

Fulfilled - John 19:31-37
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

While it may seem to be an obvious detail, the idea of Jesus' burial is actually an important aspect in understanding the crucifixion event. You would think it would be sufficient to say that Jesus died and rose again, but all of the early creeds and confessions remind us that Jesus was crucified, died, was buried, and then rose again (see I Corinthians 15:3-4). All four Gospels give attention to the fact that Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body, took Him off the cross, wrapped him in burial clothes, and laid Jesus in a new, freshly cut, and unused tomb that was owned by the wealthy aristocrat who was also a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. John's Gospel includes the presence and participation by Nicodemus, the Pharisee who had come to Jesus by night (John 3), and was perplexed when Jesus told him that to enter the Kingdom of God Nicodemus must be born again. Later Nicodemus would take a soft stand in defense of Jesus when the Pharisees were starting to act like a mob looking to lynch Jesus. In John 7:50, he reminded the council that if they were going to arrest Jesus they were required to give him a fair hearing. We meet Nicodemus for the third time here, taking Jesus off the cross, and it is not a random thing. Both Joseph and Nicodemus were part of the inner circle of ruling Jews, and were around the trial of Jesus, but not in favor of the outcome. Still, they had placed their faith in the Jewish system and the religious rites found in the sacrifices and celebrations including the Passover. Jewish Law is clear, touching a dead body renders a person unclean for a week, which would mean that these men could not participate in the Passover. Furthermore, to take Jesus' body and give Him the burial of a king would have been a public act and driven a wedge between these two men and the Jews who called for the death of Jesus, thus ending any political and social aspects for these two men. John wants us to see the acts of these men as a response of genuine saving faith by people who see Christ as their Savior and King.

As I mentioned, the burial of Jesus is not just a mere fact in the story, for all the Gospel writes and early believers the burial of Jesus is a key element of the event and crucial for understanding all that Christ accomplished. 17th Century Presbyterian Pastor John Flavel wrote a sermon titled *The Fountain of Life Opened Up: Christ's Funeral illustrated, in its Manner, Reasons, and excellent Ends*, in which he explains the importance and implications of Jesus' funeral and burial. In it he shares four reasons the early church understood the burial of Jesus to be theologically and missionally important.

Reason 1. First, it was necessary Christ should be buried, to ascertain his death; else it might have been looked upon as a cheat: for, as they were ready enough to impose so gross a cheat upon the world at his resurrection, "That the disciples came by night, and stole him away," much more would they have denied at once the reality, both of his death and resurrection, had he not been so perfumed and interred. But this cut off all pretensions; for in their kind of embalming, his mouth, ears and nostrils were all filled with their spices and odors; bound up in linen, and laid long enough in the tomb to give full assurance to the world of the certainty of his death; so that there could be no latent principle of life in him. Now, since our eternal life is enrap up in Christ's death, it can never be too firmly established. To this, therefore, we may well suppose Providence had special respect in his burial, and the manner of it.

Reason 2. Secondly, He must be buried, to fit the types and prophecies that went before. His abode in the grave was prefigured by Jonah's abode three days and nights in the belly of the whale, Matt. 12:40. So must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Yes, the prophet had described the very manner of his funeral, and, long before he was born, foretold in what kind of tomb his body should be laid, Isa. 53:9 "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:" pointing, by that expressions at this tomb of Joseph, who was a rich man; and the scriptures cannot be broken.

Reason 3. Thirdly, He must be buried, to complete his humiliation; this being the lowest step he could possibly descend to in his abased state. They have brought me to the dust of

death: lower he could not be laid; and so low he must lay his blessed head, else he had not been humbled to the lowest.

Reason 4. Fourthly, But the great end and reason of his interment was the conquering of death in its own dominion and territories; which victory over the grave furnished the saints with that triumphant "epinikion" song of deliverance, 1 Cor. 15:55. "O death! where is your sting? O grave! where is your destruction?" Our graves would not be so sweet and comfortable to us, when we come to lie down in them, if Jesus had not lain there before us and for us. Death is a dragon, the grave its den; a place of dread and terror; but Christ goes into its den, there grapples with it, and forever overcomes it; disarms it of all its terror; and not only makes it to cease to be inimical, but to become exceeding beneficial to the saints; a bed of rest, and a perfumed bed; they do but go into Christ's bed, where he lay before them. For these ends he must be buried.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Weds | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 2 Timothy 2 | 2 Timothy 3 | 2 Timothy 4 | Proverbs 1 | Proverbs 2 | Proverbs 3 | Proverbs 4 |

Reading from this past week: John 19:38-42

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: John 20:1-23

Family Worship

Hosanna (Praise is Rising) - Paul Baloche version here - note: the kids have been practicing this song and are preparing it for our Easter worship.

<https://youtu.be/VMBDWG9tseU>

Gospel Project

Story: Jesus Triumphant Entry

Main Point: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Big Picture Question: Who saves us from our sin?

Answer: Only Jesus saves us from our sin.

Scripture: Mark 11:1-11

New City Catechism

Question 12: What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?

Answer: Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive. Tenth, that we are content, not envying anyone.

Verse: James 2:8

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

Scripture

John 19:38-42

*Have you been to a burial service or visited a grave site? Was it a happy or sad experience? Why?

*Why do you think Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea chose to bury Jesus?

*How is Jesus' burial different from anyone else's? What does Jesus burial tell us about what Jesus accomplished for us?

Prayer

*Give thanks that the grave of Jesus proves that death does not have the final say.

*Pray for our Good Friday Service and our Easter Celebration this week.