

JUNE 2020

GRACE MONTHLY

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation."

Habakkuk 3:18



Rejoicing in the Lord

by Annie Hong

As we are adjusting to our new lifestyle due to COVID-19, I believe that many of us have been affected by the negative and things that we can't achieve. I was personally disappointed by our graduation ceremony cancellation, having to do online learning and to socially distance myself from my friends; especially since the month of June was where many of us were looking forward to all the new changes and big transitions in life.

However, we have to remember that God has an amazing plan for us. The path that we choose might not be the path that God wants us to go. The things we want to see happen might not happen for us right away. But the truth is that God is a waymaker and He never makes mistakes. So often, we get frustrated when things don't work out, but Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:4, that it is important to rejoice in the Lord always. **Even during our sufferings, trusting in God bring us to be joyful in God Himself.**

If you are feeling anxious and frustrated because things are not working out as you have planned, I encourage you to know that **we are in the midst of God's great plan.** If you are having a hard time being joyful, try to change your perspective and attitude. Be open to receive what God has to say to you and take time to rest in His presence. We may have a plan for our ways, but it is the Lord who guides our steps (Proverbs 16:9). God sees all of us and He loves us unconditionally. So let us rejoice in the Lord!

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MAY HIGHLIGHTS

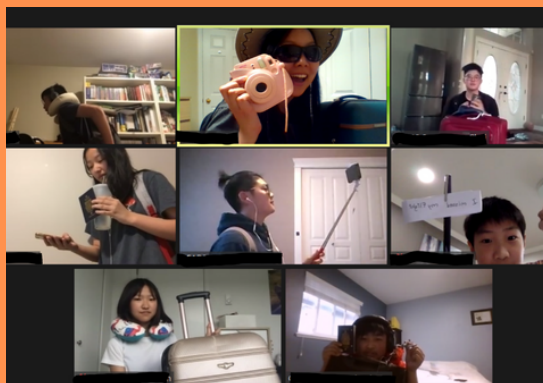
FAMILY WORSHIP NIGHT

On Friday, May 8th Pastor Josh led the Family Worship Night. He shared a message from 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, titled, "Sharing Life Abundantly". In his message he pointed out that in life, we not only share our joys, but also our sufferings with one another. The encouragement in this is that there is a comfort that is greater than our suffering - God's comfort. And God's comfort doesn't just relieve our own pain and sufferings, but also enables us to share that comfort with others who are suffering. This is how we understand what it means to truly "share life" with one another.

So as we continue to live through this season of "suffering", may we be encouraged to look to "the Father of compassion who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from Him".



1. God blesses us so that we can share His blessing with others.
2. Our greatest comfort in suffering is that we are never suffering alone.
3. Christ's overflowing comfort equips us to share life abundantly with God and each other.



GEM FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

GEM Youth held a games night online on Friday, May 29th. They started off with some rounds of "Zoom Unscramble", and were then broken up into teams of mixed grades to play "Screenshots Challenge" and "Pictionary". It was a fun time of fellowship, where students and leaders were able to come together just to hang out and even meet some new people. We are grateful to have the time and space to continue meeting together in various ways!

Praise & Prayer

- **Praise** God for family! Last month, we celebrated family month and were reminded of the value of sharing life with one another. Especially in this season, many of us have been spending lots of time with our family at home. Please **pray** that family members will grow closer together and learn to love one another deeply.
- **Praise** God that the number of positive cases of COVID-19 have relatively leveled off. Please continue to **pray** for protection and healing for those who have been affected, and that even though there is anticipation for a "second wave", people will respond wisely and not in fear.



- Please **pray** for the summer months that are ahead of us. With several restrictions still in place by the government authorities, our usual summer activities are being adapted substantially! Please continue to **pray** for wisdom and creativity for the church staff and pastors who are constantly adapting their ministry activities to the changing circumstances. Please also **pray** that students will be motivated and excited to engage with their faith in new ways.
- An online chapel will be held for Grace Youth and ABLE on June 17th. Please **pray** that this will be a blessed time of worship for the students, that they will gain a renewed heart of worship, and that God will be exalted through their praise.
- The 2019-20 school year is soon coming to a close. As students look forward to the end of their school year very differently this year, please **pray** that they will be able to process their past year's experiences well. Please **pray** especially for the graduating grade 12s, that they will have a sense of closure to their high school year. **Pray** that their disappointments will turn into prayers of thanksgiving, and that they will find peace in God's greater plan for their lives.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR JUNE

Wednesday, Jun 17th Youth & ABLE Online Chapel

Various meetups will be happening online at different times throughout the month.

Make sure to keep up with our latest updates on our website, Instagram, or Facebook!

Preached by Pastor Phil on Sunday, May 24th.

Are you familiar with the prophet, Samuel? He was the last judge and prophet of Israel who inaugurated the period of the kings. He was born in a time of great difficulty for Israel and can be compared to Moses, who saved the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt; Samuel was the person whom God used to restore Israel to Himself during the period of the judges. If we think about it, for such a time that we ourselves are going through at this time, perhaps we need someone like Samuel in our midst.

Samuel's story begins with the story of Hannah. Hannah was barren, and because of this, she went alone to a place of worship to pray. Typically, prayers at that time would involve some kind of ritual or sacrifice. But for Hannah, she goes beyond the ritual and goes directly before God to pour out her heart. God hears this prayer, and grants her a son whom she names, "Samuel". The name "Samuel" literally means "God heard me". One thing we must remember when we read the book of Samuel is that **God hears our prayers**. When Hannah was crying out due to her childlessness, and when the Israelites were suffering as slaves in Egypt, God heard them (Exodus 3:7). So we see that God surely hears our prayers. However, we must remember that He also wants *us* to be attentive to *His* voice. for this is the way we can build a relationship with Him.

In English the two words "hear" and "listen" are separate and mean different things. But in the Hebrew language, a single word bears both meanings: the Hebrew word *shema* embodies both "to hear" as well as "to listen". God trained Samuel as a young boy to "hear and listen to" His voice. Three times He called Samuel, but Samuel did not recognize it as the voice of God. At the fourth time, he finally understands that God had been calling him and responds, "Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:10). As you read the book of Samuel, you will find that Samuel plays the role of listening to God's voice and relaying that message to the people. But even Samuel did not recognize God's voice from the beginning - he needed practice. *We need to practice hearing and listening to the voice of God*. How do we do this? Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." **Our practice of listening to God begins with having a pure heart.**

The word *shema* also includes the aspect of obedience. Oftentimes, we have the wrong idea of what it means to obey God's voice. When king Saul had won the battle against the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:1-3), he spared their king and all the best of their livestock. Samuel rebuked Saul for this, because he had disobeyed God's command to spare absolutely nothing. Saul had thought that God will delight in the sacrifices he was going to make with the Amalekites' livestock. But when Samuel hears the sound of the animals, he expresses God's angered heart to Saul and reminds him that "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam 15:22). **Listening to God's voice is more important than following a ritual of worship.** To put it into our context today, for us to simply attend a worship service is not the same as listening to God's voice.

Do you hear the voice of God? Are you listening to it? It's okay if you don't hear it right away; even Samuel had to practice recognizing the voice of God. As we continue to live through this season of suffering, my prayer is that it can become a time where we each practice hearing, listening to, and obeying God's voice. Pray that God will grant us a *pure heart*, and that He would help us *practice* listening to His voice.