

MARK 15:42-47 "SECRET DISCIPLES?"

For as God had promised thousands of years ago in the garden **Genesis 3:15 . . .** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

The sovereignty of God in His preservation of the Messianic line is astounding

THE PASSOVER LAMB was tied to the altar and at the time of death the High Priest would pronounce "It is finished" in front of the multitude that was gathered for the ceremony.

Jesus at that exact moment makes the declaration...

IT IS FINISHED "te-tel-es-sty" IT IS FINISHED "Paid in Full."

WHAT IS FINISHED? As the JFB declares *"The Law is fulfilled as never before, nor since, in His "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross"; Messianic prophecy is accomplished; Redemption is completed; "He hath finished the transgression, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and sealed up the vision and prophecy, and anointed a holy of holies"; He has inaugurated the kingdom of God and given birth to a new world."*

The work had been done, redemption had been won... The war was over without a fight IT IS FINISHED "Paid in Full." **PRAY**

42 Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

John gives us a little more info... In his gospel chapter 19 and verse 31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day),

Deut. 21:22 *“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.”*

Passover was one of the highest high days. **So** the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. If the legs were broken the crucified could not push themselves up on the cross to exhale any breath. Romans wanting the death to be as slow as possible to show an example to those who mess with Rome. Vultures, wild dogs and insects could come and bring even greater shame and repulsion on the people who look on.

So they were more concerned about **defiling their land** than the **defilement of their hearts** by killing a innocent man. So callous in their killing of our Savior yet so careful in their keeping of the Sabbath. **Committing the greatest of all crimes in the sight of God... rejecting His Son.**

Back to Mark 15 verse 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, **coming and taking courage**, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus *Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals - but the Jews wanted no such horror displayed at the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses to friends or relatives for proper burial.*

44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; Typically, crucifixion was a long, agonizing death... **up to 3 days** - yet Jesus died in a matter of hours. However, the death was confirmed by careful examination of eyewitnesses and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time.

Hughes points out... “So Joseph knew that Jesus’ body would be tossed into a common criminal’s grave to complete the **humiliation**... and **THAT** Joseph could not bear”

It appears this “secret disciple” has come out from behind the scenes AND RISKS IT ALL.

As verse 43 states, “coming and taking courage”, **This was a Brave move by Joseph . . .**

bravery and courage?

* Pilate still steaming over being manipulated by the Sanhedrin into killing Jesus, could have implicated Joseph under the charge of treason.

* Brave identifying with Jesus openly, he could lose his coveted position in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court. **Identifying himself with Jesus makes him an enemy of the state.**

* What’s more he would be **dressing a dead body** during the hours of preparation for the Sabbath and he would become ceremonially unclean. **Big deal for a PROMINENT COUNCIL MEMBER**

SPURGEON Of course, Joseph took a risk with this request. He risked Pilate's animosity or scorn, but it mattered little to Joseph. "Is there no holy chivalry in you? Can it be so, that, because God has dealt so well with you, and trusted you so generously, you will repay him by denying his Son, violating your conscience, and turning your back on truth; and all for the sake of being in the fashion? I know it may seem hard to receive the cold shoulder in society, or to have the finger of scorn pointed at you; but to bow before this selfish dread is scarcely worthy of a man, and utterly disgraceful to a Christian man."

45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. **46** Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him

in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. **Tombs such as this were very expensive, and it was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give his up - but it was only going to be for a few days!**

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

Luke 23:50 Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51 He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.

Matthew 27:57 Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

John 19:38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being 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 the body of Jesus.

39 And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Nicodemus... a member of the counsel, a Pharisee and highly respected teacher in Israel.

Both have kept their relationship with Jesus in the shadows.

Joseph goes to the man that put Jesus on the cross and asked if he may take him down... permission granted.

Joseph brings the **linens** and **Nick** brings the **spices**... this must be done quickly... **before the trumpets proclaim sundown.**

Imagine with me as they arrive at the cross . . . The one who made the heavens, the one who made the earth, the one who formed their

life long before birth... **hanging, mutilated, lifeless** flesh. The one who powerfully proclaimed the necessity of being born again... **DEAD.**

Gire paints ... *Like a ton of bricks, emotions fall heavy on them.* They begin to weep... for Jesus... for the world that did this to Him... and for themselves. For all they didn't say. For all they didn't do. **For all the times they stayed in the shadows.**

Joseph plants a ladder under the crossbeam and ascends with uncertain steps. **Timidly at first,** for this is not the work of a rich man, **he wrestles with the stubborn nail in Jesus' wrist.**

Nicodemus watches from the ground. His robe is swept by a sudden gust of wind, and the words Jesus spoke to him that windswept night rustle in his mind: ***"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of man must be lifted up."***

LIFTED UP. The words thump through his encyclopedic mind and come to a stop in Isaiah, the prophecy of the Suffering Servant. ***My servant will be... lifted up.***

Awkwardly, Joseph lowers the body to the waiting arms of Nicodemus, who steadies himself under the weight. His arms tremble as they wrap around Jesus' lacerated back, slick with blood. They put the body on the ground and stand back to get a hold on their emotions. They survey the damage the Romans have done. ***The body lies there, pathetically, in a twisted pose.*** His head is punctured from the Jerusalem thorns. His face, swollen and discolored from Roman fists. His shoulders, pulled out of socket from the pendulous weight of the last six hours. His hands and feet--bored and rasped by seven inch spikes--expose ragged muscles and white bone. **His back and rib cage, clawed from a savage cat-o-nine tails.**

Nicodemus sees before him the incarnation of Isaiah's words: *"His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness..."*

looks at the blood on his own hands and robe and pensively quotes from prophesy: **"so will he sprinkle many nations"**

The two kneel beside the servant who has suffered so much, and they gingerly work their **wet clothes** over his blood stained body...

Nicodemus continues: *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised and we esteemed Him not.*

In the quiet courtroom of their hearts, they realize that loving Jesus in private was just another way of despising him and esteeming Him not. And their hearts ache at their sins of omission.

Sponging down the rib cage, Joseph's hand touches the gouge made by the spear. He looks solemnly at Nicodemus as he, to, recalls Isaiah's words.

"He was pierced for our transgressions"

The descending sun hurries their work. They wrap the body with strips of linen, layered with **aromatic** spices. Both are ashamed for not doing more to prevent this brutal tragedy. **They had influence. Their words carried weight.** They could have objected more forcefully. They could have warned the disciples. They could have done something. Anything. **But no, they had their careers to worry about.**

Shouldering this guilt, they pick up the body to take it to Joseph's tomb. Suddenly, Nicodemus remembers one other thing from Isaiah's words, "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." It's as if Jesus graciously gave them the verse. **For as Nicodemus says this, he looks at Joseph, and they realize that they have done something.** They have spared the Savior the shame of a criminals' burial.

THIS IS THEIR MOST HEROIC HOUR. An hour when hatred against Jesus is most intense. **An hour when friendship with Him is most dangerous.** This is the hour that late blooming love draws them out of the shadows... to fearlessly befriend their Savior.

Better late than never... No doubt it's true!

Yes Joseph was a secret disciple... but he did something almost no one else could do.

Peter, James, John, or even the many women who served Jesus couldn't provide a tomb, but Joseph could and did.

Joseph thought, "God provided this tomb for me, but I will give it back to Him." What special thing has God given you so you can give it to Jesus?

Whatever you have to give... give it!

Your wealth... your time... Bob gave me his liver.

We are the salt of the earth! We are the light of the word! **Don't let your candle be hid under the the bushel of being undercover but boldly placed on a candlestick to give light to all those around you.** Light it obvious when it penetrates darkness.

Dearest Saints . . . now is the time . . . the hour is upon us to boldly proclaim life found in Jesus

How Joseph and Nicodemus must have been plagued by Regrets... what a horrible way to come to an end of life... No regrets

[Harriet Beecher Stowe](#): The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone.

[Sydney J. Harris](#): Regret for the things we did can be tempered by time; it is regret for the things we did not do that is inconsolable.

Prayer by Ken Gire... Let's pray... *Dear Suffering Servant...*

How they have marred and disfigured you. How they have despised and rejected you. How you have suffered. As I see you there on that cross, I fall to my knees, knowing that where I stand is sacred ground. Thank you, O Lamb of God, who, being led to the slaughter, takes away the sin of the world. Thank you for being pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Thank you that in your blood there is cleansing and in your wounds there is healing.

*I pray that standing at the foot of your cross would do for me what it did for **Joseph and Nicodemus** – that your love would completely overwhelm me and draw me to you. Regardless of what others may say. Regardless of what consequences, they pale by comparison to what you suffered for me.*

*I can hardly comprehend such a love. **Love that came so costly to you and yet so freely to me.***
To me, so fearful. To me, so long in the shadows.

*Thank you for the power of the cross, a power that can draw **cowards out of the shadows** and turn them into **heroes**.*

Help me to realize that a late blooming love is better than a love that doesn't bloom at all. And help me to realize that even a late blooming love – whether that of a thief on the cross or that of a religious leader on the ruling council – even a late blooming love is fragrant and beautiful to you.....

God is speaking... are you listening? Come now just as you are... your seat is an altar... will you commit to go full throttle for Jesus... No regrets... empower me Jesus to live for you. Surrender... no more wasting my life I don't want to end with regrets.

I have decided to follow Jesus... No turning back, no turning back!

Minor miracle, Unbiased opinion, Constant change, Partially completed, Legal brief, Half dead, Found missing, Original copy, Government organization, Rolling stop, Pretty ugly, Rap music, Jumbo shrimp... **secret disciple**