

Introduction:

- *"Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid."* (Luke 23:50-53, ESV)
- My goal tonight is to paint the story of two men who stood for Jesus and made history, without even knowing it. We used to sing a song, "I wanna be a history maker."
- I am convinced that most history makers never knew they were making history. They were just loving well!

I. The Miracle Of The Burial Of Jesus

- A. There are several things we can learn and be encouraged from as we look at Jesus burial.
- B. Context and background give us lots of perspective on this portion of scripture.
 1. It was prophesied that Jesus would be buried.
 - a) We do not think much about this because to us it is natural that if you die you are buried.
 - b) But we have to acknowledge this: most crucified people were left on the cross to rot. *"And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth."* (Isaiah 53:9, ESV)
 2. The challenge to the prophetic word of Is 53:9 was this:
 - a) Jesus was considered a criminal. Criminals were left on the cross to be devoured by birds and to also rot.
 - b) That was the purpose of crucifixion; to send a message to all entering the city that crime will not be tolerated.
 - c) When the bodies were decomposed enough they were take down and thrown into the city dump. (Gehenna) This would be where the two thieves most likely went.
 3. It was a 'high Sabbath' and the Jews asked that the legs broken and the bodies taken down. Jn 19:31-ff
 - a) A 'high sabbath' was a sabbath that fell on the start of a Jewish feast. It was considered, "double holy."
 - b) And the reason for the breaking of legs of the crucified caused them to suffocate quickly.
 - c) Jesus was already dead and His legs had no need of breaking. But His side was pierced to make sure or confirm that he was dead. (The passover lamb) *"They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones;*

according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it." (Numbers 9:12, ESV) *"He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken."* (Psalm 34:20, ESV) *"For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken.""* (John 19:36, ESV) It is a miracle that none of His bones are broken.

4. It was a miracle in itself that Jesus was buried given the circumstances. By dying with the criminals and being laid in a rich man's tomb, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled.
 - a) So this gives us the context or setting. Let look at the people involved.

II. The History Makers

- A. Learning from the men who buried Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and Pilate.
- B. Joseph of Arimathea. What do we know about Joseph of Arimathea?
 1. According to Mark, he was a respected member of the Jewish ruling council. The same body of men who moved to have Jesus crucified.
 2. Luke says that Joseph did not consent to their decision or actions to crucify Jesus.
 3. Jn 19:38 States that Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus because he was afraid of the Jews.
 - a) He was a secret disciple because he was afraid.
 - (1) Have you ever been a secret disciple. Not wanting anyone to know you were a Christian?
 - (2) The good news is he had faith. It was little, but he had faith.
 - (3) The better news is he outgrew his secrecy! His little faith became bold faith.
 - b) He was a good and righteous man.
 - (1) He was good - speaks of his heart. He was morally right on the inside.
 - (2) He was righteous. He did good works. He was known to be a righteous man because of his works.
 4. He was willing to defile himself by touching a dead body and thus disqualify himself from participating in the passover and unleavened bread feasts. (Numbers 19:11)
 - a) Both Joseph and Nicodemus felt that it was more important to give Jesus a proper burial than to remain ceremonially clean so that they could participate in the Passover. This was a statement of honor!
 - b) They let go of their rituals and laid hold on Christ who was and is the true Passover Lamb.
 5. He was looking for the Kingdom of God. Luke 23:50-53
 - a) Like Simeon - Lk 2:25
 - b) Like Anna - Lk 2:36

- c) He was a secret disciple and looking for the Kingdom of God. Guess what? He found it. With little faith, he found the Kingdom!
- 6. He had courage to go to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus! Mark 15:42
 - a) It took courage for several reasons.
 - (1) Under Roman law those condemned to death lost the right to be buried.
 - (2) He Jewish peers would now know about him! That would cost him position, money, etc. Taking the body of Jesus communicated that he was a believer.
 - (3) As part of the Ruling council, Pilate would most likely want nothing to do with him. Why would he want to give him the body of Jesus when they pushed for his crucifixion?
 - b) It takes courage to do what is right in many situations.
- C. Nicodemus
 - 1. He was also a part of the Jewish Ruling council.
 - 2. Helped Joseph with the body of Jesus.
 - 3. He brought nearly 75-100 pounds of spices, myrrh and aloe.
 - 4. Their faith brought them together! Joseph and Nicodemus.
 - a) Their 'together' faith gave them courage to go public with their faith.
 - b) While the disciples are hiding, Joseph and Nicodemus are going public!
- D. Pilate
 - 1. He found Jesus innocent.
 - 2. His wife warned him: *"Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.'"* (Matthew 27:19, ESV)
 - 3. Pilate learns from Joseph that Jesus is dead and Pilate is surprised. Mk 15:42-45.
 - 4. Pilate wanted him confirmed dead before giving up the body of Jesus.

III. The Burial

- A. Joseph took down the body of Jesus from the cross.
- B. Joseph wrapped Jesus in a linen shroud.
- C. Joseph laid Jesus in his personal tomb.
- D. They put 75-100 pounds of spices in it.
- E. They rolled a stone in front of the tomb.
- F. The next day the stone is sealed and a troop of guards are stationed there to secure the tomb. But...the third day is coming!
- G. Burials are final. It is the last stopping point when your ticket is punched...unless you are Jesus!

Conclusion:

- We do not think of the burial as significant but it had to happen for Jesus to come up out

of the grave.

- Two men who helped fulfill scripture played a huge part but they are probably the most overlooked participants in the Passover story.
 - I wonder how many people with weak faith will be found in heaven having done some of the most astonishing things without ever having thought of it. They were just loving Jesus!

*"When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, **who also was a disciple of Jesus**. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away." (Matthew 27:57-60, ESV)*

*"And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, **took courage and went to Pilate** and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb." (Mark 15:42-46, ESV)*

*"After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, **but secretly for fear of the Jews**, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there." (John 19:38-42, ESV)*