

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

JESUS WHO TESTS THE HEARTS OF MAN

REV. LITO VILLORIA | JOHN 6:1-21

From Jerusalem, the scene shifts quickly to Galilee where Jesus fed the multitude and walked on water. These miracles prove that Jesus is the anticipated Prophet from the Old Testament, who not only provides eternal life, but also the essential needs of man. It also demonstrated His power over nature.

During the Passover, Jesus sat on a mountain with his disciples as a multitude followed because of His miraculous works. When Jesus saw the large crowd, He posed a problem to His disciples on how to provide them with food to eat. Jesus already had a solution, but He asked to test them so their faith in Him would be strengthened (John 6:1-6).

Philip and Andrew replied they did not have enough resources to feed

the multitude. Philip implied they did not have the money to purchase the needed food. Andrew, on the other hand, replied that the five barley loaves and two small fish from the boy were not enough. After commanding the people to sit down, Jesus took the loaves and after He gave thanks, He distributed the loaves as well as the fish to the full satisfaction of everyone (John 6:7-11).

After feeding the multitude, Jesus instructed His disciples to gather the leftover bread so "that nothing may be lost." The disciples were able to gather twelve baskets of leftover bread. When the people saw this miracle, they wanted to seize and install Jesus as king, but He withdrew to the mountain (John 6:12-15). When it was already dark, the disciples crossed the sea to

Capernaum, where they faced a violent storm. The disciples saw Jesus walking on water, which caused them to be frightened. Jesus identified Himself, and the disciples were glad to take him into the boat. They immediately reached the land where they were headed (John 6:16-21).

Jesus is the Promised Messiah who provides, preserves and protects His people. But, oftentimes, He tests us to strengthen our faith in Him. In this sermon, we will be challenged to put our complete trust in Jesus, especially in those moments when our faith in Him will be tested. ✱

WHERE IS GOD IN OUR TRAGEDIES?

DR. MARIA SUSAN GONZALEZ-LIM

As I sipped my favorite chocolate drink one warm April morning, I scoured through the newspaper for world news—wars, riots, raids, the dipping economy, then I thought, "so what else is new?" But, what caught my attention most was the conviction of James and Jennifer Crumbley to 10-15 years behind bars for involuntary manslaughter. This came two years after the school shooting at Oxford, Michigan, which killed four innocent students and wounded scores of others. Their son, 15-year-old Ethan, was the lone gunman. What?! It was a landmark trial and unprecedented! For the first time, parents were convicted for their son's crime. Ethan was convicted to life imprisonment without parole.

I was shocked, stunned, to say the least! What had gone wrong? The prosecution tried its best to convince the jury that the parents were to blame. Others pointed their fingers at the failures of the school system and the political system on gun control. While all of this was taking place, the victims' families had to watch from the sidelines, even as they grasped at straws, trying to make sense of the indescribable pain of losing their sons and daughters. The Crumbleys, themselves, had to grapple with their own mixed emotions of guilt, remorse, and devastation over their 15-year-old son being sentenced to life imprisonment.

One cannot help but ask, "Where is God in all these? Why did He allow this to happen?" What was depressing is that it seems to be another win for Satan, who's out to steal, kill, and destroy families.

Thus, for the past 10 years, the Lord has laid the burden on the hearts of

the Family Builders Ministry to join the Father in His work among the families.

Genesis 12:3 ESV
"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all families on the earth will be blessed through you."

Our heart's desire is to see parents leading and teaching their children in the ways of the Lord.

Proverbs 12:6
"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn away from it."

The Lord has put it in our hearts for families to develop a culture of blessing within their homes, where parents honored one another and their children, and children honored their parents. So the children "will be like trees planted by streams of water, whose leaves will not wither, whose branches will bear fruit in due season, and everything they do will prosper"(Psalm 1:2-3).

In this light, the Family Builders Ministry encourages everyone to join Family Day, a day of Fun & Play. Spend time with your family. Create memories for your children to remember even when they have grown. Join us from 7 am to 5 pm on Wednesday, May 1, 2024. We encourage everyone to bring food to share with other families.

Back to the case of the Crumbleys, Jennifer Crumbley gave her final testimony before the conviction was handed down by the judge. Let me quote an excerpt, "I am not the same person I used to be prior to November 30, 2021. This tragedy has changed who I am. Through this struggle, I gained wisdom, and I also gained God. I have learned

to depend on Him for peace and strength alone in that struggle. We cannot totally predict what will happen in this life. We can, however, choose what to do with the tragedies and hardships and make them a thing to work for good. I have also learned the meaning of unconditional love."

John 11:4 NIV
When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

It is difficult to understand how tragedies challenge us to recognize God's power and ability to fulfill His will and His way. Faith trusts that God's purpose is greater than our understanding.

FAMILY DAY REMINDERS

With the much-anticipated Family Day swiftly approaching, here's a gentle reminder to ensure we're fully prepared for a day of joy, connection, and shared moments. Kindly remember to pack the following essentials to make our gathering even more enjoyable:

1. Extra shirt (of your team colour)
2. Water tumbler
3. Small towel
4. A ballpen
5. Extra food

Mark your calendars and set your alarms! We eagerly await your presence on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, from 7 am to 5 pm. Together, let's create lasting memories and strengthen the bonds of our cherished community. ✱

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