



2/3 December 2017
Vol. 39, No. 49

Choosing Caesar Over Jesus

John 19:1-16

English Services

(8 & 10:30 a.m., & 5:30 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Fellowship
Worship through Giving
Worship in Music
Scripture Reading
Anthem
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Celebration of the
Lord's Supper
Benediction

Filipino Service

(3 n.h.)

Paghahanda
Tawag sa Pagsamba
Pagsamba sa Pag-awit
Pagkilala sa mga Bisita
Pagsamba sa Pagbibigay
Natatanging Bilang
Pagbasa ng Salita ng Diyos
Pakikinig sa Salita ng Diyos
Pastor Emer Manaloto
Pagdiriwang ng Banal
na Hapunan
Pangwakas na Panalangin
at Basbas

*See inset inside for the **Traditional Service (Sat., 6 p.m.)** program.*



Choosing Caesar Over Jesus

Today's Message (2/3 December 2017) /
John 19:1-16

SOME SAY, "I'M GOING TO ANALYZE, SCRUTINIZE, AND EVALUATE JESUS CHRIST." IN REALITY YOU'RE NOT JUDGING HIM; YOUR REACTION TO HIM IS JUDGING YOU BECAUSE HE IS THE JUDGE OF ALL MANKIND REGARDLESS OF HOW YOU DECIDE.

Whenever the Romans took over a nation, they promised change—good roads, law and order, protection, and peace—but life would be under a dictatorship. It ruled with an iron hand. In Rome the innocent got justice, and the guilty got justice—not mercy, but justice. Yet the trial of Jesus was the greatest travesty of justice in history. The charges were based on hearsay, and even His false accusers disagreed with each other (*Mark 14:55-56*). The result was a public fishing expedition by the Jewish council that finally landed a fabricated charge of blasphemy.

When it was referred to Pilate, however—with his own eternal destiny at stake—he chose Caesar over Jesus. When the crowd was incited by hate and by the scheming religious leaders became a lynch mob hungry for blood, they chose Caesar over Jesus.

It is a terrible thing when political power gets into the hands of men who get drunk with it and disregard the laws of God or the lives of men. But nothing is worse than people who sell their souls because they choose the fake gods of men rather than the God above all men. Notice how people chose Caesar over Jesus for various reasons:

1. PILATE: POWERFUL PEOPLE WHO CHOOSE CAESAR OVER GOD, FOR SELFISH REASONS

- The soldiers played a cruel Roman game with Jesus. As a result, the Lord was so mutilated His face was unrecognizable. Isaiah 52:14 says, "There were many appalled at Him—His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and His form marred beyond human likeness."
- Why did Christ not answer Pilate's question in v. 9? Pilate had ignored the truth he had already received, and God does not reveal more truth until we accept what He has already given.
- Our Lord's silence before Pilate was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7. Peter later used this as an example for suffering Christians to follow (*1 Peter 2:18-23*). When you are questioned or ridiculed because of



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your faith, remember that while you may be on trial before your accusers, they are on trial before God.

- The irony is that as Pilate sat down in his judgment seat to make a decision, he himself was being judged on the basis of his response to Jesus Christ. Some say, "I'm going to analyze, scrutinize, and evaluate Jesus Christ." In reality you're not judging Him; your reaction to Him is judging you because He is the Judge of all mankind regardless of how you decide (*John 5:22*). The judgment seat you're occupying right now is for your own judgment. And how you respond to Him will determine whether you go to heaven or spend eternity in hell.

2. THE CROWD: THE MAJORITY WHO CHOOSE CAESAR OVER GOD, BECAUSE THEY REJECTED GOD'S WILL

- The gullible crowd was incited to hatred. Nothing in this world warps a man's judgment as hatred does. Once a man allows himself to hate, he can neither think nor see straight, nor listen without distortion. Hatred is a terrible thing because it takes a man's senses away.
- See how religious pretenders wish to appear righteous and just, zealous for God, submissive to government. But in the struggle with Pilate, they reveal themselves as jealous, petty schemers who are willing to commit murder to protect their own interests.
- John wants us to see that it is impossible to sustain such facades. Jesus said there would come a time when there is "nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known" (*Luke 12:2*). God will strip away all pretenses and reveal us for what we really are.
- The most astonishing thing the crowd said that day was: "We have no king but Caesar." It was the most astonishing about-face in history. The Jews were prepared to abandon every principle they had in order to eliminate Jesus.
- Throughout history, the nation of Israel has undergone unparalleled pain and problems. Why? Rejecting the Father in the Old Testament, refusing the Son in the Gospels, and resisting the Spirit in the book of Acts caused the collapse of Israel. But God is faithful. The message of Romans 9-11 is that even though Israel has rejected Christ, God will keep His promises to her. God's faithfulness to His promises overrides even our unfaithfulness to Him.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Pilate was forced to a choice. Will it be Jesus Christ or Caesar? The crowd was forced to a choice. Will it be Jesus Christ or Caesar? They made their dreadful choice, "we have no king but Caesar."

Every man must make his choice about Jesus Christ. He says, "He who is not with me is against me" (*Matthew 12:30*). The minute you make a decision against Christ, you make a decision for "Caesar."

You'll be surprised how often people choose Caesar over Jesus, even today ■

Traditional Service (Saturday, 6 p.m.)

Prelude
Call to Worship
Worship through Praise
Worship through Giving
Worship in Music
Doxology
Worship through Fellowship
Scripture Reading
Anthem
Worship in the Word
Pastor Larry Pabiona
Celebration of
the Lord's Supper
Benediction

WHAT IS THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO THE ORDINANCE OF COMMUNION (THE LORD'S SUPPER)?

In the first place, Jesus instituted this because, in His own words, we "do this in remembrance of Me." What about Jesus that we should remember then? His suffering and death, where the bread symbolizes his Body being pierced, torn and shredded, like the bread, which was originally broken and shredded. Then the fruit of the vine symbolizes his shed Blood that came from multiple wounds from literally his head to foot. For grapes to produce wine, they must first be crushed and pressed until there is nothing left. It was just like Jesus who died from losing all His blood, as He took the place of the Jewish Passover lamb to become the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of both Jews and Gentiles who believe.

But why should we remember? It is because we have heard this crucifixion story so often, and we know it so well that it loses its impact oftentimes. We know Jesus was beaten. We know He was marred more than any man and was eventually nailed to a tree. But I think it would do us well sometimes to consider what Jesus willingly went through with you on His mind and in His heart. We were on His mind. We were on His heart when He took those blows, felt that pain, and endured unspeakable suffering. It was all for me. It was all for you.

And when we remember, when we treasure, when we value the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus once again, it

affects us greatly. We are moved to worship, adore, and give thanks. Some feel constrained to rejoice audibly, some quietly. Some on the other hand are moved to repentance when they begin to realize their present lives do not reflect the incalculable price of their salvation.

And perhaps God's most desired response from us is to learn to love God back, beginning with an immensely grateful heart. Because how do we learn to love God back? Only as we reflect on things such as these—His great love for us shown through Jesus Christ. Like babies taking awkward, faltering steps, we begin with gratitude, and it leads us to worship. And as worship and gratitude overflow in our lives, we begin to do things for God out of love—not out of fear of punishment, or fear of losing blessings, or fear of what people will think. Reading and studying the Bible becomes a joy out of love, and obeying becomes a joy, also out of love.

Finally, the Communion is a reminder to look forward, for as we do this, we "proclaim the Lord's death until He returns." It means we long for that return, something far better than death, and yet as we wait we commemorate with joy His great love and sacrifice for us.

May you meet God personally at the Lord's Table today ■

Ablaze Devotional

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God.

- Job 19:25-26 (NSRV)

GCF PRAYER GATHERINGS AT THE CHAPEL:

The GCF Hour of Prayer
Tuesdays, 6-7 a.m.

Midweek Prayer Service
Wednesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

We have come to the final month of 2017, and a lot of things have happened, both good and bad. But in all the days that have passed, we who are redeemed by the love of God are reminded of His work in the beginning. All six days He created. And all six days culminate to the day of rest.

A day also came when we chose to work the days on our own, selfishly defining what is good. We rebelled from the One who alone is good, and so we reaped toil and hardship for our work. It seemed that what once were days that point to rest now point to restlessness and pain.

But God is always at work. Despite the cursed ground, and the pain to every birthing, He is always at work to show His love for us.

The powerful God moved in with us in weakness. The One who once walked with man in the Garden laid His feet on the ground that is cursed. The Creator chose to be creative, from His greatness He chose smallness, becoming an infant. The independent and self-sufficient became dependent on human breasts.

Christmas is that time of the year which reminds us of when God came down and took on human flesh, sharing and bearing our toil and pain. As the creative God, He has also transformed our toil into service, and our pain into healing.

As we prepare in celebration of Christ's birth, may we also see it as an invitation to receive His redeeming love. Let us open our tired hands and restless hearts so that we may receive rest that He alone can give and create ■

Ministry Opportunities + Other Announcements

Welcome, NEW MEMBERS!



Carolina Diaz
Jonah Rose B. Orong
Herminigelda P. Rafols
Allen Roy A. Unson
Eiryll I. Chan
Isaiah S. Mendez
Micah S. Mendez
Ashley Denise Robale
Joseph N. Barrameda
Eurofrocina D. Pempel
Maria Teresa E. Roxas

Angelica P. Barrameda
Sagar Ghishing
Purnima Ghishing
Girly B. Lu
Vince Patrick S. Lu
Redeemer D. Mendez
Chona B. Orong
Janmarie B. Orong
Joseph R. Villordon
Beatrice Salumbides



GCF FAMILY CONFERENCE

December 10, 2017 after the 10:30 a.m. service at Auditorium B | Open to all official members of GCF included in the church roster



ELECTION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Election Days: December 16 and 17 (Sat. and Sun.)
Early voting commences December 9. Ballots will be available at the Ministry Information Booth.



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SERVICES

featuring "He Shall Be Called"
December 16 (Saturday): 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
December 17 (Sunday, two services only):
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 nn. and 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Weekly Stewardship REPORT

The Stewardship Report for the Week of November 26, 2017 will be published next week.

Flower Ministry

The flowers this week are given with praise and thanksgiving to God for His love and faithfulness by the Basilad family and the Messiah College.

Please call 632 1354 to 56 for inquiries on how to participate in this ministry.



Love God, love others.
THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT



Update from our missionary apprentice Theo Espinosa: Hello church. I've had the opportunity to work with the homeless on my third week here in Japan.

We praised and worshipped through songs followed by a sermon, just like in our Sunday services. After that, we formed groups to discuss the passage and share how it can help the homeless. Then we handed out food to keep them warm and minister further.

I've been regularly helping out with Pastor Ken Taylor's ministry of choirs. I also got to listen to a Japanese pastor preach about Sabbath and how the Japanese community can learn from what the Bible says about it.

I also met up with Jj-san, a Japanese-Hawaiian missionary who is helping me with the Japanese language and culture. We talked for hours about how the Gospel is badly needed in a country that does not see the need for it. For a first-time hearer of the gospel, the sacrifice that Christ did is considered shameful in the eyes of a typical Japanese. So it makes you think, how can we preach something so powerful that they consider shameful? This is one of the many questions we need to deal with here in Japan.

Please continue to pray with me for the salvation of the Japanese and for the missionaries here like our supported missionary, Andrea Roldan ■

You may also bless others by sharing your own shepherding or discipleship journey in loving God and in loving others. You may e-mail your story to lifejourney@gcf.org.ph.

ON THE COVER: Relief from the south panel of the Arch of Titus in Rome, depicting Roman soldiers carrying the Temple's menorah and other Temple artifacts. This arch commemorated the victory of Titus, the Roman general who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Wikimedia). The siege and consequent destruction of Jerusalem was one of the watershed moments of the Jews' checkered relationship with the Roman Empire. *Consider praying for:* Jews all over the world, that they might know that Jesus is the Messiah and that they would put their faith in Him.

Join a GROWTH GROUP

HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE Y-GROUP

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m., and 4:30-5:30 p.m.
At GCF (Youth Center, 6th flr.)

ICU (Intimacy Care Unit) GG

for Couples aged 30 up
Saturdays, 4-6 p.m. at GCF (Rm. A109)

GREEN MEADOWS GG

for Couples aged 40 up
Every other Thursday, 8-10 p.m.
at Green Meadows Subdivision

NEW GG (GATHERING CONTACTS)

for Single Men aged 21-30
Tentatively scheduled on Sundays,
3-5 p.m. at GCF

YACIES TUESDAY GG

for Single Men and Women aged 30 up
Tuesdays, 7-10 p.m. at GCF (Rm. BM07)

SPORTS GGs (THREE GROUPS)

for Boys aged 11 to 18
Saturdays, 12 nn.-3 p.m. at GCF Multi-purpose Gym (6th flr.)

Pass by the GGEX (Growth Group Express)!

Sundays, 9:30-10:30 a.m., Room B123
Get a feel of what a Growth Group is like before you participate in one. Come and join us!

If you are interested in joining any of the small groups above, fill out the tear-off form inside this bulletin, drop it in the offering bag or submit it to the Growth Group booth at the lobby. For more information, you can text or call us at 0917 532 7740.

How may we SERVE YOU BETTER?

Fill-out this tear off form and drop it in an offering bag/box or at the Ministry Information Booth. Please check all that is applicable:

- I am a first-time guest.
- I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord today.
- I would like to know how to become a Christian.
- I am interested in becoming a member of this church.
- I want to join a Growth Group. (Specify age group: _____) (Specify group composition: _____)
- I want to start a Growth Group.
- I want to host a Growth Group.

Please share with us some information about yourself:

Name: _____

Age: ____ Landline no.: _____

Mobile no.: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Year of membership: _____

Name of Growth Group (if you already have one): _____

Today is 2/3 December 2017, and I attended the 8 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 3:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. (Sat) (encircle the time).

Write below any inquiry or prayer item that you want to ask or share.

God's Way to Heaven

THE GOSPEL

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God is holy and righteous: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). **He requires holiness of us as well:** "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

THE TRUTH ABOUT MAN

Man is sinful: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). **Sin demands a penalty:** "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST

Christ is the expression of God's love for us: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). **Christ paid the penalty of our sins and died for sinners:** "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18). **Through Christ, God offers man reconciliation:** "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

PRAYER: *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I believe that you died on the cross in my place, to save me from my sins, and I accept you as my Savior, and the Master of my life forever. Amen.*

Need someone to talk to?

Visit the Emmaus Road Counseling Center at the GCF Mezzanine floor or contact 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80 or 0917 532 7794 for inquiries.



Greenhills Christian Fellowship
Know Christ and Make Him Known

Ruby cor. Garnet Roads, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605
Tel. Nos. 632 1354 to 56, 635 0078 to 80, 635 0082 to 83 | Fax No. 632 1357
Mobile No. 0920 961 2964, Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
E-mail: email@gcf.org.ph • Website: www.gcf.org.ph

For hospital or house visitation, dedication service, or funeral service requests, please call or text 0917 532 7794.