

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

JESUS AS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

JOHN 11:1-57 | REV. PARKIN YOUNG

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" - John 11:25-26

When Lazarus was ill, Mary and Martha, his sisters, sent word to Jesus. When Jesus heard about Lazarus' illness, the Lord did not proceed to where Lazarus was, but he decided to stay. Jesus said that this illness would not lead to death but would lead to God's glory (vv. 1-4).

Jesus stayed two days longer where He was. He even wanted to go back to Judea. The disciples, though worried, trusted in His plan. Jesus assured them that this was the time given to Him by the Father and that they need not worry (vv. 8-10). Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus had fallen asleep but would recover. The disciples, initially confused,

found comfort in Jesus's words, knowing that what would happen next would strengthen their faith, even Thomas (vv. 11-16).

Jesus came after Lazarus had already been entombed for four days. Martha went to Jesus and told him in faith that if He were present, his brother Lazarus would not have died. She expressed her trust and confidence in who Jesus is and what He could do. Jesus told and assured her that Lazarus would rise again. Martha said he would on the last day, but here, Jesus makes a bold and clear statement about himself: He is the resurrection and the life, and whoever believes in Him shall never die (vv. 23-27)!

Mary, the other sister, was also grieving. Upon seeing Jesus, she also expressed her faith that Lazarus would not have died if He had been present. Jesus, deeply moved and troubled, wept. This

emotional response from Jesus, a sign of his deep love and empathy, inspired those around him. He asked them to take Him to the cave and ordered that the stone be taken away despite the warning the body was already in the decomposition stage. Jesus prayed, then cried, 'Lazarus, come out!' And, Lazarus came out of the tomb (vv. 28-44).

When the people saw this, some believed in Jesus, and some went to the Pharisees and told them what happened (vv. 45-46). This led the Pharisees to convene and decide what to do with Jesus. So they plotted to kill him, which led Jesus to not walk openly in their midst (vv. 45-57).

May we all be affirmed that Jesus is the only one who gives Eternal Life to those who believe! ✨

DISCIPLE MAKING: THE CORNERSTONE OF EFFECTIVE CHURCH PLANTING

REV. DONG VILLATITO

The Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28:19-20, calls followers of Jesus to «go and make disciples of all nations.» But making disciples should lead to establishing churches that multiply disciples. Christ's command to make disciples and His declaration of building His church go hand in hand.

Through the command was given to Jesus' immediate disciples, it continues to resonate with believers today. It's not merely a historical directive but a timeless calling that shapes our faith journey. The same thing holds true with building the church. Jesus Himself said that He will build His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. The mission remains the same – make disciples that produce healthy disciple making churches.

Making disciples and planting churches are fundamental aspects of the Christian faith. This process involves more than just increasing numbers – it's about fostering genuine relationships and nurturing spiritual growth. When we invest in others spiritually, through teaching, guiding, training and support, we create

environments where people can encounter God's love and find their spiritual family.

These new faith communities serve as spiritual incubators, providing safe spaces for new believers to ask questions, develop their gifts, and learn to serve. It's a rewarding experience to witness someone's spiritual growth, from taking their first steps in the faith to becoming a leader who can guide others.

One of the strengths of church planting in context is its adaptability to different cultures and communities. While the core message of Jesus remains unchanged, the way it's shared can be tailored to resonate more deeply with people's specific experiences and contexts.

An example of this principle in action can be seen in the story of the family of Pastor Paski and Jo Cefre. In late 2019, they purchased a small piece of land near the mountains in Brgy. Tumalim, Nasugbu, Batangas, about half an hour from Tagaytay. Initially envisioned as a peaceful retirement house, their plans for a simple rest house evolved into something more significant and eternal.

Despite not knowing anyone in the local community, the Cefres were drawn to the area's natural beauty and tranquility. Pastor Paski often contemplated how they would spend their time there, even considering taking up farming as a new pursuit.

However, it seems that God had different plans for their property. What was intended to be a rest house became a place where people learned the gospel, found salvation and learned to serve God. This transformation illustrates how multiplying disciples can lead to the establishment of a church, aligning with God's kingdom agenda. The small group that started from ten children now thrives as a vibrant rural church of eighty people every given Sunday.

In essence, the story of the Cefres demonstrates that disciple-making and church planting are not mutually exclusive endeavors, but complementary aspects of fulfilling the Great Commission. It's not a matter of choosing one or the other but rather embracing both as integral parts of the Christian mission (Matthew 16:18). ✨

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