



NEWSLETTER  
August 6, 2023



## *God Misses You...Come Home!*

WELCOME to our brand-new exciting series, *Dear Prodigals*.

Today, as we introduce the series, you'll hear the simple but powerful message, "*Come Home!*"

Dear friend, have you been away from God?

Have you been avoiding Him?

Have you put priority on other things?

Have your distractions pulled you away from Him?

*God misses you.*

It's time to return to Him.

*God is your home.* Come back!

Return to the Lord. Run to Jesus. Because of what He did, forgiveness is waiting for you. A feast is waiting for you.

May your dreams come true,

**Bo Sanchez**

**WELCOME**  
to our new  
**Feast Talk series:**  
*Dear Prodigals,*  
our study on the book  
of *Deuteronomy*.

## *How To Be Rich*

WELL, we who are supposed to be already *with the Lord*, we know that to be rich is, yes, to be *with the Lord*.



Well, in his homily in last Sunday's Mass at The Feast, Fr. Joel Sason discussed just that: how we become rich. But he pointed out being *with the Lord* does not simply mean you cannot be poor. Confusing?

Fr. Joel told us more as he explained last Sunday's Gospel on *The Parable of the Hidden Treasure*, page 3.

So, if you're after that hidden wealth, stay on today at The Feast as we start a new Talk series, *Dear Prodigals*, which our founder, Bro. Bo Sanchez, introduces on page 1.

So, what are those that matter most? In the last few weeks, we already learned about them: *Faith, Family, Finance, Fitness*. And last Sunday, the last of the series: *Friendship. Flashback* by Bro. Audee Villaraza and Bro. JC Libiran starts on page 14.



One who can tell us all about being rich is Bro. Joe Dean Sola, longtime member of our Light of Jesus Family, and founder of He Cares Mission for Street Children--one of our Mercy Ministries partner beneficiaries. Ably supported by his wife, Sis. Ardis, also our LOJ co-member, Bro. Joe Dean has sustained He Cares Mission which continues to flourish on a sprawling Promised Land, page



Yes, we have a land the same as God promised to Abraham. Because we have the same God. The same rich God.

All for God's Glory,

**Randy Borrromeo**  
Media Ministry  
Executive Director





# FLASHBACK!

JULY 30, 2023

## Holy Mass



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Homily

**FR. JOEL JASON**

on the Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

*The Parable of the Hidden Treasure*

Excerpts...

THERE is a reason you are here. You are here because you are looking for something. You are here because there is a treasure that you see worthy of pursuing every time you attend our Feast gathering.

And that's our Gospel today is talking about.

The Gospel talks about people who are searching for true riches. And in the Gospel, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a treasure hidden in a field that a man accidentally finds and he sells everything that he had to purchase the land and to own the treasure.

In the next parable, Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like a man searching for fine pearls and when he finds one pearl of great value, he gives away everything that he has to obtain the fine pearl, the pearl of great prize.



## Who Is Poor? Who Is Rich?

Our Gospel reminds us that we are searching for riches and that we may find real wealth.

When is it said that one looks wealthy? When the person is well-dressed, stands tall, has smooth skin.

Sometimes, if you have no money, but you pretend to be wealthy, you eventually look well off.

But who is really wealthy? There are those who are actually rich but are actually poor. They have everything but they are actually poor.

And for this morning, this is what I would like us to reflect upon. When do we become really poor? The *poor* I refer to here is not the pitiful indigent-- *hindi lang yung mahirap, ang ibig sabihin ay yung kaawa awa*. It is possible that you are rich yet you are poor. *Yung mayaman ka pero kaawa awa ka parin sa paningin ng Panginoon.*

So, when does that happen? I propose three signs that indicate one is really poor.

### SIGNS YOU ARE POOR

#### 1. You Have Wealth but No Wisdom

Our First Reading is very beautiful. It is the story of Solomon.

And who is Solomon? He is the Son of David. So, he is set to begin his kingship.

But God appears to him in a dream—maybe in his prayer time.

And then God says, “Solomon, ask whatever it is that you want and I will give it to you.”

*Wow!* It’s like God is giving you a blank check—He already signed.

If the Lord appears to you and says the same favor He has given to Solomon, what will you ask the Lord?

What does Solomon say? “Give me wisdom.” The ability to *distinguish evil from good*. And the Reading says that God is so pleased by Solomon’s request that He gives him wisdom beyond compare. Solomon becomes the wisest man in the world that no other man may be compared with him.

And God gives him riches beyond any wealth in the world. Solomon receives not just wisdom but wealth as well.

## How You Become Rich

Ask for wisdom. Why? Because without wisdom, you wouldn't know what to do with your wealth. Without wisdom, you are not able to handle your wealth. That's why God was so pleased with Solomon because he asked for what is more important. Because when you have wisdom, you will know what wealth is for. You will know why God blesses us with prosperity. Without wisdom, wealth will consume us.

When do we become really poor? When we want only wealth and not wisdom. What is wealth for? Why are we given wealth and why does God bless us with prosperity?

Wisdom is what will enable us to handle wealth in a way that glorifies God. And when you do that, you become truly rich.



### Reading I: 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

*<sup>5</sup> The Lord appeared to Solomon, through a dream in the night, saying, "Request whatever you wish, so that I may give it to you." <sup>7</sup> Solomon answered: "O Lord God, you have caused your servant to reign in place of David, my father. But I am a small child, and I am ignorant of my entrance and departure. <sup>8</sup> And me, your servant is in the midst of the people that you have chosen, an immense people, who are not able to be numbered or counted because of their multitude. <sup>9</sup> Therefore, give to your servant a teachable heart, so that he may be able to judge your people, and to discern between good and evil. For who will be able to judge this people, your people, who are so many?" <sup>10</sup> And the word was pleasing before the Lord, that Solomon had requested this kind of thing. <sup>11</sup> And the Lord said to Solomon: "Since you have requested this word, and you have not asked for many days or for wealth for yourself, nor for the lives of your enemies, but instead you have requested for yourself wisdom in order to discern judgment: <sup>12</sup> behold, I have done for you according to your words, and I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so much so that there has been no one like you before you, nor anyone who will rise up after you.*





## 2. You Have Riches but No Relationship

There's a classic story of a man who asks the Lord, "Lord, give me a vision of Heaven and Hell."

So, he is given a vision of Heaven. And he sees that Heaven is a marvelous place, a big place-- everything is big, everything is upsized. There's a feast there and the people are all full.

Then he sees Hell. And he notes that it is not any different from Heaven. Everything is also big; everything is also upsized. He sees the difference between Hell and Heaven when the people are already eating.

In Hell, the forks and spoons are so big, so long, that the people can't put the food into their mouth. And so, food that they can't eat is just thrown away. So, the people look malnourished.

In Heaven, their spoons are also long-- long enough for one person to feed another person. So, the people feed each other. So, they are well nourished.

What is the moral of the story? In Heaven, there are riches and relationships. In Hell there are also riches but no relationship.

Do you remember the Gospel about a rich man who has a rich harvest?

He says, "I will build bigger barns so that this wealth will only be mine."

What does the Lord say to him? "You fool. Tonight, your life will be taken from you. Where will all these riches go?"

The word *fool* comes from the Greek word *idiot*—which means *one who is alone, one who is isolated*. That is the danger of riches. It can isolate you. It can steal you from meaningful relationships.

So, when do you become truly rich? When you want riches but also relationships. And when do you become poor? When you want only riches -- but it isolates you from meaningful relationships.

## Reading II: Romans 8:28-30

*Brothers and sisters:*

*<sup>28</sup> We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*

*<sup>29</sup> For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.*





### 3. When You Have Everything but Have Nothing

I remember Whitney Houston's song: *"I have nothing, nothing, nothing if I don't have you."* Alicia Keys also says, *"Everything means nothing if I don't have you."*

So, it's possible to have everything but also have nothing.

That's what Jesus says in the Gospel: to search for that fine pearl which is beyond all other riches. That fine pearl for which you are willing to give up everything because when you have it, you have everything.

Remember King Midas?

An angel appears to him and says, "I can grant you only one wish. So, think very well and I will give it to you."

King Midas says, "I hope everything I touch becomes gold."

And the angel says, "Wish granted."

So, Midas, he touched the wall and his walls became gold. He touched his table, his chair—they all became gold. When it was time for him to eat, his food also became gold. When his child approached him and embraced him, his child became gold-- and even his wife. King Midas had everything but he had nothing.

### Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

*R. (97a) Lord, I love your commands.*

*<sup>57</sup> I have said, O LORD, that my part is to keep your words.*

*<sup>72</sup> The law of your mouth is to me more precious than thousands of gold and silver pieces.*

*R. Lord, I love your commands.*

*<sup>76</sup> Let your kindness comfort me according to your promise to your servants.*

*<sup>77</sup> Let your compassion come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.*

*R. Lord, I love your commands.*



*<sup>127</sup> For I love your command more than gold, however fine.*

*<sup>128</sup> For in all your precepts I go forward; every false way I hate.*

*R. Lord, I love your commands.*

*<sup>129</sup> Wonderful are your decrees; therefore I observe them.*

*<sup>130</sup> The revelation of your words sheds light, giving understanding to the simple.*

*R. Lord, I love your commands.*

## Seek *First*...Not *Only*

Matthew 11:28 says, “*Seek first the Kingdom of God and everything else will be given to you.*”

Why does the Gospel say that?

It doesn't mean that God is against the world. No.

The verse just means that you shouldn't fall in love with the world-- because the world cannot give you God. But fall in love with God-- because God can give you the world.

That's why the verse says *seek first*. It doesn't say *seek only*. Because when you have God with you, everything else will follow. Everything else is secondary. When you have a living relationship with God, everything else will fall into place. You will have everything.

Tomorrow (July 31, 2023), I will be celebrating my 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the priesthood.

And whenever I celebrate my anniversary, that's when I'm reminded that a priest forsakes many things-- you will be giving up a lot, you will sacrifice a lot.

But you know what the irony is?

All that you thought you have abandoned, God will bring back to you and you receive beyond what you expect. They said you'll have to leave your parents— but everywhere I go, I meet fathers and mothers. They said you can't have a child and a family. But everywhere I go, children approach me and call me *father*.

When you find that pearl in Christ, then everything else is secondary and when you show God that you're longing for that fine pearl, God will bless you with even more.

My dear friends, that is the grace that you ask God: to look for genuine riches. We want to avoid becoming poor in the eyes of God. And when do you become poor? When you want only wealth over wisdom, when you want only riches but not relationships, and when you have everything but have nothing.

So, we pray for His grace as we continue our Holy Eucharist. Amen.







**BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:** Good Morning, Feast Bay Area!

Thank you so much for being here in spite of the rain, in spite of the inconvenience. You know, that's a great way to praise God. You praise Him in the storm. It's easy to praise God when life is good... When you got the promotion, when you got the girl, when you got the guy. But we all know that it's difficult to be grateful to the Lord when you're not the crush of your crush--*hindi ka crush ng crush mo, kapag hindi naging kayo.*

It's hard to praise the Lord when times are rough-- but it's when praise matters the most. That's when it counts the most... I want to thank you all for being here in spite of the difficulties in coming here.

You know, earlier, I was just witnessing people coming. They brought their children and their umbrellas.

I want to give you one advice that a wise man once told me. A wise man by the name of Bro. Bo Sanchez. But he's not here with me. I hope he's listening.

Two Sundays ago, I didn't want to go to church, to The Feast, because it was also raining. It was such a hassle to go to church. You wanted to stay in bed because it was bed-weather and you didn't want to get up and take a shower.

But I heard Bro. Bo's live stream podcast. He gave a piece of advice. You will never believe the advice that he gave.

He said, "It's going to be raining today so just bring an umbrella."

Sometimes in life, you're going to get rained on, it's going to be inconvenient but just bring an umbrella. Just be prepared! Just be ready.

Again, I'm so grateful that you came here!

You are the reason that we do church. You know, we have a rule at The Feast.

Day before The Feast, when it's raining, there's a storm, some servants would ask us, "Bro, do we have Feast tomorrow? There's a storm."

Our rule is this: Even only one person comes to The Feast, *tuloy po ang Feast*— We hold The Feast. That's our rule-- because we want to serve you.



## Love Offering

**BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:** Before you lift up your Love Offering envelopes, I want you to think about what you are praising God for today.

Maybe it's a bonus that you received this week. Maybe God healed you from your ailment. Maybe it's a little miracle that you woke up today because you are just grateful to the Lord.

When you lift up your Love Offering envelope, I want you to remember that God has blessed you today.

Let's pray:

*We thank You, Father, that You have blessed us so much more than what we deserve. We believe that this blessing comes from You because every good blessing comes from above. We thank You and we give this Offering with hope, love, and with faith. Thank You, Jesus!*

Say this with me:

*"Dear Lord, thank You for blessing me. I give this with a happy heart. In Jesus' Name. Amen."*

Give to the Lord today and let it be your act of worship.

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# Worship!

## EXHORTATION

**KRIZIA OCOMA:** I know it's gloomy out there -- so may you please greet the person beside you: "Thank you for showing up."

I know we come from different walks of life. So, there are times that we need to be reminded that God sometimes takes a long time to give us something good. Have you experienced that?

Sarah and Elizabeth waited for so long to bear a child. Israel took centuries to be delivered out of slavery. People with our faith have to wait for so long for the Messiah to come in flesh and blood.

So, right now, whatever we're going through, know that if God was faithful to His people in the past, what can now stop Him from showing us that He's the same God who can be faithful to us now and in our future. Amen!

So, I encourage everyone to be in the position of worship. Open your arms and palms to Heaven knowing that the God we praise is the same God yesterday, today, and forever.





FEAST BAY AREA WORSHIP

# SAME GOD

ELEVATION WORSHIP

WORDS & MUSIC BY BRANDON LAKE, CHRIS BROWN, PAT BARRETT AND STEVEN FURTICK

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# NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE

## DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

ARE you ready to receive a blessing from God today? All right, let me invite you right now to say this beautiful prayer.

In the Name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Come on, reach for the heavens right now 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'm God's beloved, I'm God's servant,  
I'm God's powerful champion. And because I am blessed, I am blessing the world.  
In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# Talk



**BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:** I'm going to open the Talk for today. I pray that you receive this with an open heart. Because if you remember, we're still in our Mini-Series called *What Matters Most*.

What matters most to you? Is it your *Faith*? Is it your *Family*? Your *Finance*? Your *Fitness*?

Here's the last one we're going to talk about: The fifth essential that you need in life: It's called *Friendship*.

How many of you here are introverts? What are introverts? That's a good question. I'll show you what introverts are like:



The last photo I can really relate to.

## **From Introvert...**

I'm an introvert, believe it or not. I'm like the type of person who enjoys being by himself. I like dating myself. When I was single, I used to love going to the movies by myself.

Are you like that?

And if you're an introvert, it's okay for you to eat alone in public places. You don't mind doing that. You don't mind people looking at you if you're alone by yourself. And you can do that for hours.

You know, when I was young, you could bring me to a playground, bringing just one toy, and you could leave me there for hours. I could create a multiverse in that playground. That's what I was.



## **...to Disciple**

But you know, something happened when I grew up and when I entered into (the Light of Jesus) Community.

Community life is so different especially for introverts like me. Because all of a sudden, all of these people just started coming and started knocking on your door and they want to get to know you, they want to get into your life-- and it was hard. It's hard being in Community when you're an introvert.

But I realized something: That when I believed and I embraced the life of being a disciple, and I realized that the Lord also wanted to disciple me, you know what the one thing I finally understood? It's that how in the world will I be able to disciple people if I don't like people, if I don't open my life to people?





Here's the truth that you can take home today: Discipleship is relationship. If you look at the model of Jesus, the life that He modeled and He showed us, you will see what the first thing He did to start His Ministry.

You want to know the first thing that He did? He didn't perform miracles. He didn't show that He was God.

You know the first thing that He did, He looked for people. He looked for 12 guys. And you know the way that He invited them? He befriended them. He was not in a rush, not in a haste. He built a relationship around His disciples. That's how He started.

And this is the lesson for us. I'll give you **Two Quick Lessons**:

### 1. You need friends.

First lesson is this -- and this is for all the introverts—you need friends. I mean that's basic in life. No man is an island.

But here's a second lesson for all the extroverts:

### 2. You don't need many, just a few good ones.

You need friends, yes. But you don't really need a lot. You just need a few good friends.





## How To Disciple People

Turn to the person beside you and tell that person: “You need just me.”

Because that’s the truth. I mean look at Jesus. Jesus had followers, yes. A multitude wanted to follow Jesus. But here’s the key: He had many followers but he had only a few close friends—the people that He kept around Him. He had 12, by the way.

The Bible says that when one time, Jesus went up the mountain and He transfigured, how many friends he had with Him? Only 3. When He went to the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader, to heal his daughter, how many persons were with Him? Only 3. So, Jesus even cut the group—the 12 persons He trusted and walked with. But here’s something that you need to learn: it’s not an assurance that if you’re friends with people that they’re real friends with you. I mean look at Judas. Judas betrayed Jesus. And it’s okay—that’s the lesson. It’s okay that if you’re not close to the person who’s close to you -- it’s okay. Why? Because you’re not really meant to give access to everybody.

That’s how you disciple people. Jesus, when He came into the world, He did not disciple the world. How many did He disciple? It is said, at one point, there were 500 disciples.

Now, question: There were probably already thousands, hundreds of thousands of persons living back then. Jesus was able to disciple only 500. You know who disciplined the others? It was His disciples who spread the Gospel all over the world.

So, your lesson for today is this: Yes, you need friends, you need people to walk with, you need accountability partners. But you don’t really need a lot. You need just very close persons—quality friends who you can walk with, who you can journey with, who really know who you are, who can pray for you.

Are you grateful for real friends? Do you have real friends with you right now? Praise God. Clap for those friends.

That’s what we’re going to talk about today. And I’m so grateful to be here in front of you because I get to introduce a real friend of mine who will preach to you, who will bless you, who will inspire you.

I’d like to call on none other than one of our Builders here at The Feast, Coach JC Libiran. Give him a big, big hand, Everyone.

# Talk



**COACH JC LIBIRAN:** Thank you, Auds. Thank you, Everyone, for being here—against all odds. So, let’s applaud the Lord and each other.

And I really believe that however bad the climate is, our God is more than good. That’s how God is good to each one of us.

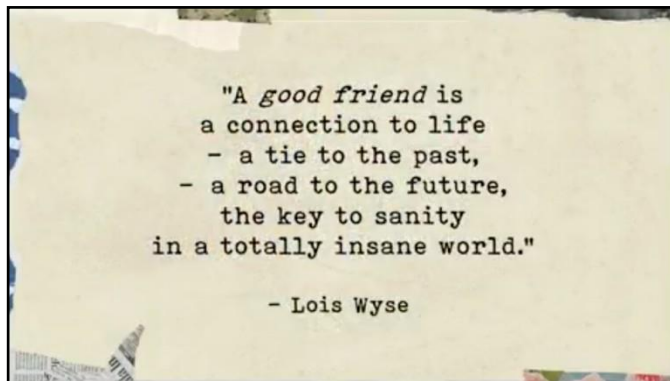
Today, we are excited. Just before we jump into reading our Word, our message for today, we want to celebrate our relationships. It has been a great, great time for us in this series, *What Matters Most*.

So far, now we have been able to discuss the first four topics of the series: *Faith*—putting our faith in God; *Family*—making God the center of our family; *Fitness*—how important it is to have self-care and taking care of others; and we talked about *Finances*.

And today, we’re going to talk about *Friendship*. That’s why, here at The Feast, we want to celebrate our friendship.

I love this quote from author and columnist Lois Wyse:

*“A good friend is a connection to life -- a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity in a totally insane world.”*



## Priceless Gift

Saint Thomas Aquinas, one of our great doctors of the Church, said, *“There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.”*

Pope Francis even tweeted this: *“Friendship is one of life’s gifts and a grace from God. Faithful friends who stand at our side in times of difficulty, are a reflection of the Lord’s love, His gentle and consoling presence in our lives.”*

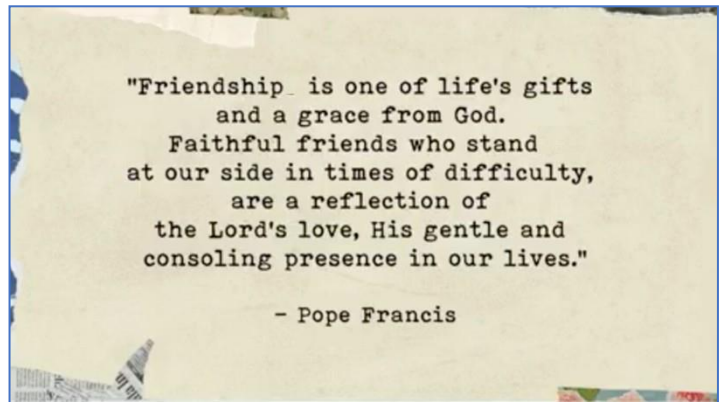
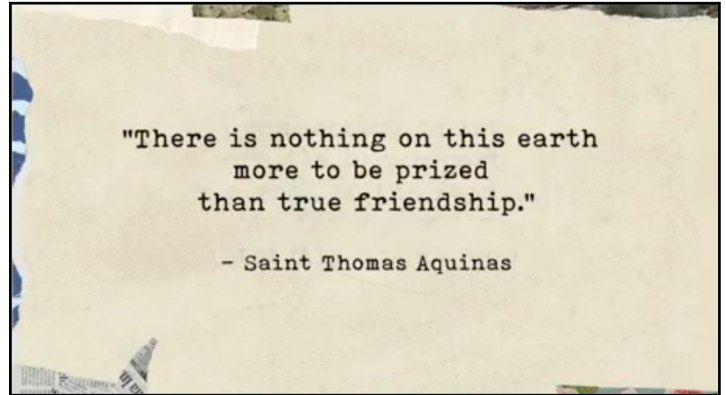
My dear friends, I remember, my daughter Yana, whenever my wife Milen and I bring her here, to The Feast, at the backstage, she plays around, makes friends with kids, and even with grownups— sharing her food, toys, friendship bracelets, and even asking them to sign her Slum Book.

How come, Yana, young as she is, makes friends easily?

How come, we grownups, we have become strangers to one another?

And we are drifting away from our most important relationships.

I feel like, my dear friends, maybe we’ve been hurt, maybe at some point, somehow, there’s no longer trust between one of our friends and us. There’s toxicity, negativity. And maybe the reason we have built walls. We’re no longer connected—we’re disconnected from that friend.





Today, our one big message is this: God calls you to celebrate His friendship to the world.

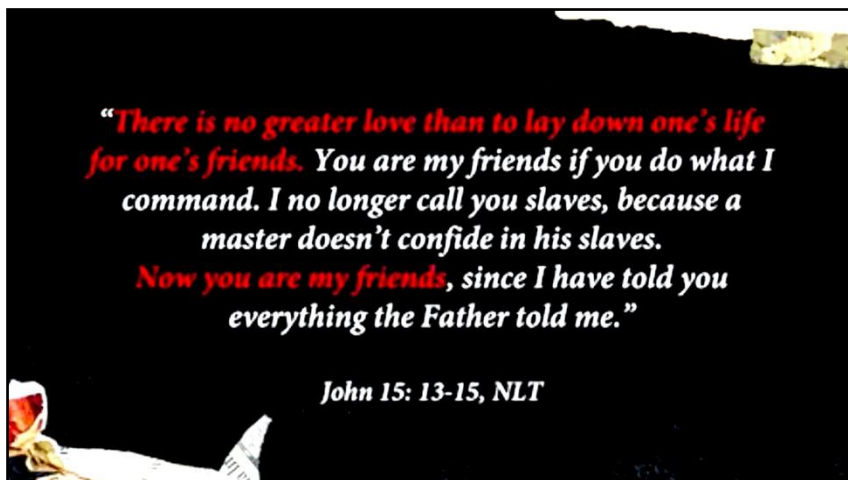
The question is: Are you ready to celebrate His friendship in your life?

Let's now serenade the Word of God.

Together we sing:

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

This brings us to the Gospel of John 15: 13-15:



This is already the Lord telling you: That you're no longer a slave. You are a friend of God.

If you want, clap for that and just acknowledge it. Celebrate that!

## Friends

In the Scriptures, we see, particularly in the Old Testament, in 1 Samuel 20: 41-42, the friendship of David and Jonathan.

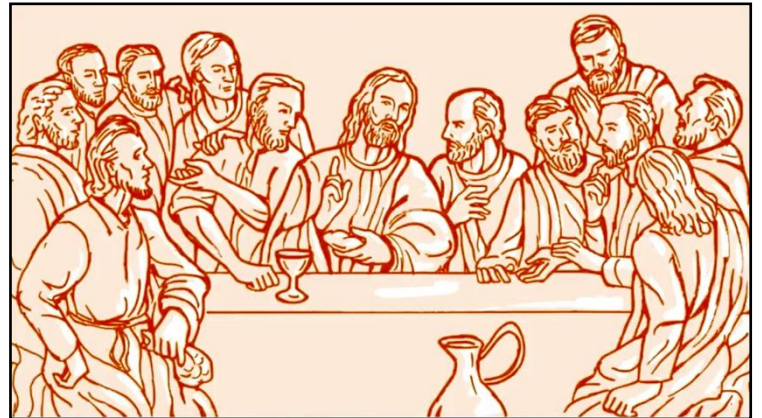
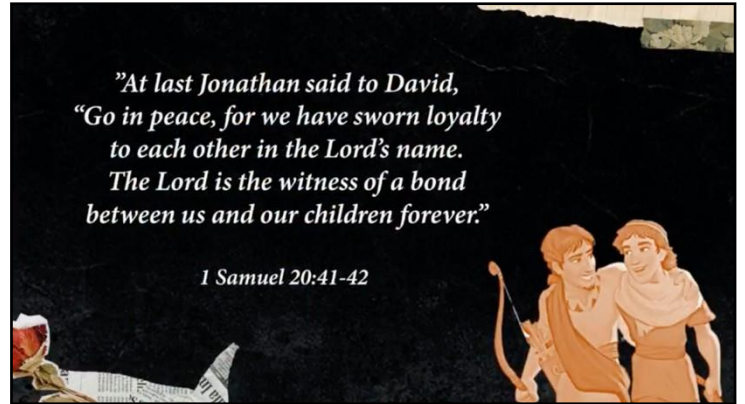
We have been into The Feast series on *Wilderness*. Where we have seen the covenant of God—the friendship of Yahweh with His people, Israel.

In the Gospels, we see Jesus having friends-- His disciples.

And up until today, in our Church, here at The Feast, we welcome you home where you are loved—because we celebrate God’s friendship today.

Amen.

Friends, I ask you once again, let’s serenade the Word of God:



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



## Real Talk

You know, we've been talking about what matters most to us.

But Real Talk: I want you to look at these photos-- and I'm sure you're familiar with some of them: Anthony Bourdain, Marilyn Monroe, Moon Bin, Goo Hara, and Robin Williams.

They were popular celebrities. They gained a lot of success. And they knew a lot of people. But how come, still they felt alone, lonely. And they took their life.

That's why, my dear friends, in this fractured world where loneliness is an epidemic, we really need companions. We really need friends.

That's why our greatest blessing is the fortune of having good friends, being loved and loving others.



Yes, we're reminded as well of this viral video of 11-year-old Shayden Walker (in Amarillo, Texas) who went to his neighbor knocking and begging to have friends—after he was bullied.

The boy said, “I just wanted to see if you knew any kids around like 11 or 12, maybe, coz I need some friends—like some, really bad... What my life was like before, kids were manipulating me, and they would be my friends but when they ask me to do something horrible, I don't feel like they're actually my friend...”

Sounds familiar? With our friendships and relationships?

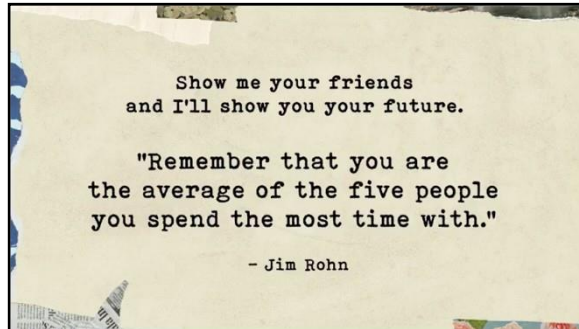
This video, uploaded on *Tiktok*, became viral. His neighbors even set up a “Go-Fund-Me” account for this boy. They were able to raise \$37,000 to launch an anti-bullying advocacy, *Shine Like Shayden*. Instantly, he had lots of friends--people who are complete strangers to him.





## Joys and Pains of Friendship

We also hear this a lot:



So, if you want to predict your future, show me your friends.

Are you happy and blessed with your friends? Are you with them right now?

You know, I remember the story about these four Catholic moms bragging about their sons. They were friends. They were discussing about who is the best among the sons.



So, the first mom says, “You know, whenever my son would come, since he’s a father, everybody respects him.”

The second mom says, “Whenever my son comes around, in a room, since he is a Bishop, everybody says, “Your grace...”

The third mom says, “Whenever my son comes, he’s a Cardinal, everybody says, “His Eminence...”

The fourth mom says, “Well, my son, he’s six-footer, tall, with broad shoulders, and incredibly handsome—so, when he comes into the room, everybody says, “Oh, My God!”

I’m sure we have the joys and pains now with our friends.

That’s why Proverbs 27:9 says:

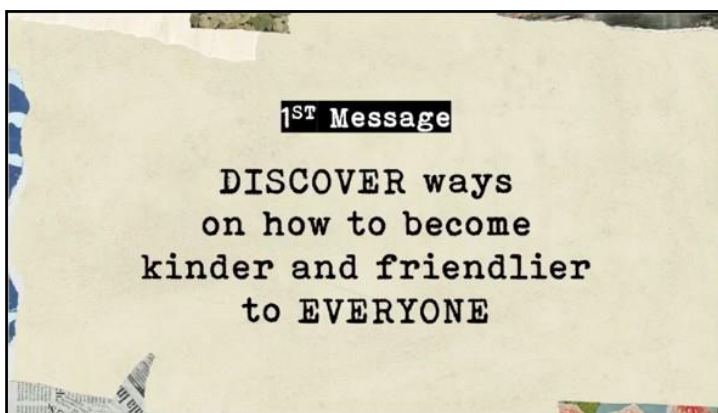


So, do you have friendships that refreshes you? Yes?

If you don’t have one, then start becoming a friend yourself.



Let me share with you three lessons on how we can celebrate God's Friendship to the world:



I don't know if you've come across one of my best-selling stories --that I made friends with my cellphone snatchers.

And true enough, I was able to get back my phone from them—because I respected them. By the grace of God, I befriended them.

Actually, today, I invited them here—look around... Just kidding :).

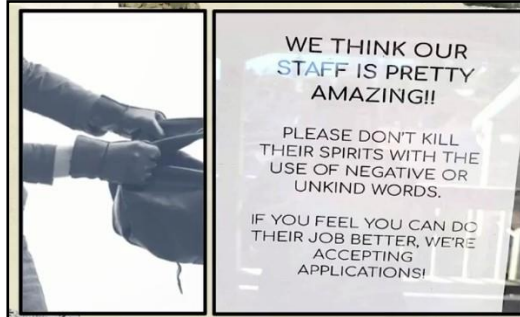
But yes, that's really a true story. I did something good to them—I was kind to them and they reciprocated that kindness to me.



## Who Are You With?



Maybe because the world that we live in right now is full of hatred, negativity, I even came across this in one of the stores:



That's why maybe, waiting in the line, maybe when you are in traffic, raining, flooded streets, maybe you're honking at the driver of the car in front of you—but you just don't know what the person is also going through...

Everybody is fighting a hard battle. Yes?

This is from my upcoming book, *Life Begins Today*:

When you're friendlier, your world expands. You can go wherever you want. Yes?

But when you have a lot of enemies, or "frenemies," you just cave in: "I'll just stay here because if I go there, I will see that enemy."

Recently, my wife Milen and I went to Bacolod.

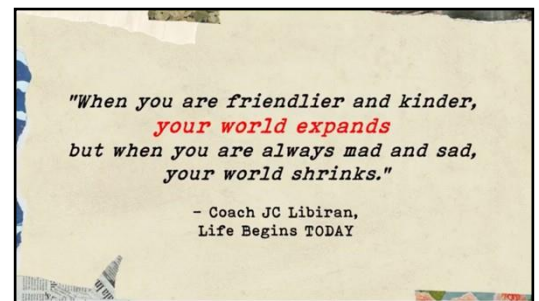
I facilitated a Team Building session for a company overnight. Right after that, the next three days we celebrated our Boyfriend-Girlfriend Anniversary.

We're now married—this coming December, our marriage is turning 12 years.

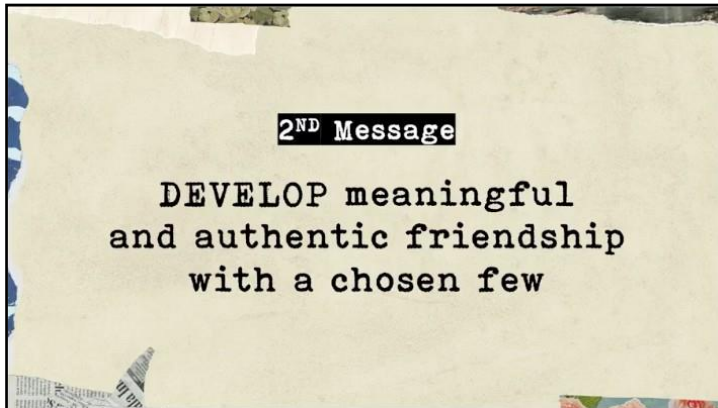
And you know, in Bacolod, I enjoyed not just the sites, not just the food. But I also enjoyed the company of the people with us. I met members of our Feast Bacolod there—they were celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary. And I also enjoyed reunion with my childhood friends.

So, we will always remember that trip not just because of the food, not just because of the souvenirs. We were even reminded that it's not just the destination, it's not just who you are becoming in the process. But *who you are with* in your life journey.

Are you a friend to the people around you? Or maybe, you're the one asking them: "Be a friend to me."



## The Chosen Few



You see, when I was in Elementary and High School, I was a social butterfly. I didn't have a solid group, or gang, or friends. I hopped from one group to another. And I enjoyed that.

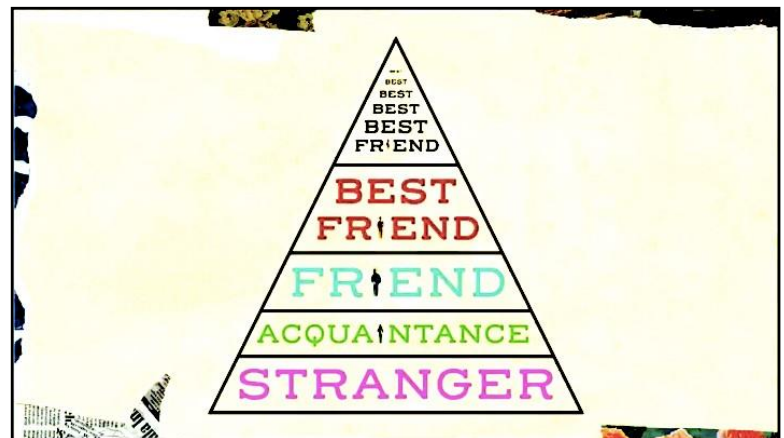
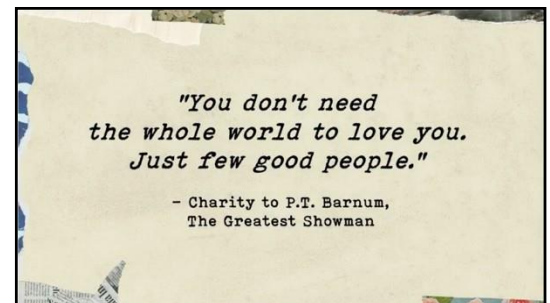
But I'm sure—this is also a common realization-- that when you are growing older, gracefully growing older, you're now looking for *authentic*, you're looking for relationship with deeper meaning.

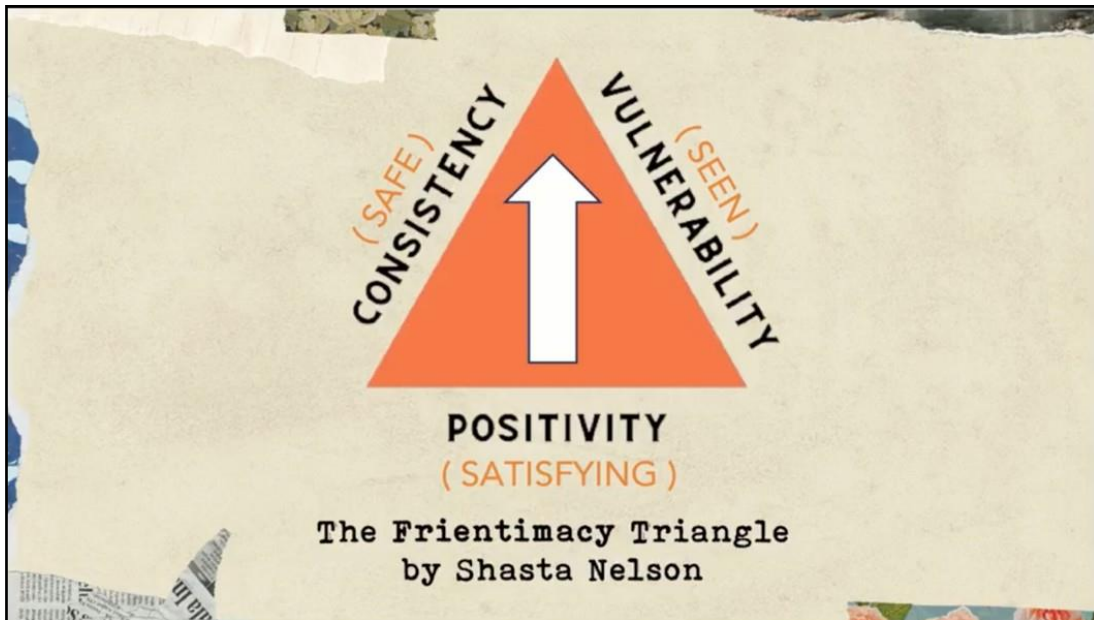
You don't have to reinvent the wheel, my dear friends, because the Lord Himself preached to many—thousands. But at the same time, He was also with His inner circle—with the disciples, with Peter, James, and John.

I remember, from the movie, *The Greatest Showman*, Charity said to PT Barnum: "You don't need the whole world to love you. Just few good people.

So, do you have those few good people? I hope you also wanted the chosen few.

And normally, when we make friends, it starts like this: strangers becoming acquaintances; friends becoming best friends; and eventually you'll have BFF—Best Friends Forever—beshies.





I want to share with you what Shasta Nelson shared: The Frientimacy Triangle. If you want to have a happy and healthy relationship with your friends, these are the steps:

**Positivity.** That gives life hope-- you love together, you smile, and you are satisfied.

**Consistency.** Eventually, you move up. Maybe, just like in high school, we meet together. That's why we remember our high school friends.

Here, at The Feast, we meet regularly. That's why if you're sitting always on the same seat, I hope you have friends among the people around you there. Consistency is important because now, you feel safe.

Do you feel safe with the person beside you?

**Vulnerability.** Eventually, you become vulnerable. You are seen. You open up—and this takes time.

You see, authentic and meaningful friendship doesn't happen overnight. It takes time.

The question is this: Are you giving time?



Right at this moment, I am inviting you to honor, acknowledge, even reach out to your friends. Remember, think, maybe you can text or reach out to your friend.

You can do that actually as I shout out to my friends: Randel Serrano; the late Ram Causing; Joseph Antiquera, Tony Valenzuela, Migs Ramirez, Audee Villaraza; my Light Group; The Feast Bay Area Builders; and most of all, my best friend, my wife, Milen.

You know, I'm just so blessed that God has given me this gift of Frientimacy.

I'm no longer jumping from one group to another. But I already have a solid, legit, group of friends.

Let's acknowledge our friends. Applaud them.



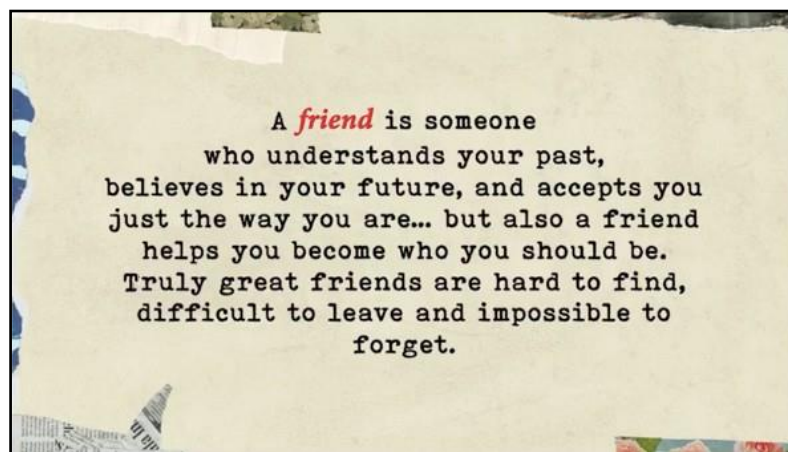


## Roof Friends

I remember the Gospel about the paralytic. For him to be able to reach Jesus, four of his friends brought him. And I call them roof friends. They did not just raise the roof, but they tore the roof.

You know, go the extra mile, so that you will be able to do the impossible in your life. For a moment, think about your roof friends. They've been with you. Imagine, they did not give up on you—despite your mischiefs. They're there—your friends are with you.

I love this and I want you to read this with me, together:



So, I hope we are not just surface-level friends. Our friendships are going deeper and deeper. As the song goes, you want to grow old with them. Tell that to your friend beside you: “I want to grow old with you.”

## On Sand...or On Stone?

I remember this story in the Jom and Terry show. They were walking in the wilderness and then they had an argument—and all of a sudden, Jom slapped Terry.

Then Terry went down on his knees, and wrote on the sand, “Today, my friend slapped me.”

And they continued their journey.

Then, all of a sudden, Terry, while walking, fell into a quick sand. So, he needed help. And Jom came to the rescue, helped Terry, and he was able to survive that accident.

And after that, he got a rock— and he wrote on the rock: “Today, my friend saved me.”

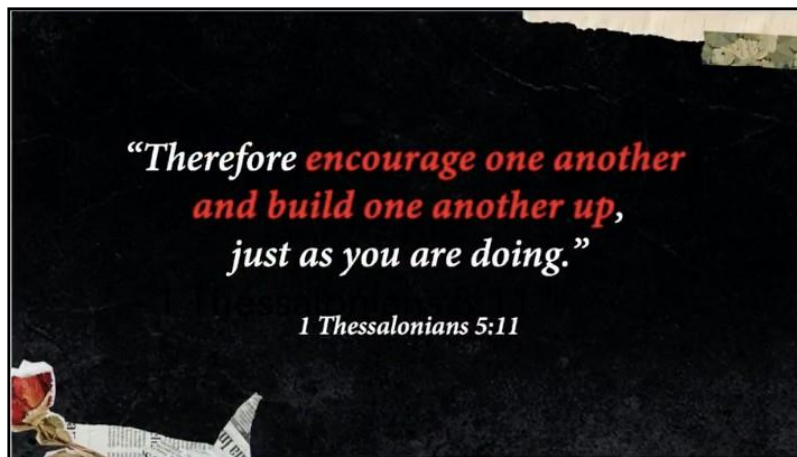
So, question: How come Terry was doing all these – earlier he wrote on the sand, and then now, he’s writing on stone. What’s the purpose?

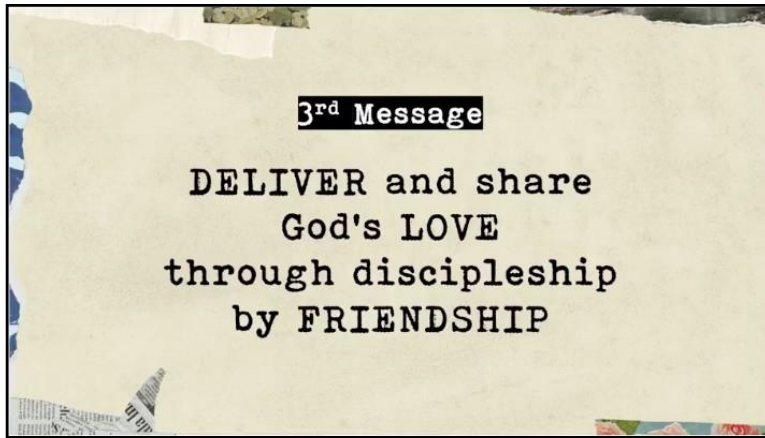
He said, “You do something wrong to me, I write it on the sand so that it will be forgotten. I’ll be able to forgive you. I write this on stone so that I’ll be able to remember the amazing favors you have done in my life.”

I hope, my dear friends, just like that, we also know how to forgive our friends and how to be grateful and celebrate the amazing people that God has given us.

Let’s give them another round of applause.

Just before I wrap up, I love this verse, 1 Thessalonians 5: 11:





You see, we come here at The Feast, and I know we are blessed. Yes?

Every week, this is our refill, our recharge. But we don't want you to just attend The Feast. Just to be an attendee.

I want to honor our servants. You see them here, or maybe backstage. This is more than just doing a weekly thing. But this is discipleship by friendship. We're inviting you to be together with us so that we can become closer to God. And as we become closer, right after our weekly service, when you go back to your family, to your friends, to your colleagues, to your businesses, to your advocacies, you know that you are meant for something more. God wants you to celebrate His friendship wherever you are.

I hope that we don't get to do this only for feeling good vibes, here at The Feast. I hope that we get to share it to the people who matter most to us.





*This photo taken by Photographer Tobias Baumgaertner received a prize in the 2020 Ocean Photography Awards presented by Oceanographic magazine. These are Two widowed fairy penguins that can be seen gazing over the Melbourne skyline.*



## Two Widowed Penguins

I love this photo. A picture paints a thousand words. It's very cute. This photo, taken by photographer Tobias Baumgaertner, received a prize in the 2020 Ocean Photography Awards presented by *Oceanographic* magazine. These are two widowed fairy penguins that can be seen gazing over the Melbourne skyline.

Wow. How sweet.

*The older female penguin who is lighter lost her companion that year 2020.  
The younger penguin who is darker lost his partner in 2018.  
They gather each night to offer support to one another, and biologists have been watching them.  
Together, they stand for hours while observing the lights.  
Sometimes more than words, it's the presence and support that matters most.*



But let's zoom in.

The older female penguin, who is lighter, lost her companion that year 2020.

The younger penguin, who is darker, lost his partner in 2018. They gather each night to offer support to one another, and biologists have been watching them.

Together, they stand for hours while observing the lights.



## ‘I’m Here for You...Until the End’

Sometimes, more than words, it’s the presence and support that matters most.

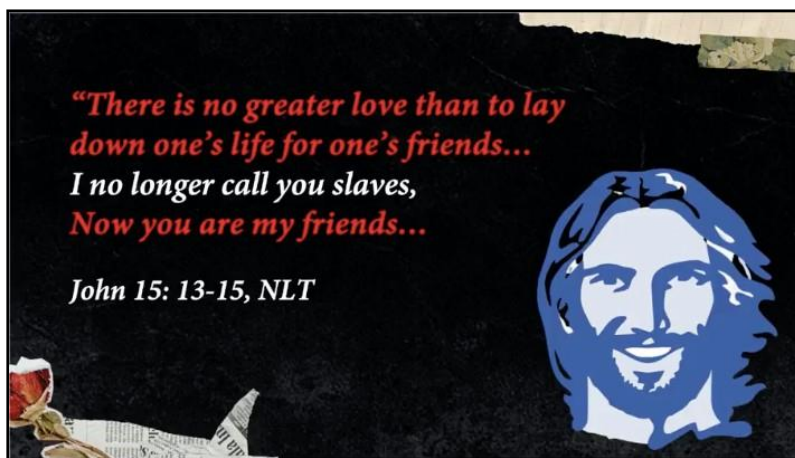
So, friend, you don’t need to give advice to your friend. Actually, sometimes, when you give advice, you inadvertently hurt feelings.

Maybe just what you need to do is say, “Friend, even if I don’t understand, I’m here for you—until the end.”

These are penguins, amazing creatures. But, my dear friends, we have a friend in Jesus. What kind of friendship can match that? Nothing.

The Lord is with you.

I love these heARTworks by real life forge.



God is there in your life—yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And it’s just reminding us that, “Friend, I’m here for you. I’m here until the end. The world may have abandoned you. People may have said mean words to you. Or you, yourself, you are too hard on yourself. You have not become a best friend to yourself.

The Lord says to you: “I’m here for you...There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. I no longer call you slaves. Now you are my friends... Set yourself free. You are meant for more. Now, you are my friends.”

Today, God is calling you to celebrate your friendship. Not just for yourself. Not just with the people around you. But God is calling you to celebrate His friendship to the rest of the world. Amen.

Let’s come before God, as we worship, as we celebrate His friendship. He has been faithful. And now it’s your time to respond—to be faithful to Him as well.



*Yes, Lord, you're so good. You're so good to each one of us. You've chosen us to be Your friends. You call us Your friends. Lord, I sin, I stumble, I struggle with our friendship. But here You are still choosing me.*

*Lord, thank You. I don't deserve this. But today, I receive You as my faithful, authentic, true, ultimate Friend.*

*And, Lord, thank You for not leaving me behind. I will follow You right here, right now. I declare and I celebrate Your friendship today. In Jesus' Name. Amen!*





## MERCY MINISTRIES

*“The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads  
me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths for his  
name’s sake.”*

—Psalms 23:1-3

## HE CARES MISSION

### *The Promised Land*



A NURSERY for all kinds of plant seedlings. An animal shed for piglets and chicks providing daily food. A campsite for spiritual learning.

This is the Promised Land of He Cares Mission, a non-profit organization for street children, part of our Mercy Ministries as one of our partner beneficiaries.

In this issue, *The Feast Family* honors He Cares Mission, which, founded in 1996, marks its 27<sup>th</sup> Year this 2023.

## Missionaries

He Cares is the story of Bro. Joe Dean Sola, longtime member of our Light of Jesus Family.

Once a carefree youth, Joe Dean, was one day short of cash. To have money, he called his elder brother Dan, an LOJ member, who at the time happened to be attending an LOJ Prayer Meeting at 56 Chicago, Cubao, Quezon City.

Dan told Joe Dean to come and get the money. Joe Dean arrived, had to sit at a corner to wait for Dan. As he sat there, Joe Dean inevitably heard the talk of the preacher which centered on God's unconditional love and forgiveness.

Long story short, Joe Dean experienced a spiritual awakening and so, he served God, first with Bro. Bo Sanchez at our Anawim Home for Abandoned Elderly. There, he met Ardis, also an LOJ member who shared his passion of serving the poor. They fell in love, got married, and continued living as missionaries.

From Anawim, Joe Dean eventually devoted his life to ministering to the youth in need-- like he was before. So, he founded He Cares Mission for street children and, ably supported by Ardis, he has well sustained the Ministry.

Of late, He Cares is developing a sustainable farm community in San Rafael, Bulacan, called the Promised Land. Yes, a land fulfilling God's Promise to Abram long time ago.



## Abram's Calling

In the Old Testament of the Bible, in its first book, *Genesis*, we read that God favored Abram for his faithfulness and obedience. God changed his name to Abraham, which means *father of many nations*. And so, for Abraham and his future offspring, God promised a land to settle in.

In Genesis 12:1, God said: *"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."*

Genesis 12:7 adds that the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, *"To your offspring (or seed) I will give this land."*

Historical accounts have named this land the Canaan, located in southern Levant, which is part of the Eastern Mediterranean region of West Asia.

Abraham's offspring, the Jews, or later called Israelites, became slaves of Egypt's pharaoh. But God sent Moses to set them free and bring them to Canaan, as Exodus 3:8 puts it:

*"So, I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, the place of the Canaanites..."*

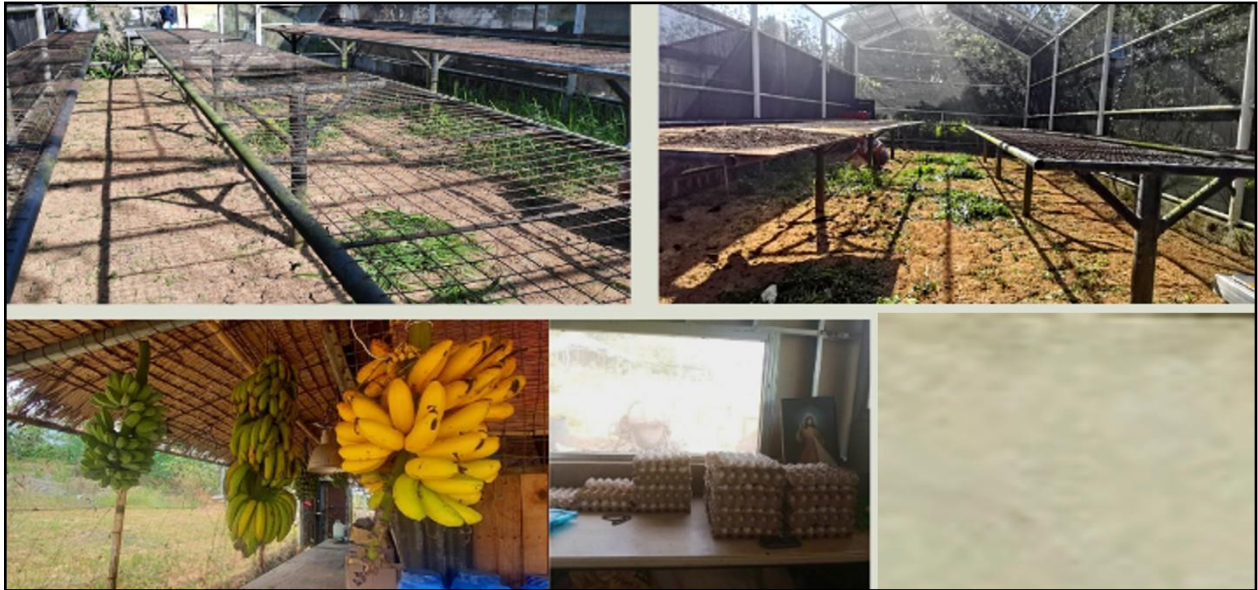
## He Cares Promised Land

Like Abraham's descendants, He Cares' children somehow had been slaves—not of an oppressive pharaoh, but of cruel poverty. He Cares Mission's passion is to set them free through a wholistic approach to loving the poorest of the poor.

He Cares Promised Land thus provides food, shelter, livelihood, and spiritual sanctuary for the children.

He Cares Promised Land may not be literally a land of milk honey—not yet.

But today, the Promised Land already has a Nursery for all kinds of seedlings to be planted.



The children as well as personnel of He Cares now enjoy fruits like bananas harvested from the farm.



The Promised Land also has an Animal Shed for piglets vaccinated by agriculturists with necessary vitamins to ensure their proper weight for their age.

There are cages housing hens providing eggs for the children and for He Cares' feeding programs for street children every Saturday.



## Campsite

He Cares Promised Land serves as perfect venue for training or other spiritual programs.

On February 16, 2023, 12 youth servants from He Cares Youth Worship Action Ministry (YWAM) completed at the Promised Land a nine-week Prayer and Life Workshop, a program where participants train to make praying and meditating on God's Word become a daily habit, and living out what they learn during the session.

Tagged *Paglalakbay Kasama si Jesus*, the workshop was also referred as Desert Day as each participant spent long hours in prayer and meditating on the Word, alone with the Lord and communing with nature.

Like how Jesus invited His disciples to withdraw from the crowd to spend time with Him. The participants spent the night bonding with one another, sharing experiences, praying, and singing praises to God. Early morning at dawn, the youth participants also learned and experienced how and why Jesus prayed alone, in silence and solitude, usually up on a mountain, to be with the Father.

They also shared how they could appreciate every creation -- the wind, trees, dogs, and more.

The loving Presence of God made them feel calm and peaceful, loved, being able to pour their heart out to God. Lastly, in response, they shared their written "Commitment ko kay Jesus" for their daily prayer habit, family, and service.

Yes, at He Cares Promised Land, they well declared, "Master, it is so good to be here." (Luke 9:33)

This way, He Cares Mission fulfills for the needy the promise in Peter 5:7 on which the Foundation has anchored its ministry: 1 Peter 5:7: "*Cast all worries to Him because He cares for you.*"



**FAMILY**

## **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.

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# 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.





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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's Voice, 60 Chicago St., Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines 1109

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# **FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE**

*The Feast Family* online newsmagazine is produced by the Shepherd's Voice Radio and Television Foundation, which is also our partner beneficiary, with editorial services by the Light of Jesus Family Library Ministry.

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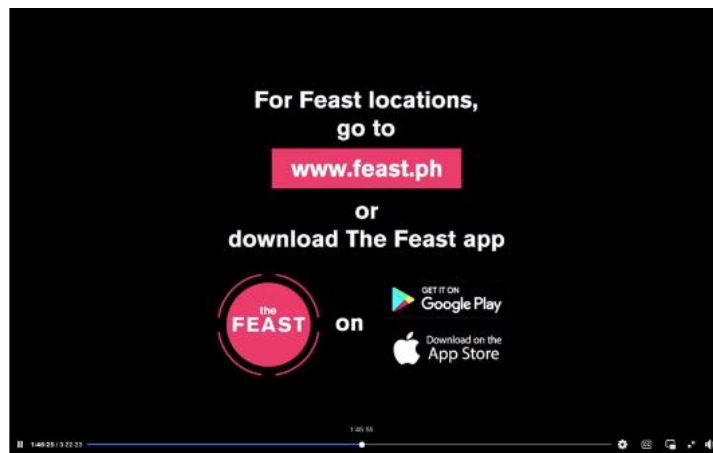
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***Go and make disciples of all men.***

— Matthew 28:19

