

Sermon Title: When There Is No Hope

Sermon Series: Easter: The Road to HOPE

Scripture: Mark 15:40-47

Speaker: Pastor Ian Bonthron



“The days have been sunless for so long; why live as if the sky will soon turn bright?”

—Scott Hubbard – <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/stepping-through-darkness>

Mark 15:40-41 ESV

40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

When there is _____ hope, what do we do?

Mark 15:42-47 ESV

42 And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 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. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. 45 And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. 46 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. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

1. In Hopelessness, _____ Honor God

Luke 23:50-51a ESV

50 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, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action;

John 19:38a ESV

38 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...

Deuteronomy 21:23 ESV

23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.

Mark 15:43 ESV

43 **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**.

Mark 15:44-45 ESV

44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. 45 And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

"I can scarcely imagine what it would have felt like to live through this day. If there ever was a time of despair, this was surely it. And here, in this darkest, most despairing of hours, the Gospels present us not with abject, unmoving hopelessness, but with a beautiful display of devotion and loyalty to Jesus, [through] Joseph of Arimathea..."

—Gavin Ortland – <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/one-painful-and-beautiful-burial>

2. In Hopelessness, We Can _____ Honor God

Mark 14:46 ESV

46 And they laid hands on him and seized him.

Sacrificing:

- Celebrations
- Social Status
- Wealth

In hopelessness, how was Joseph able to courageously and sacrificially honor God?

Mark 15:43 ESV

43 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.

3. In Hopelessness, Keep _____ for the _____

Romans 4:18-20 ESV

18 In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

What do you do when there is no hope?

**Keep looking for the king because God is using our _____ and _____
obedience**

“We don’t know what God may do tomorrow with our efforts today. True obedience is never wasted. Who knows what glory might still be reverberating on the new earth, a trillion years from now, because of your difficult obedience today?”

—Gavin Ortland – <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/one-painful-and-beautiful-burial>

“With Joseph, take courage. Keep praying, keep waiting, keep looking for the kingdom you cannot trace. Set your weary heart like a watchman on the walls, asking and aching for morning. Obey your Lord in the darkness, and dare to believe that he will bring the dawn.”

—Scott Hubbard – <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/stepping-through-darkness>

Discussion Questions – March 24, 2024 – When There’s No Hope

Getting to Know You:

1. Have you ever participated in a project where there was “no hope” of it working? What was it? How did that make you feel?
2. Hopelessness is a very dangerous attitude. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

Into the Bible:

Read Mark 15:40-47

40 There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

42 And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 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. 44 Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. 45 And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. 46 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. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

3. What was something from the passage or sermon that surprised you, helped you, confused you, or bothered you?
4. What does this passage tell us about God? People? Living to please God?
5. Given how John describes Joseph in John 20:38 compared to what we see here of Joseph in Mark 15:43, what do you think caused this transformation in Joseph as he goes from fear and secrecy to demonstrating such public courage?
6. Have you ever stuck your neck out like Joseph did for Jesus? Would you share your experience?

7. We tend to sacrifice when we know there is hope. Why do you think Joseph was able to sacrifice so much, even in the face of hopelessness?

8. How have you seen God use obedience in hopeless situations for great good?

9. What are some comparisons and contrasts between God's Kingdom & the kingdoms of this world?

For Extra Study:

Read the following passages.

Matthew 27:57–61

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud 60 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. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Luke 23:50–56

50 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, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 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. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

John 19:38–42

38 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. 39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 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. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

10. From these passages, why do you think the gospel writers all gave a lot of attention to the burial of Christ?

11. Who aided Joseph in Jesus' burial?

12. What do you find challenging about trusting God?

13. What needs to change in your life so that you can live this out?

14. Jot down any insights, questions, or key observations.

Application:

1. What did courage look like in Mark 15:42-47? How does courage look in our day? How should courage look in your own life?

2. Are there areas of your life where you operate more as a secret and fearful disciple of Jesus? If so, what are some of the steps you can take to grow in the courage of obeying God?

3. In your relationships, what sacrifices do you need to make so you can honor God?

4. What are some ways you can keep "looking for the kingdom of God?" How can you encourage each other with these truths?