

GCFSM SUNDAY BULLETIN

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SERMON OUTLINE

JESUS AS OUR LORD AND GOD

JOHN 20:1-31 | ELDER RAYMUND SANCHEZ

Jesus told his disciples that there would come a time when they would not see him, but he would return, and their sorrow would be turned to joy. We know this pathway of sorrow to joy in our text as the disciples begin to grasp the truth that Jesus has risen from the dead.

Jesus had been in the tomb for over a day, and Mary Magdalene visited while it was still dark. Mary stumbled upon a sight that caused her great concern: the tomb had been opened.

Jesus spoke about his suffering, death, and resurrection, but the disciples and his other followers

did not understand or believe it. In our passage, we read that Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John did not expect the tomb to be empty; they did not believe the resurrection would happen, at least not in their lifetime, with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

John highlights Jesus's resurrection in a unique way by showing us different snapshots of Jesus meeting people and opening their eyes to the truth of the resurrection. Peter, John, Mary, and Thomas have different experiences with Jesus. The Lord met with them to help them believe that He

had risen! John saw it and understood what Jesus taught as he examined the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene was the first to interact with Jesus and was transformed into the first witness to the resurrection.

We learn from these various accounts that it is an act of faith to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. There is great evidence for it, but each person has to overcome some unbelief to put their trust in the truth that Jesus rose from the dead. Today, the Lord is still in the ministry of helping us all believe and stand firm in our faith through His Word. ✠

SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

REV. LITO VILLORIA

As I dwelt in the Lord's presence during my annual study leave last September, God affirmed through His Word and various circumstances that our theme next year is going to be "Shine as Lights in the World." This theme is anchored on Philippians 2:14-16, where the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you **SHINE AS LIGHTS IN THE WORLD**, ¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain." Philippians 2:14-16

With the pressing challenges we face in the present generation where moral depravity is getting worse, we need to heed Paul's command to "shine as lights in the world", "in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation." As followers of Christ, we are in the world, but we are not of the world. Instead of being drawn away from Christ by the dark influences of this world, we need to keep directing people to Jesus, the Light of the World.

Based on the context of Philippians 2:14-16, we need

to constantly do three things in 2025: (1) keep grumbling out of our system (2) keep glowing for Christ in dark times and (3) keep grounding ourselves in God's Word. In the end, our prayer is that in every season and in every circumstance, we will be able to reflect and reveal the light and glory of Christ to people around us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our 2025 sermon series entitled, "Reflecting and Revealing the Light and Glory of Christ," based on the Book of Philippians and Book of Judges, we will be reminded of who God is and how He works in the ever-changing moral and spiritual landscape we are in and learn how to shine as lights in the world. From January to April, we have twelve (12) sermons from the Book of Philippians. Then, from May to November we will have twenty (20) sermons on the Book of Judges. We will have ten (10) Real Talk Sermons during Communion Sunday (second Sunday of each month) from March to December. The remaining Sundays will be an open topic for special occasions.

In both books of Philippians and Judges, the key challenge is to reflect and reveal the light and glory of Christ. Our anchor verse for the Book of Philippians cited above obviously reveals the main thought. But, for the Book of Judges, there is no one verse

that captures the theme of our sermon series. However, one of the key purposes of the book is to remind the Israelites about the danger of being influenced by Canaanite religion and society as they settle in the Promised Land. Instead of delighting and depending on pagan practices and gods, they need to return and rely on Yahweh.

As we go through each book, we will discover the theme of each pericope, draw theological principles and discern practical applications on how we can shine as lights in the world amidst this crooked and twisted generation. This sermon series on the books of Philippians and Judges will come with a devotional and Growth Group study material. I encourage you to start reading and reflecting on these books!

It is my prayer that God will use these two books for us to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ as we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures. And as we develop a deeper love for Christ, may we have the burden to keep directing people to Him as we walk alongside in their journey of faith. May God continue to build us up through His Word as a church family for His glory! ✠

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