit card) Go to [www.kerygmfamily.com](http://www.kerygmfamily.com) and click 'DONATE' box Paypal I US Donations.

2. Pick Up from Your House or Office (Metro Manila Only) Cash or Checks Address Checks to Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation and call Joy at (+632) 725 -9999 loc 112 or text (+63) 922-828-9890 and we'll pick them up from your home or office.

3. Mail 12 Post-Dated Checks to Our Office for US and CANADA: Address Checks to Kerygma Family, 848 Rainbow Blvd # 1937, Las Vegas, NV 89107. For Other Countries/Philippines: Address Check to Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation and mail (registered mail) to Shepherd'Ours Voice, 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109

4. Directly Deposit to Our Bank Accounts. Deposit to Shepherd's Voice Account in any branch of these banks:

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Banco de Oro Savings Account no: 3970019804 General Araneta, Cubao Branch

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Union Bank Savings Account no. 00-206-000940-1 Tektite Branch

Note: Text, Fax, or email us your name, date and amount of deposit, and the branch of the bank where you deposited your donation, or fax the deposit slip to us.

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# **FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE**

***The Feast Family* online newsmagazine is produced  
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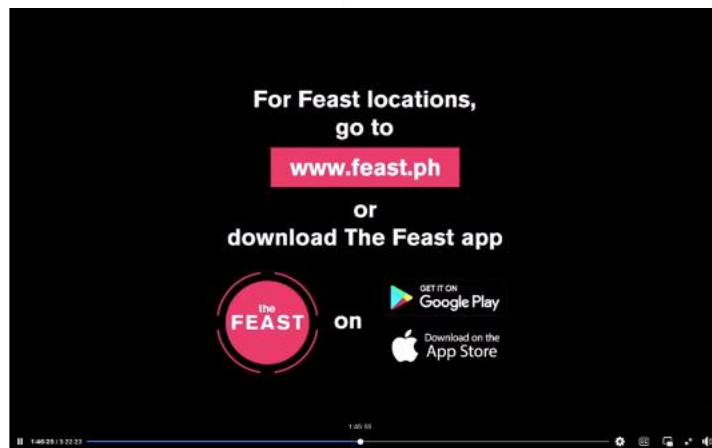
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*Go and make disciples of all men.*

— Matthew 28:19

