

MAY 2021

GRACE MONTHLY

*"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."*

Psalm 23:2-3



He Guides Me Along

by Grace Choi

During this crazy season we've been going through, God has personally been training me and showing me what it means to rest. Before quarantine, my life has always been busy and occupied, but when the world suddenly stopped last year and I was obligated to stay home, I started to become confused with my life. I couldn't adjust myself to just simply rest.

In Psalm 23 verse 2, it says "God *makes* me lie down." After reflecting much on this verse, I realized that even though I am resting physically, my heart is always restless and my mind is always busy trying to plan out my future. However, there are times in life when God leads us to just rest. Although we might think that we don't need to rest, God wants us to, so that we can focus on our relationship with Him. The fact that we easily focus on living for ourselves, during these times, God is giving us the opportunity to be refreshed and restored in Him. I recognized that in order to grow in my relationship with God, there are times when I need to stop what I'm doing and remember why I'm living and who I'm living for.

God gives and He also takes away. When He gives us time of prosperity, we take joy in that and live with thanksgiving, but when He takes it away, it is a time for us to consider and trust in the Lord by confessing that our lives are not ours, and that we were made to live for God and His kingdom. In times of uncertainty, as children of God, let us trust in the God who guides us "along the right paths."

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APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

GOOD FRIDAY FAMILY SERVICE

On Friday April 2nd, a Good Friday Service was held online. Each household prepared a love feast in remembrance of Christ's death on the cross. We thank him for His great love that was given to us on the cross for our sins, and for the promise of His second coming.



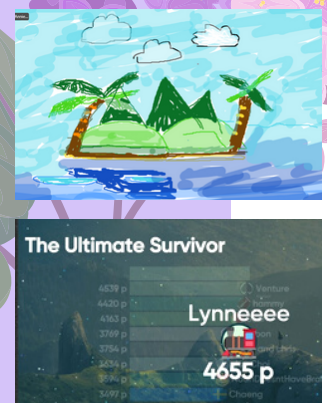
EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE

April 4th was Youth and ABE's joint Easter Sunday Service. It began with a pre-service gathering led by hosts Alex and Bessie where they interacted with the students through Mentimeter. The title of the sermon given by Pastor Kevin was, "Way? Truth? Life?" with the main passage being John 14:1-7. The sermon was a video recording of Pastor Kevin guiding us around our church and explaining the righteousness of God through redemption, propitiation and justification. Afterwards he led us through a time of response where we reflected on areas in our lives where we feel lost, thirsty and chained and how only Jesus can truly satisfy our needs. We celebrate Jesus' resurrection - He is risen from the grave!



TEAM SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

For the last Friday Youth Night of April, GEM Youth had a special event planned and run by their very own core student discipleship! It was a night of fun and games and a few minor technical difficulties, but it was all the more fun because of it. The night started off with a quiz on real life survival situations and solutions, where many lost their lives to the Care Bears. Afterwards, teams versed each other in intense games of Drawasaurus, an ASL word unscrambling game, and a picture puzzle drawing relay. In the end, after a tight battle between 8 teams, team 3 won victoriously with 35 points, team 8 came in 2nd (25 pts) and team 2 came in 3rd (20 pts). The core discipleship students are excited to prepare other game nights, so you can look forward to some more fellowship events in the future!



Praise & Prayer

- **Praise** God for an amazing Easter service. Let us give thanks to God for providing us a way to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ together. Let us also **praise** God for sending His Son, Jesus to die for us so that we may have a new life in Him. **Pray** that those who have not heard of this good news yet would one day find hope in Jesus and the joy of salvation.
- The pandemic may have stripped away many things in our lives, but it has allowed us to have more family time. **Praise** God for allowing this time so that each family may come closer through this pandemic season. **Pray** that the family services in May will be a time of blessing for each and every family, and that God will continue to deepen the relationships in each family.
- **Praise** God for the four youth students who got baptized and confirmed, dedicating their lives to Jesus! **Pray** that God will use these students as vessels for His Kingdom, and that they will be able to live out their lives in Jesus' footsteps.



- **Praise** God for the ability to learn in-person at schools with our friends. As exam season begins and ends, **pray** that each student will be able to focus on their studies and excel with whatever subject. **Pray** that students will look to God and confide in Him, and not so much on the exam results.
- **Praise** God for providing us a way to continue worshiping together through this pandemic. Let us be thankful for all the work that is put into every virtual worship service, and **praise** God for all the service done by our leaders, pastors, and the tech team to make each virtual service possible. **Pray** that each and every online worship service would restore our weary hearts. As we continue to have virtual services, let us **pray** that we won't become indifferent to them but instead will continue to grow a burning passion for Christ and remain hopeful for in-person services in the future.

Let it Out

Psalm 40:4-5 ESV

The word "Confess" or "Confession" is repeated all throughout the Old and New Testaments. In Hebrew, the word "Confess" is *yada* and in Greek it is *homologeō*, and it generally means, "to profess, to admit, to acknowledge." There are two ways that this word is primarily used in the Bible.

First, and probably the most commonly understood usage of the word "Confess" is to **confess our sins**.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 JOHN 1:9 ESV

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

1 JOHN 4:15 ESV

The second way that the Bible teaches us to confess is to **confess our Christian faith**, and it is important that we practice this kind of confession regularly too.

In Psalm 40, we see a confession of faith made by king David. In verse 4, David begins to confess his faith in God:

Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust. Who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! (Psalm 40:4)

The first thing we see is that David's confession of his faith reminds him to put his trust in God. He says that he is not going to turn to the proud, meaning, he's not going to put his trust in himself or in other things like the people in the world do. Why? Because those things aren't truly fulfilling; they're temporary and they never last. It's "a lie" to trust in anything or anyone other than God!

The first thing we need to know about the importance of confessing our faith is that **confessing our faith redirects our hearts to put our trust in God**.

The confession of our faith is so vital for our spiritual growth. A Christian who practices regularly confessing their sins to God, and who also confesses their Christian faith in song or prayer, is a sign of a maturing believer because the focus stops being on "me", and it starts to be on God.

Think about the times when we came together for a Friday night and sang praise songs together to God. Do you remember how the praise songs would redirect your eyes and hearts to God? These songs of praise help us to confess our faith in God, remembering who He is, what He has done for us, and where He is leading us towards.



The second thing that we see from David's confession of his faith is how it leads him to realize the countless times God has been so good and gracious to him and all of Israel.

You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! I will proclaim and tell of them, yet they are more than can be told. (Psalm 40:5 ESV)

There is so much to discover about our God, which is why we will always find another reason to sing to our God, to trust in our God, to hope in our God, to humble ourselves before our God, to confess our sins and our faith to Him.

Confessing our faith helps us to reflect on all the wonderful things that God has done (and is continuing to do) for us.

The more we begin to realize how much God has done for us, the more we realize how big and how great He is. This, as a result, increases our faith in Him. Our God is not small – our God is great!

So, when was the last time you confessed your Christian Faith?

On the side is the Apostle's Creed, which we can recite together or individually as a regular confession of our faith. Take a few moments to read it out loud yourself, and even go further to memorize it.

Grace Youth, let us regularly make the time to *confess not only our sins, but also our Christian faith*. In this way, we will be able to redirect our hearts to God and to reflect on all the amazing things God has done in our lives, both big and small.

{Apostle's Creed}

I believe in God, the Father almighty
Creator of heaven and earth

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary
Suffered under Pontius Pilate
Was crucified, died, and was buried
He descended to the dead
On the third day he rose again
He ascended into heaven
He is seated at the right hand of the Father
And he will come to judge the living and the dead

I believe in the Holy Spirit
The holy universal Church
The communion of saints
The forgiveness of sins
The resurrection of the body
And the life everlasting
Amen.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MAY

Sunday, May 2nd Family Worship Service
Friday, May 7th Family Worship Night
Friday, May 14th Friday Youth Night
Friday, May 21st (GEM) Hidden GEMs
Friday, May 28th (CLAY) Claydio

Events are subject to change. Make sure to keep up with our latest updates with your small group leader, on our website, Instagram, or Facebook!