

THE BREAKTHROUGH OF

# JOY

INTO OUR BROKENNESS

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LUKE 2:8-14



Message Guide | December 13, 2020

# The Breakthrough of Joy Into Our Brokenness

Today's Message (13 December 2020) / Luke 2:8-14

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How strange that God reveals the most important birth in history, not to scholars or kings but to outcasts! But this is the same God who self-describes in Isaiah 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways", declares the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts".

When Jesus was born, Israel was a humiliated and broken nation under Roman conquest. And shepherds were downtrodden and untrusted people who often deserved their bad treatment. But whether it's broken nations or broken people, God loves to redeem those who admit their need of Him. Note how heaven addresses the same things burdening our hearts as the shepherds, as well as the nation they were in:

## **1. WHEN GOD'S GREATNESS IS REVEALED, YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN FEAR. (vv. 8-10)**

- Consistently, in the Bible, when God's glory is seen, people are terrified! When God withholds His protecting hand to send self-sufficient 21st century people a message through a pandemic, fear may become the most important thing to us.
- Those who are not God's should rightly fear. But if you are now His through Christ, it is better to revere, not fear. The King is indeed awesome and dreadful, but that King is your Father now (Romans 8:15-17).

## **2. WHEN GOD'S GRACE IS RECEIVED, YOU CAN LIVE OUT YOUR JOY. (vv. 10-12)**

- The Incarnation, when Jesus put on flesh to become our Savior, is the greatest proof of God's love, and the well-spring of our joy! (Philippians 2:6-8)



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- This is the Good News that brings great joy: God gave His own son, Christ the Lord, and those who receive Him, who believe in His Name, God gives the right to become children of God (John 1:12). And the darkness of the present time doesn't need to be the mood of your heart. If you belong to Jesus the circumstances don't define your joy – His presence does.

### **3. WHEN GOD'S GLORY IS REALIZED, HIS FAVOR GIVES YOU PEACE. (vv. 13, 14)**

- Precisely because God is worshiped in heaven, His favor gives peace to those He loves. Your problems or their absence, don't have to determine your peace – His favor does. Face this season with peace knowing Christ is in your heart and runs your life.

### **Final Thoughts**

God promised joy and peace in lieu of fear. He prefers outcasts though. But aren't we all? "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). The self-sufficient don't need a savior, they'd rather have admirers. But sinners need a savior, and that is what God has offered us who run to Jesus for mercy and redemption.

Joy and peace are God's promises, and they are meant for you. God isn't too good to be true. He is too good to be untrue. He will keep His Word!

May God's joy break through our collective brokenness after all the darkness of the past few months, and through your personal brokenness this season. Have a joyful Christmas! ■

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What was your greatest fear in the past nine months of this lockdown?  
How does the fact that we are children of God help address it (Romans 8:16-17)?
2. If joy and peace are promised to every believer, why do Christians struggle so badly with believing this? Can you cite at least one verse promising either joy or peace besides our passage?
3. Pray together and ask God to help you all celebrate the reality and impact of the Incarnation, regardless of its actual date.

# The Shepherd's Voice

by Pastor Mark Daniel Del Rosario

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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas...or is it? This year, the staples of a Filipino Christmas have gone the way of sleigh rides and snowmen. Seeing streets and malls decorated with paroles and lights with family is only a dream now. This holiday for Filipino families is one centered on celebrating with neighbors, and without community, some of us ask, "Where is Christmas?"

In GCF-ICS, we have all been adjusting to the "loss of community" since in-person classes were no longer held since March. Teachers, students, and parents had to learn how to handle all online classes. Yet, God has been so gracious to us. Challenges may come, but they are also a reason to come together intentionally as family.

MJ Yazon, a 12th grader, shares, "It's been hard at times to see how God is moving in the terrible things that have been happening this year, but He makes himself known to me in the littlest of things. From the love and care I feel from my family to the happiness the calls I have with my friends bring, and even that I've been able to survive online classes." God-directed and intentional connections with others reminds me of the parable of the Good Samaritan where Jesus responded to the question, "Who is my neighbor" by asking, "Which of these three was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" (Luke 10:36). Being a neighbor should be a verb and not just an adjective. The "being a neighbor" mentality has helped each Growth Group in ICS experience God's love in this pandemic.

"My friends and family were evidence of God's goodness and love in times wherein I thought there were none," MJ continues, "Even if most of our interactions were limited to video calls and messages, I was still reminded again and again that love knows no boundaries, even virtual ones. I feel God's love a lot more evidently when I'm 'around'... talking with other people." Her Growth Group continues to be a safe place to open up about what is truly happening in her life. As a school, we have been encouraging parents to do the same. Parents have been encouraging each other also, sharing how they got to reconnect with their kids and really have discipleship - not just Bible studies.

Yes, GCF-ICS has not seen each other in-person for more than 9 months. No, we have not grown apart. By God's grace, ICS has grown closer with His love at the center of the community through the Growth Groups. Christ is always at the center - which has allowed relationships to be celebrations of God's love and faithfulness. It is a place we can ask, "Where was God?" and be reminded by our testimonies that He never left. He is there in our friendships, families, classrooms, and conversations. It is only with Jesus that we have thrived.

Without Jesus, a Christmas celebration is just noise. Without Jesus, a community is just a crowd of strangers. Without Jesus, a manger is merely a feeding trough. Jesus' birth was used by God as a time to bring people together as the shepherds shared to their community the good news of the Savior being born. When we come together in Jesus Christ during this pandemic, even virtually - it indeed will begin to look a lot like Christmas. ■

# CHURCH UPDATES

## GCF RELIEF OPERATIONS FOR #UlyssesPH VICTIMS

We are accepting CASH donations for the typhoon victims.

Email a copy of your transaction slip to [finance@gcf.org.ph](mailto:finance@gcf.org.ph) with the subject "Typhoon Ulysses"

## EMMANUEL — GCF CHRISTMAS MUSICAL 2020

Celebrate Christ with us on December 20, 2020.

Invite your friends and family as we proclaim the good news, God with us!

## ELECTION OF CHURCH LEADERS

Church members can visit [election.gcf.org.ph](http://election.gcf.org.ph) to see the list of candidates for the Board of Elders and Council of Deacons.

## PRE-REGISTER FOR THE IN-PERSON WORSHIP SERVICE

To know more about the safety guidelines and restrictions, and to reserve a seat,

visit <https://tinyurl.com/GCFreservation>. Pre-registration is open every week from Wednesday (5:00pm) to Saturday (11:59pm) or upon full booking, whichever comes first.

## ONLINE VISITOR'S CENTER

Are you here for the FIRST TIME? We'd love to get to know you more! Visit [tinyurl.com/GCFwelcome](http://tinyurl.com/GCFwelcome) today!

## BELONGING (Midweek Series): CHRISTMAS IN A COVID WORLD

December 16 (Wed), 8:00 p.m., GCF Facebook Page

## REMINDERS OF GOD'S CARE AND FAITHFULNESS

Mondays and Fridays, 8:00 p.m., GCF Facebook Page

## LIVestream (Youth LIVE Worship)

Saturdays, 5:00 p.m. on [youtube.com/user/gcfyouthlive](https://youtube.com/user/gcfyouthlive)

## KIDS' L.I.F.E. ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sundays, 1:00 p.m. on Facebook at [@GCFKidsLIFE](https://www.facebook.com/GCFKidsLIFE)

## THE GCF FAMILY'S HOUR OF PRAYER

Thursdays, 8:00 p.m. to 9 p.m. via Zoom

## UNO-DOS GG (TAGALOG GG) / YOUNG ADULTS

Sundays, 1:00 p.m., via FB Messenger Room, with Shane An

# WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING

For offerings during this time, please consider the following options:

## BANK DEPOSIT OR TRANSFER

Account Name: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, Inc.

- **BDO** (BDO Corporate Center Branch)  
Savings Account 000661590216
- **China Bank** (Ortigas ADB Branch)  
Savings Account 1112-02006218
- **UnionBank** (UB Plaza Branch)  
Checking Account 0005-9001-0426
- **Robinsons Bank** (Main Office Branch)  
Savings Account 1000-3010-0017-355
- **Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI)**  
(Ortigas Emerald Branch)  
Peso Savings Account  
Account name: Greenhills Christian Fellowship, Inc.  
Account No.: 9823 0217 01
- **Metrobank** (Ortigas Sapphire Branch)  
Savings Account 629-3-62919733-9
- **GCash (L) and PayMaya (R)**  
(Scan QR code below)



## CREDIT/DEBIT CARD THROUGH PAYPAL

Please visit [www.gcf.org.ph/give](http://www.gcf.org.ph/give) for instructions.

Please email a copy of your transaction document to [finance@gcf.org.ph](mailto:finance@gcf.org.ph) so your giving can be properly recorded and an official receipt can be sent to you.

## COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE EFFORTS

You may also designate your giving to our church's efforts to help frontliners and the vulnerable. Just indicate "For COVID-19 fund" when you email your transaction document ■



## Greenhills Christian Fellowship

Know Christ and Make Him Known

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☎ Fax No. (02) 8632 1357, Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

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