

Staying with the Signs?

WE'VE been learning much of these powerful, life-changing secrets now:

Don't just seek life. Seek the Life-Giver!

Don't just receive healing. Receive the Healer.

Don't just settle for the miracle.

Go for the Miracle Worker!

We continue our dive into the Gospel of John via our amazing series, *COME and SEE!* We've learned that John calls miracles *signs* -- and *signs* are meant to point and lead you to something.

Imagine going to Baguio-- and it's your first time. Looking for and following the signs that would say "To Baguio" will surely be important and helpful.

But who in his right mind would be totally caught up with the signs and stay there thinking that the signs are already the destination. Crazy, right?

Yet, this is how we people are. We choose to *Stay with the Signs*.

Think of the signs now as blessings and miracles-- a high paying job, a hugely successful business, a mansion, a fleet of cars, a position of power and fame, a strong, beautiful and healthy body, happy and sweet relationships-- and you'll easily be led to think that these *signs* are already what we want -- forgetting that all these should lead you somewhere else: to Someone!

Signs of blessings and miracles may also indeed make us blind to their ultimate purpose -- to show us God's glory and be led to Him!

In Talk 6, *Healing the Spiritually Blind*, we'll relearn the fascinating story of the healing of the blind man. We shall dig deeper again to what John is telling us: that more than seeing the healing, we should see the Healer.

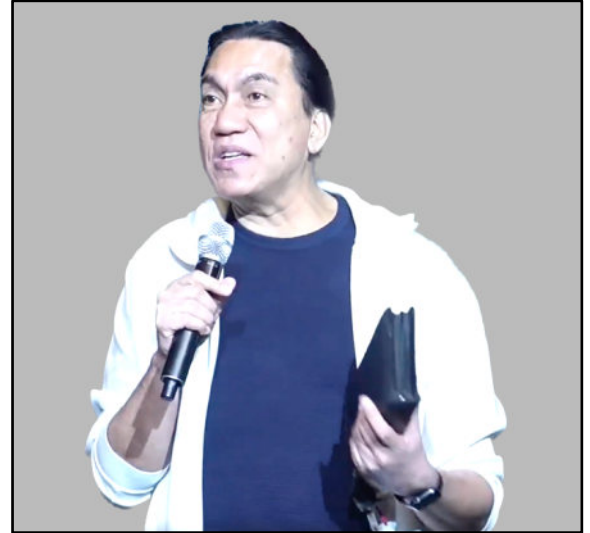
Get ready to *See Jesus-- He is healing you!*

Welcome to The FEAST, where *You are loved!*

Mayroong Magandang Mangyayari Sa 'Yo!



Alvin Barcelona



WELCOME
to our ongoing
Feast Talk Series:
COME and SEE
Talk 6:
Healing the Spiritually Blind

Possessions, Promise, Peace

THE war will go on. Sadly, that's what some news on the Israeli-Palestine conflict are saying as we close this issue of *The FEAST FAMILY*.

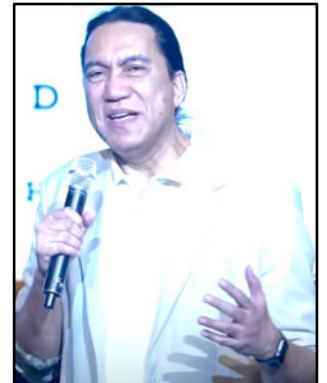


If you've been following world news, you know that an armed conflict is ongoing between Israel and Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, taking place in the Gaza Strip. And if you're a Bible nerd, you know that Gaza is part of Canaan, the land God promised to give Abraham for being faithful to God, *page 17*.



But it was not easy for the Israelites to settle in the Promised Land because Palestinians lived there and they were not going to hand the territory to the Jews just like that.

Can you give up your prized possessions just like that? Fr. Sherwin Nuñez asked the disturbing question as he presented at The Feast last Sunday's Gospel -- about the Lord Jesus telling the rich man to sell his possessions and use the money to help the poor, *page 3*.



That may not be easy to do-- especially if we see these possessions as *signs* of God's blessings and miracles for us. But Bro. Alvin Barcelona says these *signs* are supposed to lead us to what's more important for us. That's the gist of today's Talk 6 of our Feast Series, *COME and See*, which Bro. Alvin introduces on *page 1*.



Last Feast Sunday, Bro. Audee Villaraza presented two stories-- miracles that, yes, may make us realize there's more important than what we cling to right now. That's the topic of Talk 5. *Flashback* on *pages 16-27*.



Sis. Mhadz Pamaong says, indeed, we have nothing to fear-- because God's promise of abundance for us still stands, *page 12*.

News reports say the present Israeli-Palestinian dispute began on October 7, 2023, and since then, at least 40,000 have been killed and close to 100,000 wounded --including civilians, some of them children.

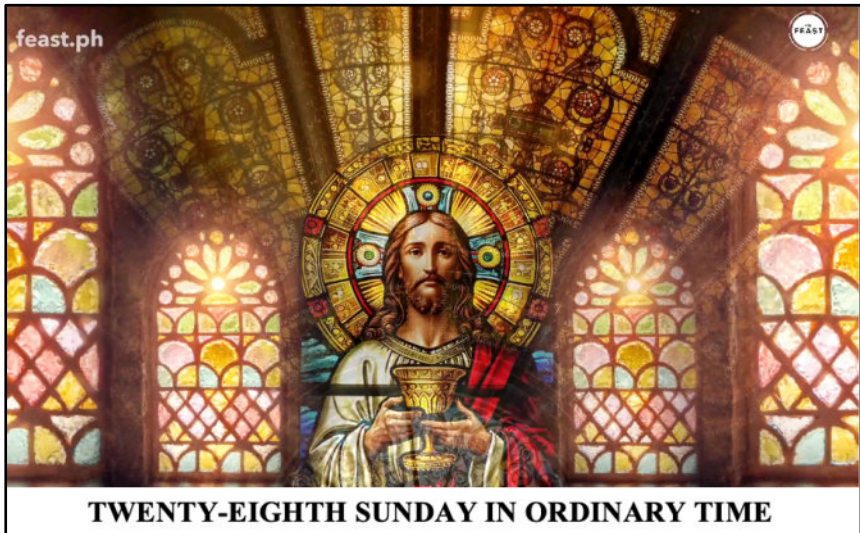
Let's pray for peace.

All for God's Glory,

Randy Borrromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director



Holy Mass



Homily

REV.FR. SHERWIN NUÑEZ
on the Gospel Mark 10:17-30

Excerpts:

Good Morning, Everyone!

Yesterday, I was asked if I could say Mass today. It was a short notice, but I said *Yes*-- not because I was excited to come here. I said *Yes* because those who invited me are my friends.

After saying *Yes*, I checked the Gospel today. I told myself that I shouldn't have accepted the invitation.

Why? Because first, the Mass would be here at the Manila Hotel. The Gospel is about selling your possessions and becoming poor.

I asked myself, "What will I say to the people who will be coming? How will I explain to them and give them the essence of the Gospel today?"

I ask you now: Would you sell your possessions just to follow God?

That is a very tough question. I think you have chosen the wrong priest because I'm a missionary. I'm a religious. I have a vow of poverty.

Possessions to Give Up

Your possessions, however, may not immediately be the wealth or the material things that you have. It could be the many other things.

For example, in the past, I wouldn't accept Masses that would be held far from our place.

Why? Because I had a very prized possession: my hair. It used to be longer, but it was thin. If I rode a motorcycle, the helmet would deform my hair. Once I get to the place where I would be saying the Mass, I would be so concerned about how I looked.

But a month ago, I told myself that it's time to shave my hair so that I could follow Christ wherever He wants me to go.

Your possessions could be something that hinders you to come here. I don't know what it is-- but whatever it is that hinders you from coming here, I hope that today, you will tell God: "Lord I'm ready to give up these things because I want to follow You closely."

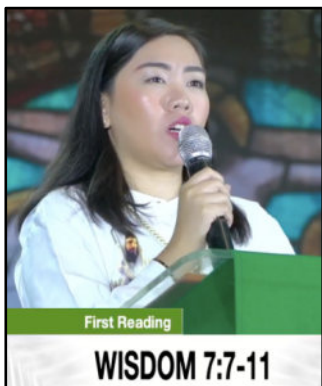
I don't know what it is but I'm sure that you're here because you are seeking something that you could not find in the work that you have. Am I right?

You could be looking for something that you cannot find in the neighborhood.

Although we know that God is present everywhere, but our First and our Second Readings talk about trying to search for wisdom.

In the First Reading, in the *Book of Wisdom*, Solomon tells us to choose wisdom. Because once you have wisdom, everything follows-- wealth, friends, joy, and the life that you want.

Because without God, it's quite difficult to live a good life.



First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24

7 I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of wisdom came to me. 8 I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her, 9 nor did I liken any priceless gem to her; because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire. 10 Beyond health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than the light, because the splendor of her never yields to sleep. 11 Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands.

Know the Commandments

In the Gospel of Mark today, there was a young man who was not named.

He asked Jesus: "What must I do to inherit the Kingdom of God? How do I enter Heaven?"

The answer of Jesus was quite surprising.

Jesus said, "You have to know the Commandments."



The TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shall not have strange gods before me.
2. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Keep the Sabbath holy.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shall not kill.
6. Thou shall not commit adultery.
7. Thou shall not steal.
8. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Bible Source: Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5: 6-21

Are you still following the Commandments? I hope that you still know the Ten Commandments in order.

Jesus added, "If you follow the Commandments, you will be fine."

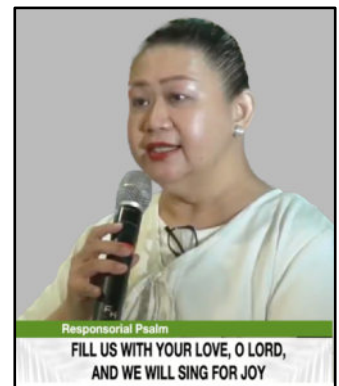
The man said, "Yes, I have followed them."

But the challenge of Jesus did not end with the Commandments. Because the Commandments would only make us religious people.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17)

R: Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. 13 Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants! (R) 14 Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days. 15 Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil. (R) 16 Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by their children; 17 and may the gracious care of the Lord our God be ours; prosper the work of our hands for us! Prosper the work of our hands! (R)



Responsorial Psalm
FILL US WITH YOUR LOVE, O LORD,
AND WE WILL SING FOR JOY



How To Get to Heaven

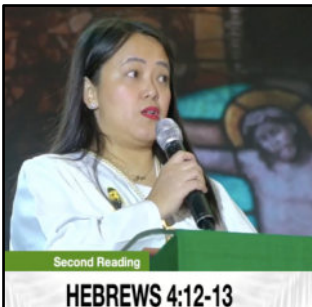
How about you? Are you religious? You must admit that you are religious because you are following the Commandments. You came here today because you are religious.

Jesus is saying, "Go beyond religiosity."

Being religious means that you come to church because the Church tells you that you should come. You go to Confession because the Church tells you that you should go.

Religiosity is doing what's required of us by the Church. We do those things because we were told to do so. But Jesus is challenging the young man to sell his possessions, to go beyond religiosity, and to follow the Commandments.

What must he do to inherit God's Kingdom? Sell his possessions. What are those possessions? I don't know. It may not be just the material wealth.



Second Reading: Hebrews 4:12-13

12 Brothers and sisters: Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. 13 No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.



The Lord's Challenge

Jesus is challenging the man to go beyond the boundaries.

Don't be just kind by being religious, by coming to church, by praying, by being obedient, and by being respectful.

Be a spiritual person because when you become one, you become a good person.

What do good persons do? They are not controlled and governed by rules, but they are governed by their love to the One that they are related to and that is God.

I hope that you're not just good while you're here at The Feast. I hope that you're still a good person once you leave this place.

Because that is the challenge of God for all of us today.

Our poverty must be our total dependence on the power of God to heal us, to be with us, and to guide us.



I'm not telling you to give up your material possessions-- because that's very dangerous. It's too expensive to come here if you don't have money. How can we minister to those who are working? We need those.

But God is just telling you to be a spiritual person who knows how to depend on Him-- so that you can continue to share whatever He has given you.

You are in the right place.

Reflection

Lastly, I would like to tell you that I've been a formator in the seminary for almost nine years. I've never been assigned in a parish and I'm praying that I will not be assigned very soon because I have hypertension. I don't want to die young.

I've been telling our seminarians that since I am a missionary, we have the vow of poverty.

I've been telling our seminarians: "Do not interpret poverty literally. Because if you tell people that you are poor so that you'll be given money, then you will go to hell.

Tell them that you are poor because you believe that God would always provide in times that you are needing something.

Look at yourself. If you tell yourself, "I'm very poor. I could not give anything..." look at how big you have grown. You're not getting fat. You're just becoming healthy.

I always tell our seminarians to be grateful to God.

Do not use poverty as a means for you to enrich yourself materially. But use your poverty to always tell God that no matter how much you have, you want to depend on Him because you know that He is the author of everything.



And He is the sole source and the reason for us to attain eternal life--as the young man in the Gospel was actually desiring.

My dear Feasters, as you reflect on God's Word today, tell yourselves:

"Lord, am I just a religious person who follows whatever is given to me? Or am I already a spiritual person who could exist with You even when no one is telling me what to do... Because I have a personal relationship with You?"

Welcome!



BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

Good Morning, Everybody! Can you give the Lord a big hand, right now? Come on. Somebody, give Him a shout, a praise. Thank Him, today. Amen.

We are jampacked in this session. Praise God! Can you clap your hands for the person standing next to you? You don't know the context of what they are going through and what life is throwing at them, but Thank God, they are standing next to you because they have faith that God is good and God is in control. Amen?

I want to welcome everyone who came here in Manila Hotel.



Welcome to the first-timers joining The Feast.

Thank you so much for joining us. After The Feast we'd like to meet you and we'd love to pray for you.

Friends, can you clap for these lovely ladies?

Love Offering

A Story on Giving

I have a little story to share as you prepare for your Love Offering. Most of you know this is the part where we offer our first fruits of labor to the Lord.

My son, Ethan, our eldest, turned 7 years old last September 18. He was so excited-- it was such a big deal for him.

But there was a problem. One of our relatives, the patriarch of our clan, passed away. And we had to attend the burial rites which happened to be on September 18. So, everyone was sad-- we were mourning.

And Ethan could not understand the situation. He asked me, "Dad, why is no one greeting me for my birthday?"

I mean, how do you explain to a seven-year-old the situation?

I tried my best. I told him, "Ethan, Tito Pancho passed away and we are mourning. But I promise you, after the burial, we will celebrate your birthday with a simple dinner.

Then, you know what happened? Ethan disappeared. Then ten minutes later, he showed up.

He was grinning from ear to ear as he got something from his pocket and said, "Dad, look!"

In his hands were peso bills amounting to P4,200.00.

I was like, "Where did those come from? Did you hold up someone?"

He said, "Dad, I went around and approached my uncles and aunts and I told each one of them, "Do you know that today is my birthday?"

And they gave Ethan bits of whatever they had in their wallet. One aunt had only P120 and she gave that to Ethan.

I have two reflections based on that incident.

Number 1: Never underestimate the power of asking. Sometimes, we get so afraid because we reach a certain age when we're like, "Ay, it's shameful to ask. What would they think of me?"

But you know what? The innocence and childlike attitude that we should have as children of God is that we ask when we need some help.

That's a burden of every leader-- that we want to ask for your generosity so that we can sustain the ministries here at The Feast.

But the second reflection is more powerful...



Powerful, Bonus Reflections

Number 2: Never underestimate the generosity of people. You hesitate to ask them for help, you think they will not give. But you'll be surprised. They just suddenly give.

But I have a third reflection-- a bonus: Never underestimate, either, the generosity of God. Because the truth is, when you give even the little that you have, the Lord will return to you what you give and the Lord will bless you.

So, I hope this encourages you today to give even the little that you have. Because that little, the Lord can turn that into a miracle. Even with the little that you have, in the Lord's hands, it can become a lot.

May I invite everybody to stand up and together, let's lift our Love Offering to the Lord. You worked hard for this, I know, the Lord knows. But it is yours to give freely and I honor you for doing just that.



Say this with me:

Jesus, Thank You for blessing me. This gift is just a portion of the abundance that You have already given me. But I give this with all of my heart because I love You and I trust You. In Your Name. Amen.

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WAYS TO GIVE

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Worship!

EXHORTATION

SIS. MHADZ PAMAONG:

Good Morning, FEAST!

The year 2024 is coming to an end.
And I know some of us are excited.
But I also know that if not all, most of us are exhausted.
I know that sometimes you feel that your life is just running in circles and the progress is not obvious.

But I want to encourage you today that the promise of God still stands. Amen.

Brothers and Sisters, I'm going to lead you into prayer today as we come into another moment of Worship:

We Thank You God for the things that we can see. We Thank You, God, moreover for helping us grow in faith especially on those moments that we don't even know where to go. Help us remember that faith is not just feeling-- but it is a choice to praise You. Even without joy, we are comforted by the truth that You are our Shepherd and with You in our presence we lack nothing. We bless You, God. This is our prayer today.

Psalm 23 says: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.

Church, this is the moment that we praise God in the presence of the enemies. This is the stage where we praise Him. Not only for His provisions. We praise Him despite of the sickness, despite of the death, despite of the brokenness, despite of the lack.

So, why don't you lift your hands to Heaven and bless His Holy and Mighty Name.





BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

Come on, put your hands together
for Him for He is worthy of our praise.
He is glorious. He is merciful. He is loving.
He is abundant. And He is our Lord Jesus Christ.
And today we celebrate Him. Amen.
Thank You, Jesus!
Hallelujah!





BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO RUN TO HIM

WHO PLACE THEIR HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN JESUS HE WON'T FORSAKE THEM



BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO SEEK HIS FACE

THEY WON'T BE SHAKEN



COME ON AND PRAISE THE LORD WITH ME

SING IF YOU LOVE HIS NAME



HE'S WORTHY OF ALL OUR PRAISE

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO WALK WITH HIM



WHOSE JOY IT IS TO GIVE IT ALL FOR JESUS

OH JESUS, ALL FOR YOUR GLORY

BLESS GOD

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NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

How many of you need a word from God today?
Let's come and say our favorite prayer:



TODAY, I RECEIVE ALL OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ME.
TODAY, I OPEN MYSELF TO THE UNBOUNDED, LIMITLESS,
OVERFLOWING ABUNDANCE OF GOD'S UNIVERSE.

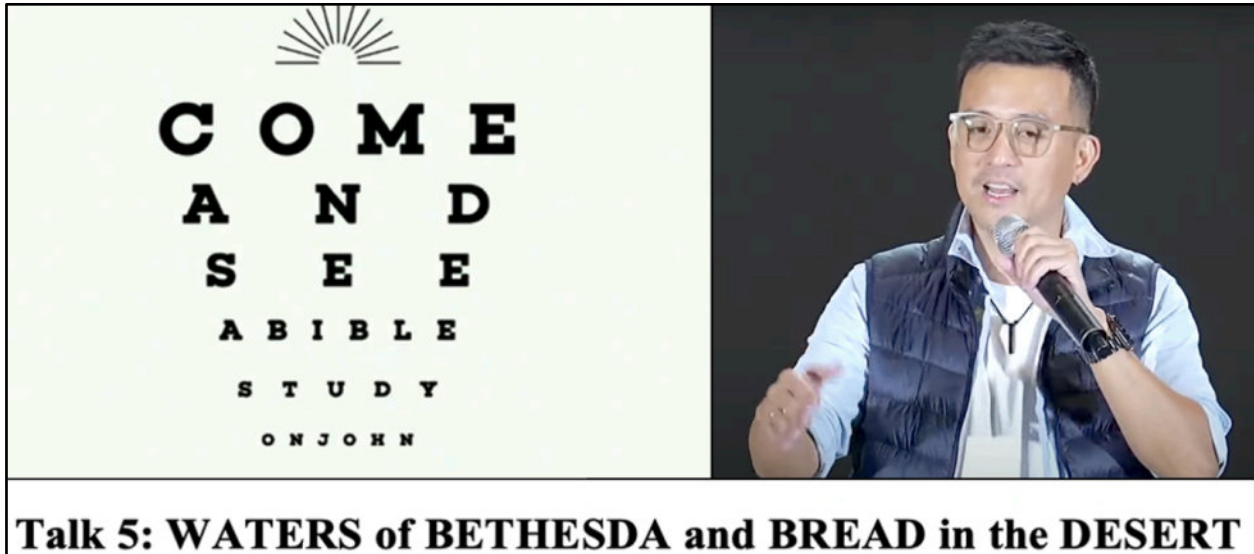
TODAY, I OPEN MYSELF TO GOD'S BLESSINGS, HEALING, AND MIRACLES.
TODAY, I OPEN MYSELF TO GOD'S WORD SO THAT
I BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS EVERY DAY.

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



We're walking through *The Book of John*. Today, there's a special treat for you because we're unpacking not just one story-- but two miracle stories.

The first one is the miracle healing of that man on the waters of Bethesda, and the second one is Jesus feeding the multitude.

We'll read the first one from John 5:1

“After this, there was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, there in Jerusalem, by the sheepgate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda which has five roof colonnades. In this lay a multitude of invalids: the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed. All of them were waiting for a certain movement of the water, for an angel of the Lord came from time to time and stirred up the water, and the first person to step in after the water was stirred was healed of whatever disease he had.”

This is not your regular five-star hotel where you swim in the pool. This is a different water. It's a water that can heal people and they believe that whoever gets in once the water was stirred would be healed because an angel was stirring.

Now, here's the story: One man who had been an invalid for 38 years was by the pool of Bethesda.

Let me pause in that moment... The number 38 sounds like simply a random number-- but it's not.

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Why 38 Years?

John is making a connection and he's pointing us to a time in the Old Testament-- to Deuteronomy 2:14-- where the Israelites themselves had to wait for 38 years to get to the Promised Land.

Why? Because they were waiting for the rebels to die.*

So, John was simply saying, "Look, this is the same moment that the Israelites had to wait. They were "paralyzed" just like the sick man who could not do anything for 38 years.

I'm wondering right now if there's somebody here that the reason you're not receiving God's promise is there's a *paralysis* in your heart. There's a sin, an unforgiveness, and an unbelief that you're carrying.

I want you to check your heart this week, come before the Lord, and pray:
*Lord, search my heart if there's anything that does not belong here.
I want You to cleanse it because I want to be freed from this spiritual, emotional, and physical paralysis.*

*Backstory:

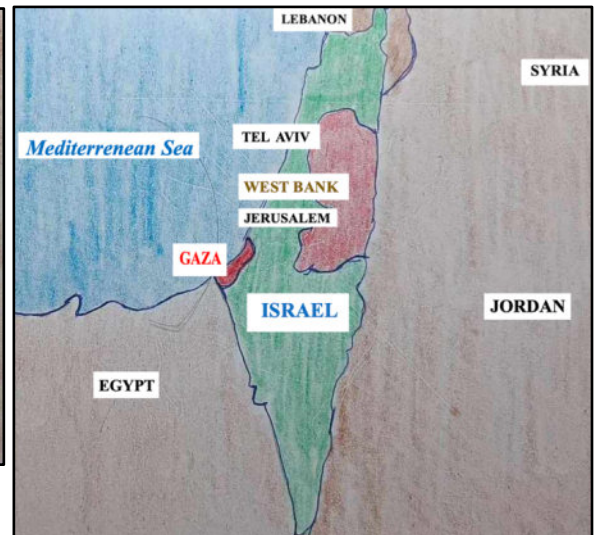
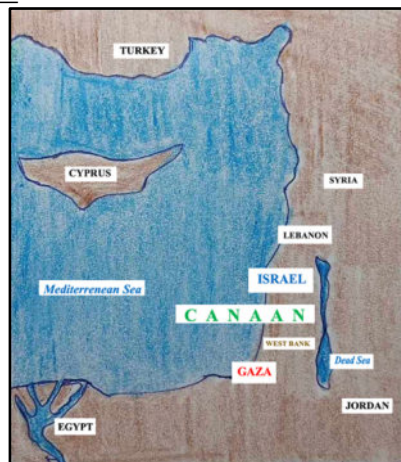
The Israelites were descendants of Jacob who was renamed as Israel. They lived in Canaan, the land God promised to give their ancestor Abraham for his faithfulness to God.

But following a severe drought in Canaan, the Israelites fled to Egypt where earlier, one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, became governor. Some 400 years (as estimated by Biblical scholars) after Joseph's death, the succeeding Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites.

God sent Moses, a prophet, to lead the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. But they were unfaithful and rebellious, so God ordered them to wander in the desert for 38 or 40 years (40 symbolizing a generation of man), within which the rebels would die. Only then would they enter back to Canaan, the Promised Land.

Canaan was situated in the territory of the southern Levant, which today encompasses Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, the southern portion of Syria and Lebanon, and Gaza.

Today, there's an ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict, part of the long-running Israeli-Palestinian dispute over territorial rights in Gaza, stemming way back since the Israelites took Canaan (where Palestinians lived) as the Promised Land.



The Healer

Let's continue the story of the sick man:

"When Jesus saw the sick man lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, Jesus said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"

That's a ridiculous question, right?

Take note: Jesus is not being sarcastic. If anything, Jesus is telling us the truth that sometimes there are sick people in this world who don't want to be healed.

For example: Do you have that friend or a person you know who always seems to have the same problem again and again and again and again-- like every five years. You would see one another and it's always the same thing-- about the same guy, about the same girl, about the same company, and about the same job.

You have that friend -- or maybe it might be you.

It's like people are in love with their problems and they don't want to move on. Psychologists refer to this as *learned helplessness* -- when people already accepted as *fact* that they are sick, and they've stopped helping themselves.

But Jesus is asking us today: *"Do you really want to be healed?"*

I've got good Gospel news today. The healer is in the house.

Jesus is in the business of healing.

Today, I pray that you receive His healing-- whether it's physical, mental, and spiritual.

But here's the word that I want you to take home today: Don't just seek healing. Seek the One who gives healing. Don't just seek life. Seek the Life Giver.

Seek Jesus because He's the one who's going to give life. He's the One who's going to heal you. He's the One who's going to provide for you. Let's pray:

Lord, I came all this way. I traveled all this way. I woke up early this morning just to get here because I need You. I need Your Word. I need Your wisdom. In this moment, I am your servant. I am your child here to listen. So, speak. Thank You, Jesus. I bless You. I worship You. I love You.

In Your Name. Amen.

*Thy Word is a Lamp
unto my feet
and a Light unto my path*





What Leads to Compassion

I just want to acknowledge and express my gratitude as the leader of this Feast for every servant who serves tirelessly and relentlessly every Sunday, without the need to be recognized. Clap your hands for everyone.

You don't need to know their names but God sees them and God sees you-- and that's more than enough recognition.

Now you're enjoying the venue, the lights, the air conditioning, and the music. But not everyone knew that before we stepped here onstage, people were already serving the Lord in the background. Some were already here yesterday at 9:00 p.m. As early as 4:00 a.m. today, they were already setting up the stage to make sure that when you come here, you are comfortable as you receive the Word of God.

You will never meet them. Chances are you will never even know their names.

But why am I sharing this? Because I want you to know that it's important to always know the context. Context leads to compassion. When you understand the context of what the persons beside you are going through, you will have more compassion for them. You will be kinder.

Let's have context also for our servants who are tireless in their service. When you see them, thank them. None of them are paid to do this. This is their service to the Lord. They do it out of their love for God and love for you.

Let's continue with the story:

The sick man answered, "*Jesus, Sir.*"

When I read that the man said "Sir," I knew right then and there that this guy had no idea who Jesus was. He didn't know that Jesus was the Savior. He only knew Him a *sir* or as a stranger.

I wonder how many of you are walking in for the first time here at The Feast without any encounter with Jesus. My prayer is that after this, you would know Him as a Savior. You would know Him as your Redeemer.

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Helpless But Not Hopeless

The sick man said, *"Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up and while I am going another steps down before me."*

Here's the context: In this pool, it's like the *Amazing Race* (an American television reality competition show) where only the strongest, the boldest, and the mightiest can win the race.

At the Bethesda pool, if you're not strong enough, you don't get to go into the water.

The problem of this man was: "I have no one to put me into the water when it is stirred."

Maybe, that's the reason Jesus even chose this man. Think about it:

Jesus has a heart for the weak. Jesus has a heart for the last. Jesus has a heart for the least.

I don't know if some of you here are feeling a bit mighty right now. I want you to know that the apostle Paul said that God's power is made perfect in your weakness.

Paul said: "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness."

Why?

He said, "So that the power of Christ may rest in me."

In God's Kingdom, the first will be last and the last will be first. God has a heart for those who are weak.

So, brag about your weakness. The problem right now is that in social media, we're always bragging about being the best. But in God's kingdom, He chooses the weak. He exalts those who are humble.

What's interesting about this story is that this guy is helpless-- but he's not hopeless. He was helpless in the sense that he could not get into the pool by himself. But since he was there every day, that means that he had hope.

I don't know about you, but this is our condition most of the time: We are helpless but we're not hopeless.

There's a couple here praying for the longest time to have a child and you've got this burning hope that one day God will bless you with that child.

You might be listening online, and this message is for you. You might have that hope deep within you but for some reason, every doctor's report said that it's not possible. But you still have this hope. You are helpless but you're not hopeless.

There's a single person here who is dreaming that one day, God is going to give you that special person.





What Do You Focus On?

This could also be the situation in our country. Every election, we have hope that we're going to get the right leaders for our country. Leaders with integrity and with a heart. For some reason, every election, we always get the same persons -- greedy and selfish on their agendas. We're helpless but we're not hopeless.

Hope is like a rope. When you cling on to that hope, your faith is enough. It really is because if you can cling on to that rope, that rope is unbreakable.

Faith is not just about believing that God *can*. Faith is about declaring that God *will*. Hang on to that rope because it's only a matter of time before grace will show up.

And that's what happened in the story.

Jesus said to this guy, "Get up. Pick up your mat and walk."

At once, the man was healed. He picked up his mat and walked.

Here's the thing: The people who were there were all needy and sick. But they focused on the water so that once it stirred, they could jump in right away.

They were so busy looking at the water that they could not see the Living Water in their midst.

Some of us are so desperate and waiting for a miracle that sometimes, we miss the Miracle Maker in our midst. We miss the Messiah walking around.

How many of you here have been battling some sins in your life and you keep on failing again and again?

How many have been battling pornography but for some reason, you keep on failing. How many of you are struggling with your anger but time and time again, you keep on going back to that same route. How many of you keep on trying to get rid of your addiction of gambling, drinking, smoking, lying, and cheating? But for some reason, you keep on backsliding. Maybe, it's because you're just too focused on your skills that you never see God's grace.

Turn to Jesus because only Jesus can save you. Only Jesus can rescue you. Once Jesus shows up, everything shuts up. Fear shuts up. Cancer shuts up. Evil shuts up. Doubt shuts up.

Because once the healing Messiah comes in, everything just starts working.

Warning to Servants and Me

Take a look at this: Everybody by the Bethesda pool was waiting for the water to stir. None of them were focused on Jesus and Jesus was right there. They're missing the miracle.

That day was the Sabbath. The Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, Brother. It is not lawful for you to pick up your mat."

The context of this one is that the Jews had this rule that on Sabbath day, you were not allowed to carry anything heavier than the clothes on your back. So, carrying a mat that was even light was prohibited. It was unlawful.

This man was just healed. Everybody wasn't looking for the Man who healed this sick man. They were looking for the man who told this guy to carry his mat.

Talk about disorder priorities. This is us. How many times, my dear Friends, have you had disordered priorities in your life? Where you're looking at something, but God is already there in the miracle.

For example, we get so caught up and blinded by the traditions of our culture, religion, and rituals. They're great. They're miraculous. But I need you to pay attention to what's more important than the rituals of religion: a relationship with Jesus. More than the rituals that you perform, it's the relationship with Jesus that really matters.

This is a crucial warning for all of us, especially to me and people who are serving in ministry.

Servants, listen to this: Sometimes we get so caught up with the perfection and excellence of our event that we want to make sure that everything works -- the lights are good, the music is good, and everybody is seated perfectly.

We get so caught up with the excellence of the event that we miss what is important. We all know that there is no such thing as a perfect event.

I'm looking right now at Vince, our sound supplier. We know-- and every servant here knows, especially the music ministry-- that sometimes the mics don't work. Sometimes, the LED doesn't work. Sometimes, the teleprompter is not on time. Sometimes, even the servants don't show up. But that's okay. Why?

Because we're not after perfection. We're after *progress* -- that every day we just get a little better. We get a bit more loving. We get a bit kinder. We get a little more forgiving.



Perfection at The Feast

Do you see what I mean? Imagine me stepping here on stage-- and if everything that I'm just doing here is not working, I get frustrated-- then I'm missing the miracle. I'm missing what God is doing here in this place.

Perfection at The Feast is not everything working together-- but the Presence of God in this place. His ministering, healing, and speaking.

That is perfection in God's Kingdom.

I don't want to get lost in the moment where I'm so frustrated and discouraged that I'm missing the miracle God is doing. Open your eyes to see what the Lord is doing. That is perfection.

This is the irony of the story. The rule said that it's unlawful to carry around anything that's heavy. Carrying even just a single mat is unlawful.

But think about this: Every day, people had to carry this sick man from his house all the way to the colonnade, and then pick him and bring him back to his home. Yet, none of the religious leaders said that was unlawful. None of them complained. The only time they complained was when the man was carrying the mat on a Sabbath.

If you really understand the Gospel, you will realize that Jesus was not adding *work*. If anything, Jesus was *reducing* work. This man needed to be carried back and forth every day-- even on a Sabbath. But on this day, he didn't need to be carried back home. He could walk on his own two legs because he was healed.

And that's what Jesus was saying: "Every Sabbath day, you can rest because I am at work. You can rest because I'm in control. You can rest because God is in charge.

Real rest is when you can say: "Lord, I can sit down here comfortably without thinking about tomorrow because I know that you're already in my tomorrow blessing my day."

That's what Jesus does. Real rest means you don't have to wrestle for every blessing-- unlike the people in that colonnade were doing, thinking that the blessing was scarce.

God says to somebody here today: "*You're already blessed.*"

God is also saying you don't need to prove yourself before every hater and every doubter in the world. Because God says to you today: "*You're already worthy.*"

I can sit back and relax because I know the Lord will take care of me.

That is Sabbath.





The Second Miracle

Now, John is switching gears in Chapter 6. We're going to move to the second miracle story-- *The Feeding of the Multitude*:

"The Passover, the Feast of the Jews was at hand. Lifting up his eyes then and seeing that a large crowd was coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, one of the disciples, "Where are we to buy bread so these people may eat?"

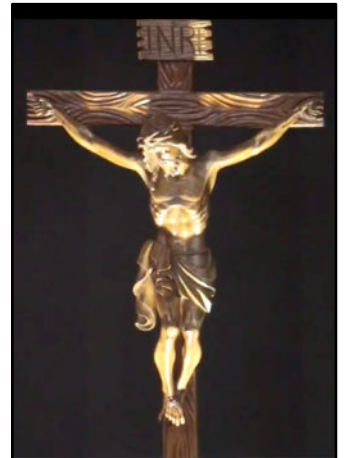
There's a Passover story in the *Book of John*. He mentioned it three times which confirms that the ministry of Jesus lasted for three years-- one Passover for each year.

For the Jews, Passover was such a big thing. This was like their Easter celebration. They would gather as a family and as a community and they would eat lambs. They would talk about the days when their ancestors were rescued from slavery -- that fateful night when their ancestors took an unblemished lamb and slaughtered it. Then they covered the doorposts of their house with the lamb's blood so that the angel of death would pass over their homes.*

*Backstory: God sent Moses to save the Israelites from their slavery in Egypt. But the Pharaoh did not want to let them go. So, God sent 10 plagues to Egypt to make the Pharaoh release the Israelites. The tenth plague was an angel of death would pass by every house in Egypt to kill the firstborn children-- which would have included the Pharaoh's firstborn child.

To spare the Israelites of the plague, God told Moses to tell the Israelites to paint the blood of an unblemished lamb on their doorposts, so that the angel would know that Jewish people lived there and thus pass over their house. So, to save his child, the Pharaoh let the Israelites go-- in what we now know as the Exodus.

Sacrificing of the lamb was a foreshadowing and symbolism pointing to Jesus as the ultimate sacrificial lamb-- the True Lamb of God because His sacrifice on the Cross provided eternal redemption and forgiveness for all who believe in Him.



Bread for All

Some 1,400 years later, Jesus was talking to a crowd and He was in a meal. But the difference was there were not just a few people-- but 20,000. The Bible says there were 5,000 men, not including the women and children. Now, Jesus was in a family meal and He was talking to them about the rescuing.

Do you remember anything that points to the Old Testament?

Jesus said: "Where will we buy bread to feed them?"

Then, Jesus multiplied just five loaves and two fish. What is that pointing to us?

The time when the Israelites were in the desert and they were hungry and they said, "Lord, provide for us."

What did God do? He started sending bread or manna. It was raining bread in the desert. Now, Jesus was into that same miracle:

"So, they gathered them and filled up 12 baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten."

What does 12 mean? It's not a random number. It signifies the 12 tribes of Israel. What is the message?

This is wonderful: God was simply telling everybody then, and He's telling all of us now, that in His family, everybody eats. In His family, everybody gets a taste of His grace. In His family, everybody goes home with basket full of blessings:

"When they found him on the other side, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you: You are seeking me not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves. You want more bread. Do not work for food that perishes but instead food that endures to eternal life which the son of man will give you. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall not perish."

Jesus is the manna coming to the people. He's the Living Bread.

You want to know what they did? They started grumbling.

The Jews grumbled about Jesus because He said, "I am the bread that came from Heaven."

The Jews were like, "That's it? I want more of that bread that you just gave me. Is this it? Is this the kind of life that I'm going to live, Jesus? This is the only blessing that I get?"

That's the same kind of complaint that the Israelites had in the desert-- day after day, as the manna came flying down from Heaven.

Some of them started complaining, "Lord, is this it? No peanut butter?"





But We're Never Satisfied...

When God blesses you with the same blessing every day, you're going to get tired of that blessing and you're going to start complaining to God. We're never satisfied.

Jesus is saying: "I've got bread that will last you forever.

But we say, "No. Jesus, I want ordinary bread that will satisfy my hunger now."

Let me close with this analogy:

I don't have my phone because my kids are using it.

My wife flew to Korea yesterday, so I'm taking care of our two kids right now--by myself. Please pray for me.

I have six days to take care of the kids by myself, but God is there. Grace will show up.

The other day, I got a blessing because it was retention for my service provider. Shout out to Globe! It's not an endorsement but I got a new phone.

The first thing that I did when I got the phone was I went to the nearest store, and I bought a phone case and a screen protector.

When we have something brand new, we like to cover it up. We like to keep it safe. Have you ever had those moments when you have a brand-new thing and then suddenly, you drop it?

I have this personal rule that I started many years ago: Whenever I own something or buy something, I make sure that I use it. I'm not judging you because maybe this is our difference. There are some who like to use expensive stuff. If you can afford it, it's okay.

But I just don't get the idea of some people who own stuff, but they use it only every so often. When you do that, you don't own things. Instead, things own you. I love using stuff. Until the very last breath of that thing, I will use that. If I can't use it anymore, I give it to those who can use it.

Going back to my phone. I put stuff in my phone, and I covered it up to protect it. I used to own a gadget store. That was my first business. I would import gadgets and there were a few clients who would come and buy the latest iPhone that costs about P80,000.00. Some of them would call me and tell me that their iPhone fell and the screen got damaged, and they were willing to trade to buy a new one.

A lot of us have that kind of culture that whenever new things would get ruined, we want to replace it. That's the culture of consumerism. That's the reason you're always attracted to the upgraded version. They will never create the perfect product because you will never have a need to buy another thing again. They will always put something that has limitations.

How You Win

When a product comes out, they will tell you, "This one has a different charger. This one has a different size."

But the thing is, they're just recycling everything. But because it's new, you'll want that thing-- until you realize that your hunger is never satisfied.

I could very well say the same thing about where you get your joy from. If you're getting your joy, love, and happiness from things and people, I guarantee you that very thing that gives you joy will also take the joy out from you once it leaves, once it breaks, once it gets stolen.

Jesus says, "If I have you and if you have me, your thirst and hunger will be satisfied-- till the very last drop."

In Him, you will never hunger, thirst, crave for anything else-- because once you have Jesus, you feel like you have everything. You may not have everything but with Jesus you feel like you are the king of the world. You are a winner in this world because Jesus is our everything.

Don't just seek blessings. Seek the Blessor. Don't just seek for healing, seek the Healer. Don't just seek for miracles, seek the Miracle Maker. Don't just seek life, seek the One who can give you life today. The One who can enrich your soul.

The One who can say: "I love you. You're my child. You're my son. You're my daughter."

Put your hand over your heart. Close your eyes, feel the Presence of the Lord in this place and say:



*Thank You Jesus for Your Word.
Thank You for Your wisdom in this moment.
I breathe Your mercy. I breathe Your love.
I Thank You that whatever I need shall be supplied
according to Your glorious riches. Today, I trust
that I can rest because You are doing the rest.
You are in charge. You are sovereign.
Thank You, Jesus. Amen.*





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 to 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

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



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is a halfway home for pregnant women in crisis.



He Cares Mission
provides shelter and pastoral care for street children.

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grants scholarships to indigent students.



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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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Branch Banco de Oro - Savings Account no. 000160506123 SM Cubao Branch

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FAMILY ONLINE NEWSMAGAZINE

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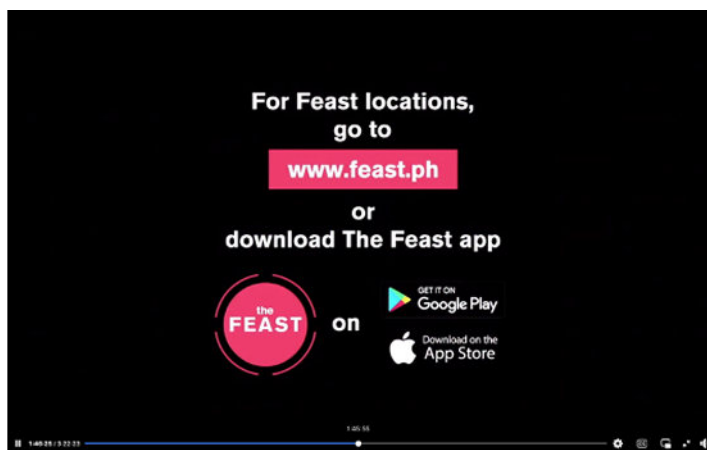
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Go and make disciples of all men.

— Matthew 28:19

