

The Burial: The Conquest of Fear



John 19:31-42

- Two groups of people were involved in our Lord's burial: The Roman soldiers (John 10:31-37) and the Jewish believers (John 19:38-42).
- It is remarkable that the Roman soldiers did not do what they were commanded to do – break the victims' legs – but did what they were not supposed to do – pierce the Savior's side.
- John saw a special significance to the blood and water that came from the wound in the side.
- When the soldiers were through with their gruesome work our Lord's friends took over.
- Jesus' death conquers fear for the genuine believer.

1. Jesus' death conquered fear in a secret disciple: Joseph of Arimathea (v. 38).

- A. He was a counsellor, a senator, a member of the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling body of Israel.
- B. He was a "good and just" man.
- C. He was a man looking for the Messiah and the Kingdom of God (Luke 2:25-27; Matt. 19:23-24)
- D. He was, however, a man who feared to stand up for Jesus.
- E. He was a man changed by the death of Jesus.
 - a. Joseph actually "asked Pilate for the body of Jesus."
 - b. Joseph risked the disfavor and discipline of the Sanhedrin.
 - The thing that turned Joseph from being a secret disciple to a bold disciple seems to be the phenomenal events surrounding the cross.
 - Every secret believer needs to study the cross of Christ.
 - Joseph courageously asked to take care of the physical body of Christ.
- F. He was a man who cared deeply for Jesus.
 - This act alone would leave no doubt about the effect of the cross upon Joseph.
 - Position, power, wealth, fame – none of these make us bold for Christ.

2. Jesus' death conquered fear in a cowardly disciple, Nicodemus (v. 39).
 - However, the cross apparently changed Nicodemus just as it had changed Joseph.
 - At some point Nicodemus, although not understanding, knew that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - By purchasing the spices for the Lord's body and helping in the burial of Jesus, Nicodemus took his stand for Christ.

3. Jesus' death stirred open an unashamed commitment.

- A. They openly took the body of Jesus from the cross.
- B. They openly cared for Jesus' body.
- C. They openly gave Jesus the best.
- D. They openly buried Jesus just before the Sabbath.
- Note the strength of their commitment: no one from Jesus' family or from among His own disciples had stepped forward to claim the Lord's body.

4. The need for haste was threefold.

- A. The Sabbath or Saturday, the day of worship for Jews, began at 6p.m.
- B. Jesus died at 3:pm in the afternoon (Mark 15:33-34, 37).
- C. The Romans either dumped the bodies of crucified criminals in the trash heaps or left the body hanging upon the cross.