

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon September 5, 2021  
Luke 23: 50 – 56 “Cherishing the Body of Christ”

44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last. 47 So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!" 48 And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. 49 But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. 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. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. 54 That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. 55 And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " 8 And they remembered His words.

I. Introduction

a. Today's sermon: Luke 23: 50 – 56 “Cherishing the Body of Christ”

1. Joseph of Arimathea, a good and just man v50,51
2. Joseph openly loves Jesus v52,53
3. Jesus was crucified on the Preparation day v54
4. The women from Galilee openly love Jesus v55,56
5. Questions to know, love and obey God

II. Joseph of Arimathea, a good and just man v50,51

a. 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.

b. “A good and just man”

1. Good
  1. of good constitution or nature
  2. useful, salutary
  3. good, pleasant, agreeable, joyful, happy

4. excellent, distinguished
  5. upright, honourable
  2. Just: righteous, observing divine laws
    1. in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God
      - a. innocent, faultless, guiltless
      - b. used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life
        - i. only Christ truly
      - c. approved of or acceptable of God
    2. in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them
  3. Henry "His character is that he was *a good man and a just*, a man of unspotted reputation for virtue and piety, not only *just* to all, but good to all that needed him (and care to *bury the dead*, as becomes the hope of the resurrection of the dead, is one instance of goodness and beneficence); he was a person of quality"<sup>1</sup>
  4. Mark 15:43 "a prominent council member"
    1. Prominent:
      - a. bearing one's self becomingly in speech or behaviour
      - b. of good standing
      - c. honourable, influential, wealthy, respectable
  5. Mt 27:57 "a rich man from Arimathea"
    1. Rich: wealthy, abounding in material resources
- c. A council member who had not consented to their decision and deed
1. Recall, after His betrayal and arrest, Christ's overnight examination by the high priest, and then the morning meeting of the council, and then how they took Him to Pilate for crucifixion. Joseph did not go along with this decision and deed.
  2. Henry "a counsellor, a senator, a member of the sanhedrim, one of the elders of the Jewish church. Having said this of him, it was necessary to add that, though he was of that body of men who had put Christ to death, yet he *had not consented to their counsel and deed* (v. 51), though it was carried by the majority, yet he entered his protest against it, and followed not the multitude to do evil. Note, That evil counsel or deed to which we have not consented shall not be reckoned our act.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- Nay, he not only *dissented* openly from those that were enemies to Christ, but he *consented* secretly with those that were his friends”<sup>2</sup>
3. Bock “Bock “He probably rejected the deal with Judas, the council’s verdict, and their sending Jesus to Pilate.... Joseph must have been absent from the evening trial, which gave a unanimous decision (Mark 14:64). In Luke’s view, Joseph is a remnant saint, one who is faithful in the midst of the disobedience of others and who participates in the fulfillment of promises made to the nation”<sup>3</sup>
  4. Consider the courage God gave to Joseph, flowing from His devotion to Christ, and note the unfolding fruits of courage in Joseph’s life. First, he stands against the decision and deed of the Jewish leaders, even though clearly in the minority, and even though this council has proven itself vicious.
    1. Jn 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.”
    2. Mark 15:43 “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.”
- d. From Arimathea, a city of the Jews
1. Bock “Joseph is from Arimathea, probably his birthplace or earlier home, since he has a tomb in Jerusalem and serves on the Sanhedrin. All of the Gospels mention the locale in order to prevent confusion with any other Joseph (Matt. 27:57 = Mark 15:43 = John 19:38). The exact location of Arimathea is not certain. Many suggest Ramah (Samuel’s birthplace), which is known as Ramathaim-zophim (1 Sam. 1:1)... This town is located about five miles north of Jerusalem.”<sup>4</sup>
  2. Arimathea = "heights"
    1. “the name of several cities in Palestine. The one mentioned in Mat. 27:57, Mk 15:43, Lk. 23:51, Jn 19:38 appears to have been the same as the birthplace of Samuel in Mount Ephraim.”
- e. He was also waiting for the kingdom of God
1. Mt 27:57 “who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus”
  2. Mk 15:43 “who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God”
  3. Jn 19:38 “being a disciple of Jesus”
  4. Note how being a disciple of Jesus means you waiting for the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>2</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

<sup>3</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [\*Luke: 9:51–24:53\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1873). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>4</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [\*Luke: 9:51–24:53\*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1873–1874). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

5. One way to be a disciple of Jesus is to pray the way He instructed:
  1. Lk 11:1-4 "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." 2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."
  2. Waiting for the Kingdom of God to come to earth as it is in heaven is essential to being a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.
6. Certainly, here we see the source of Joseph's courage, the melting away of his fear of the Jews, replaced by His devotion to Christ and His Kingdom.
  1. Henry "he believed the Old-Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, and expected the accomplishment of them. This was the man that appears upon this occasion to have had a true respect for the Lord Jesus. Note, There are many who are hearty in Christ's interests, how, though they do not make any show in their outward profession of it, yet will be more ready to do him a piece of real service, when there is occasion, than others who make a greater figure and noise."<sup>5</sup>

III. Joseph openly loves Jesus v52,53

- a. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.
- b. So, this good man, with the respect of the people, known to be just, having national influence and notable wealth, because of His devotion to Christ, steps out of the obscurity of unexpressed faith and walks into the good works prepared beforehand by Christ for him to do. Risking everything he has, he doesn't send someone else to secretly ask Pilate. He doesn't send someone else to get the body of Jesus. He doesn't have someone else touch and hoist Christ's dead body down from the cross. He himself wraps the body of Christ in linen. Joseph's arms lay Jesus' lifeless Body in his tomb. Joseph cherished Christ and His Body.
- c. Henry "He *went to Pilate*, the judge that condemned him, and *begged the body of Jesus*, for it was at his disposal; and, though he might have raised a party sufficient to have carried off the body by violence, yet he would take the regular course, and do it peaceably. 2. He *took it down*, it should seem, with his own hands, and *wrapped it in linen*. They tell us that it was the manner of the Jews to

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<sup>5</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

roll the bodies of the dead, as we do little children in their *swaddling-clothes*, and that the word here used signifies as much; so that the piece of fine linen, which he bought whole, he cut into many pieces for this purpose. It is said of Lazarus, *He was bound hand and foot*, Jn. 11:44. *Grave-clothes* are to the saints as *swaddling-clothes*, which they shall out-grow and put off, when they *come to the perfect man*.”<sup>6</sup>

- d. Nicodemus and Joseph worked together
  1. Jn 19:39 “And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.”
  2. Bock “In a detail that the Synoptics lack, John 19:39 mentions that Joseph and Nicodemus anointed Jesus with one hundred pounds of spices, an amount normally reserved for a king. Such anointing was common, though the amount of spices was not”<sup>7</sup>
  3. Note how the Lord God gave these two men one another’s encouragement. Would either of them have courageously stepped out of secret-disciple status without one another? Perhaps, but surely their plan to work together as brothers following Jesus was a great encouragement to each man.
  4. Rushdoony “History has never been dominated by majorities, but only by dedicated minorities who stand unconditionally on their faith.”
- e. “laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.”
  1. Just as Jesus emerged as a newborn from a virgin womb, His lifeless Body goes to rest in a virgin tomb.
    1. Henry “But it was *a sepulchre in which never man before was laid*, for he was buried on such an account as never any one before him was buried, only in order to his rising again the third day by his own power; and he was to triumph over the grave as never any man did.”<sup>8</sup>
  2. Jesus’ Body was not buried in a hole dug into the earth. His Body was placed into a man-made tomb, a cleft hewn into the rock for the purpose of placing a dead body.
    1. Exodus 33 “18 And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” 19 Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I

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<sup>7</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [\*Luke: 9:51–24:53\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1875). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>8</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

will have compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." 21 And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

3. John tells us more about the place of Christ's tomb

1. Jn 19:41,42 "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 there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby."
2. So, by God's Providence, Joseph's tomb is nearby, allowing time complete their service to Christ without breaking the Sabbath that was drawing near.
3. Also, note how verse 41 brings together Christ's death and burial with a garden, especially that the tomb was in a garden. Just as Creation began in new life from a garden, the new Creation begins in new life in a garden resurrection.

IV. Jesus was crucified on the Preparation day v54

a. 54 That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

1. Recall prior sermons regarding the year of Christ's death being AD 30. And, in this year, Nisan 15 (Passover) began at sunset on (what we now call) a Friday. So, this day of Preparation (Nisan 14) was the day on which Jesus was crucified, a Thursday. So, the Last Supper with His disciples was not the full Passover meal, but rather the first unleavened bread meal of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
2. Hence, at this moment in the city, great turmoil is underway because of the prior darkness. Hardly any lambs have been slain. The preparation efforts prior to the Passover meal have been through into confusion and rush. As Christ our Sacrifice is being prepared and laid in His tomb, the slaughtered lambs were being prepared and laid into the cooking fires.

V. The women from Galilee openly love Jesus v55,56

- a. 55 And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.
- b. Again, note how these women are commended. They never ran away. They stayed with Jesus, all the way from Galilee. They watched His Body all the way into the tomb, and when they couldn't stay with Him, they were preparing spices and fragrant oils for Him, and they were resting on His Sabbath according to His commandments. If there were ever a reason to break the Sabbath

commandment, surely it was to anoint His body, but instead they anointed Him with their obedience to His commands.

1. Henry “busy as they were in this preparation, they *rested on the sabbath day*, and did none of this servile work thereon, not only according to the custom of their nation, but *according to the commandments* of their God, which, though the day be altered, is still in full force: *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy...* Who attended the funeral; not any of the disciples, but only *the women that came with him from Galilee* (v. 55), who, as they staid by him while he hung on the cross, so they *followed* him, all in tears no doubt, and *beheld the sepulchre* where it was, which was the way to it, and *how his body was laid in it*. They were led to this, not by their curiosity, but by their affection to the Lord Jesus, which was *strong as death* and which *many waters could not quench*. Here was a silent funeral, and not a solemn one, and yet *his rest was glorious.*”<sup>9</sup>

VI. Questions to know, love and obey God

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<sup>9</sup> Henry, M. (1994). [\*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume\*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.