

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 27:55-61 | The Burial of Jesus
Sunday May 31, 2026

WELCOME:

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

REVIEW:

We continue our verse-by-verse expositional study of Matthew's Gospel this morning.

Last Sunday, we wrapped up the *Passion narrative*.

Jesus' *Passion* comes from the term "suffering."

The *Passion* narrative spans from Jesus' prayer and betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane through his death on the cross.

As we studied Jesus' death last week, we learned it was the one perfect sacrifice for sin.

There is no other way for sin to be forgiven, except through by God's Son—sin is that serious.

Jesus' death has infinite worth and is enough to forgive every sin of every Believer.

So please don't believe the lie that says your past, behavior, upbringing, etc., is so terrible that you are unforgivable.

We also witnessed five miracles that happened at Jesus' death.

Just as there were miracles at Jesus' birth, there are miracles at His death.

1. Darkness
2. Curtain
3. Earthquake
4. Saints were resurrected
5. Possible conversion of the Roman soldiers.

Last Week KEYPOINT 2:

Because of Jesus' death, Believers can approach God the Father directly.

God's people no longer need a human priest because Jesus is the High Priest.

There is no need for a curtain to block access to the Father because the Son is the Mediator.

- What does Jesus' death mean for you personally?
- What's it mean for us as a church corporately?

Jesus said, "tetelestai"—"It is finished!"

Maybe that's your word for the week.

I also hope you had time to review the reflection questions in my sermon notes to deepen your understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done.

Please remember that when you know God's Word, you know God Himself.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we'll study the burial of Jesus.

At first glance, the burial may not seem important.

We think, "Jesus died, so of course He was buried."

However, Jesus' burial carries important theological truths that the world, the flesh, and the devil want to deny or contradict.

Jesus burial proves that He really died—and if Jesus really died, then there must be a real resurrection.

And the reason the world, our flesh, and the devil want to argue this fact is because if Jesus didn't really die—then the opposite would also be true— there can be no resurrection.

So there's been some wicked “substitution” theories and rumors that have denied both Jesus' death and resurrection.

One theory suggests that the Roman soldiers actually crucified Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus's cross, instead of Jesus.

Another theory states that one of Jesus's brothers was a twin and was crucified instead of Jesus.

Islamic tradition teaches that when Jesus was arrested, God rescued him by taking him alive to heaven and creating another man to look like Jesus, whom soldiers and Jews crucified instead (Qur'an 4:157–158)

A fourth theory involves Judas kissing a different man in the Garden of Gethsemane, and they crucified him instead.

Beyond these substitution theories, there is the well-known “swoon theory.”

The “swoon theory” says that Jesus didn't die on the cross but instead lost consciousness, then somehow revived in the tomb, unwrapped himself from the 100 pounds of linen and spices, moved a massive stone by Himself, and walked on nail-pierced feet to His disciples.

Lastly, there is the accusation that the Disciples stole the body after the burial—which we'll deal with in a few weeks.

However, Scripture affirms the physical burial of Christ as both a historical fact and a theological necessity.

The Apostles Creed:

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

The Nicene Creed:

(He) was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried;

Jesus burial is a part of the Father's redemptive plan— Christ died as a substitute for sin, was buried, and then rose from the dead on the third day.

That's the Gospel in a nutshell.

This sequence—death, burial, and resurrection—is not only what happened to Jesus physically, but it also has profound spiritual meaning for us today.

For example: In baptism, we're buried with Christ and then raised with Christ—going under the water pictures burial and coming up pictures resurrection.

Romans 6:4—*Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.*

Jesus' burial is like a bridge between His work on the cross and victory in the resurrection.

Jesus' burial demonstrates the completeness of Christ's death both physically and spiritually.

Let's see how burial impacts our lives today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 27:55—Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him were there, watching from a distance.

Matthew 27:56—Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Matthew 26:57— When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

Matthew 26:58—He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. Then Pilate ordered that it be released.

Matthew 26:59—So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in clean, fine linen,

Matthew 26:60—and placed it in his new tomb, which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Matthew 26:61—Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith 1.1

“The Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible standard of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are absolutely necessary, because God's former ways of revealing His will to His people have now ceased.”

It's in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection where the OT—the Old Covenant and its former means of God's communication to His people have ceased. Why?

Because of today's passage.

PRAY:

How I love your instruction! It is my meditation all day long. (Psalm 119:97)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 27:55—Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him were there, watching from a distance.

We don't know the exact number of women who were there—Matthew says “many.”

“Many” (Greek adjective: polys/police) means a large number of women were present.

Let me ask an obvious question: *Where are the men?* Where are Jesus' Disciples?

We all know where Judas is—he committed suicide.

Where are the other Ten Disciples?

Where are Jesus' most committed people—*the inner circle*—Peter, James, and John?

Answer: The other ten Disciples are fearing for their lives and hiding.

At this moment, the only salvation they're interested in is their own skin.

During the greatest time of need, they are AWOL—absent without leave.

Today we have a similiar problem—men don't show up when they are needed the most.

Where are men in the workforce?

1 in 3 American men are not working—a record low outside the pandemic (The Washington Post).

As a social experiment this week, take notice of the lack of men when you go out to eat, visit the doctor's office, vet or dentist.

Where are the men in education?

Women now earn college degrees at higher rates than men (Wall Street Journal: Women: 46%, Men: 38%)

Where are men in the family?

Millions of children grow up without a father.

Countless studies have been done on absentee fathers—none of the results are good, healthy, or Biblical.

Where are men in the Church?

Where are the men in prayer groups? Bible Studies? Elders? Deacons?

“Are men faithfully carrying out God-given responsibilities?”

Examples include:

- loving and serving their wives (Ephesians 5:25)
- discipling children (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)
- providing for households (1 Timothy 5:8)
- leading through humility and example (Mark 10:42–45)
- being active in the local church (Hebrews 10:24–25)

Where are the men?

Imagine a huge moving truck pulling up to your neighbor's house. The truck is full, the kids are tired, and the boxes are everywhere.

Mom is exhausted, and Dad is noticeably missing—this void is physically noticeable and spiritually tragic.

Matthew 27:56—*Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

Big picture—at Jesus' burial, the women are present while the men hide—God makes sure we notice this.

God also makes sure we know who these women are.

Matthew 27:56—*Among them were Mary Magdalene,*

Mary Magdalene is the woman who had seven demons. (Luke 8:2).

Jesus saved her life, and from that moment of salvation, Mary never left.

Magdalene is not her last name, but represents where Mary was from, Magdala.

If she had a driver's license, it would say, "Mary of Magdala."

Matthew 27:56—*Mary the mother of James and Joseph,*

The second woman is also named Mary.

This James is not the James in the "inner circle"—Peter, James, and John.

There are lots of "James" in Scripture, so this James is also known as *James the Less* in Mark's Gospel (Mark 15:40) or *James the son of Alphaeus* in Matthew and the book of Acts.

Matthew 27:56—*and the mother of Zebedee's sons.*

The third woman is Salome—Zebedee's wife.

We know that Zebedee and Salome were married when we harmonize the Gospels.

The sons of Zebedee and Salome were James and John (Matt. 4:21), AKA “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17).

Why doesn't Matthew just state Salome as Salome?

Because Matt is being specific, the names Mary and Salome were extremely popular in Israel at this time.

Here's the irony of asking where the men are—

In Matthew 20, Salome went to Jesus, requesting that her two boys be given seats of honor next to Him, one to His left and one to His right.

What did Jesus say?

Matthew 20:22—*Jesus answered, “You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?”, “We are able,” they said to him.*

Salome wanted her sons to be honored—her sons wanted to be powerful—but talk is cheap when it comes to drinking the cup of suffering.

They weren't able—they didn't even show up!

The good news is that Jesus is in the business of changing cowards into courageous disciples.

These men who ran away will soon be transferred into bold apostles preaching the Gospel unto death.

Matthew 27:57—*When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came,*

All hope is not lost when it comes to men doing their duty.

Here we meet a new character in the Gospel.

Why does Matthew mention this little detail about Joseph being rich?

Isn't that odd? Is that how you would introduce him?

Because it's not so little.

500-700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote about this rich man named Joseph.

Isaiah 53:9— *He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man at his death,*

Joseph's gift of a tomb fulfills this prophecy.

There is no way that God the Father will allow His Son's body to be thrown in an open community grave like trash.

What's interesting is that this is the first time Matthew speaks of wealth in a positive manner.

Matt normally paints wealth as dangerous and full of temptation.

We know in other parts of Scripture that Abraham was a wealthy man. Job was a wealthy man. Solomon was the richest man on the planet.

But in Matthew's Gospel, we've seen Jesus teach his followers, most of whom are poor, to trust in their Heavenly Father in their poverty rather than seeking worldly wealth.

BTW, the last rich man we encountered in Matthew was the rich young ruler, who walked away from Jesus (Matt. 19:22)

What's Matthew's point here in mentioning that Joseph of Arimathea is rich?

Can a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven? How so?

Through faith—not finances.

Even Solomon didn't have enough money to buy grace.

Matthew 27:57— *When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea*

Where was Arimathea? And why is that detail important?

Just as there are a lot of *Marys, Salomes, and James* in Israel— there are also a lot of *Josephs*.

Matthew identifies who this Joseph is by his hometown.

Just as Mary Magdalene's driver's license said, "Mary of Magdala," Joe's said Joseph of Arimathea.

Mark's Gospel says that Joseph is a respected man who belongs to the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43–46)

The Sanhedrin is similar to our Supreme Court today—meaning that Joe is a very powerful man.

Luke portrays Joseph as a good and righteous man who disagreed with the Sanhedrin's decision to crucify Jesus (Luke 23:50–53).

So Joe is no "yes-man."

So although we know who this Joseph is, we don't know the exact location of Arimathea—our best guess is that it's 20 miles north of Jerusalem.

Arimathea might be the home of Samuel in the OT—Ramah.

Arimathea might be the old Ramah, but we're not sure.

What we are sure of is this...

Matthew 27:57— *who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.*

That's great news! Joseph is one of two people on the Sanhedrin who actually became disciples.

The other is Nicodemus.

John's Gospel emphasizes that Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38–42)

Why was Joe a “secret” disciple?

Answer: Because Joe was a member of the Sanhedrin—the very group that condemned Jesus and brought him to Pilate for execution.

Obviously, going public would have cost Joseph his seat on the Sanhedrin and would have jeopardized his economic, social, and his family welfare.

I hope this verse encourages many of you.

Maybe you feel like a secret disciple because you don't do much for God.

Maybe you're quiet and shy—and don't walk on water very often.

Maybe you haven't healed any lepers lately.

Listen—God has given you certain spiritual gifts to use at specific times.

You'll have your opportunity, so don't feel guilty.

Don't allow anyone to make you feel guilty—and don't put that pressure on yourself.

BTW, it's the secret disciples who really shine the brightest when life gets really dark.

Today, people sometimes criticize Nicodemus and Joseph for being secret disciples.

But where are Jesus' disciples? Where are the public outspoken ones?

Where are the rock stars of the Christian faith?—They were hiding.

But not Joseph. Not Nicodemus. They showed up and were present—they fulfilled their calling.

That's why the Gospel is a team sport—everyone in the church is equal, but we all have different roles.

Matthew 27:58—*He (Joseph) approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body.*

Three things to note:

1. Only a rich and politically connected man like Joseph could get access to Pontius Pilate.
2. Joseph risks everything to see Pilate.
3. Joe is the only male disciple to show any sense of bravery in all of chapter 27.

Why would Joseph risk his career and his life to ask for Jesus' corpse?

Because it was against Jewish law to leave a Jewish corpse on the cross/tree overnight. (Deut 21:22-23).

But the Romans would be happy to leave the bodies on their crosses indefinitely as a warning to others.

The Romans had zero respect for corpses.

Normally, they would throw the bodies into an open grave or into a burning garbage dump.

Obviously, Joseph doesn't want any of that to happen.

So once Joseph explained all this to Pilate and through the providence of God...

Matthew 27:58—*Then Pilate ordered that it be released.*

It's no surprise that, because of Pilate's business relationship with Joseph, Pilate actually granted Joe's request.

It's also no surprise that Joseph and Pilate are on the Father's divine timetable.

Had Joseph asked for Jesus' body any earlier, Jesus would still be suffering on the cross.

If Joe had come any later, he wouldn't have had time to take the body down and prepare it for burial.

But it is the right time.

Matthew 27:59—*So Joseph took the body,*

A proper burial was very important to the Jews.

The burial was the last honor the living could give to the dead.

John's Gospel reports that Nicodemus joined Joseph at the tomb and brought a hundred pounds of spices for the burial.

As hard as the Gospel writers are on the Pharisees, we see some insight into Joseph and Nicodemus here.

Just as all churches are not the same, neither are Pharisees all the same.

Not only do we see the courage of these men, but we also see their love for the Lord Jesus.

Because rich men normally don't do the work of slaves.

However, these men get their hands dirty—and in doing so, they have to touch a dead body— during Passover.

Jewish law said that anyone who touched a corpse was ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11–16).

So this timing becomes significant because it meant that they could not eat in the Passover meal.

This is a big deal—the Passover meal (sedar) stood at the center of Jewish religious observance for Passover itself.

KEYPOINT 1:

Joseph and Nicodemus chose Jesus over religion.

They chose the relationship over their religious duties.

So what happened to Joseph and Nicodemus when the Sanhedrin found out?

According to tradition, Nicodemus was excommunicated from the Sanhedrin and reduced to poverty.

Joseph was supposedly thrown into prison and miraculously freed.

Whether those traditions are true or not—let's not miss the main point.

When the Divine Coach called these men off the bench—Joe and Nic were present.

Matthew 27:59— *wrapped it in clean, fine linen,*

Unlike the Egyptians, who embalmed bodies and the Romans, who cremated bodies, the Jews wrapped the body in burial clothes with burial spices.

Mark and Luke say that the body was wrapped in linen, but Matthew is specific — *clean white linen.*

In other words, the best of the best—and only a rich man could afford unused “clean fine linen.”

Matthew 27:60—*and placed it in his new tomb, which he had cut into the rock.*

Poor people were buried either in shallow trenches or communal burial pits.

Joseph's tomb, on the other hand, had been built specifically for him and his family.

It was brand-new; it was above ground—thus very expensive.

Matthew 27:60—*He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the tomb.*

This tomb was the deluxe edition; it had a state-of-the-art, rolling-stone feature—like a giant sliding door on a sloped track.

Most tombs like this had small square stones for the entrance, just large enough to keep the animals and thieves out, but not Joe's tomb.

Many people wonder how Joseph and Nicodemus could roll this great stone against the entrance, yet after the resurrection, people say it takes many people to roll the stone away from the tomb.

The reason is that the stone and its slot/track were on an incline, making the grave easier to seal but much more difficult to open—think of it like a security system.

Jesus was given a royal burial in a private tomb owned by one of the wealthiest men in the city.

KEYPOINT 2:

Jesus' burial is the beginning of Jesus exaltation.

Jesus said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30).

He completed the work and paid the price, meaning that His humiliation was finished.

From that moment on, the Father was determined that His Son should be exalted/glorified forever and ever.

Matthew 27:61—*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there,*

We started this narrative with emphasis and importance of women, and now we'll end with the importance of women.

This passage is like a pair of bookends, with godly women—faithful women on both sides.

We know who Mary Magdalene is, but who is the “other Mary?”

The “other Mary” is most likely the mother of James the Less from verse 56—same woman.

These women were at Jesus’ crucifixion, and now they are at Jesus’ graveside.

Here’s something to think about—not only are these women faithful to Jesus, but they are faithful to the church and the world as official eyewitnesses.

KEYPOINT 3:

Without the women’s eyewitness testimony, the church would have no testimony.

Without these women at the burial site, these passages wouldn’t be in the Gospels.

In the first century, women were not viewed as credible witnesses in the court of law.

But in God’s kingdom, God always uses women when men cower.

See the book of Judges, you’ll read about three amazing women who have more courage than most men in the American Church today.

Deborah functioned as a judge, prophetess, and military leader in Judges 4:4.

Esther saved the entire Jewish race by risking her life (Esther 4:13–16)

Matthew 27:61—*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb.*

These women were grieving.

The American church does a lousy job at allowing people to grieve.

But God knows the importance of grief and grieving well.

That's why He has given us the book of Lamentations—to lament.

Psalms of lament were meant to be sung!

This book teaches us how to articulate pain, despair, and injustice before God.

It provides a supernatural voice when we have no voice at all.

Isn't it interesting how, rather than trying to explain suffering, Scripture provides a proper way for expressing our suffering

Second, Jesus Himself grieved and cried—the city of Jerusalem and the death of Lazarus.

So these women are grieving.

Make no doubt about it, they also know exactly where this tomb is—and that becomes very important for the resurrection.

APPLICATION:

Jesus' burial is not just a minor detail in the Gospel story, but a crucial part of God's redemptive plan.

Jesus' burial is both a historical fact and a theological necessity.

Jesus' burial proves that He really died, which leads to a real resurrection.

How does this passage impact your life?

1. Embrace the Fullness of the Gospel:

We've all heard that Christ has died, was buried and resurrected so many times, we're deaf to it.

There are two extremes where we can receive this truth.

First—Little Jesus Syndrome.

- I'm so great— of course God loved and saved me!
- Little Jesus equals a little faith.

Second—Big Sinner Syndrome (unworthy/unloveable/unlikeable)

- God may love you and has saved you but He doesn't really like you.
- God just tolerates you.
- Much of our image of God comes from the projections we place Him because of our own fathers.

What's the problem with both extremes? Me, myself and I.

When we make ourselves the center of our universe—we'll always be unhappy at some level.

Why? Because the Gospel is not about us—and we need to repent of that.

2. Be Present When Others Are Absent:

The women at the tomb and Joseph of Arimathea showed up when the Disciples were hiding.

Maybe the Lord is encouraging you to be present when it's difficult or unpopular.

3. Choose Relationship Over Religious Duty:

Maybe this passage encourages you to move towards a relationship with Christ and a commitment to your church— rather than going through religious motions.

4. Use Your Unique Opportunities and Gifts:

Joseph's wealth and position gave him a unique opportunity.

God has given you specific gifts, resources, and special moments.

Maybe this passage encourages/prepares you to step forward when God calls you, even if you feel like a “secret disciple”.

For those of you who don't believe the Gospel:

The Gospel is:

- Christ died for sinners (perfect)
- Christ was buried
- Christ rose again
- and salvation belongs to all who repent and believe

POP QUIZ!

1. What major section of Matthew's Gospel did we finish studying last Sunday?

- The Sermon on the Mount
- B. The Passion Narrative
- C. The Parables of the Kingdom
- D. The Olivet Discourse

Answer: B

2. Which key truth about Jesus' death was emphasized from last week's sermon?

- A. It was a tragic mistake
- B. It was a temporary defeat
- C. It was the one perfect sacrifice for sin
- D. It only covered small sins

Answer: C

3. Why is the burial of Jesus theologically important?

- A. It shows Jesus' followers were wealthy
- B. It proves Jesus really died, paving the way for a real resurrection
- C. It fulfilled Jewish burial customs only
- D. It allowed the disciples time to hide

Answer: B

4. Which of the following was not one of the "substitution" or denial theories about Jesus' death mentioned in the sermon?

- A. Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus
- B. One of Jesus' brothers, a twin, was crucified instead
- C. Jesus' body dissolved into spiritual light on the cross
- D. Another man made to look like Jesus was crucified, according to Islamic tradition

Answer: C

5. According to Romans 6:4, what does baptism picture?

- A. Only the cleansing of sin
- B. Buried with Christ and raised with Christ
- C. Joining a local church
- D. Receiving spiritual gifts

Answer: B

6. In Matthew 27:55, who is specifically said to be present at the crucifixion and burial scenes?

- A. The Roman soldiers only
- B. Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee
- C. Only the twelve disciples
- D. The Pharisees and scribes

Answer: B

7. Which three women did Matthew highlight by name or description at the cross and tomb?

- A. Martha, Joanna, and Susanna
- B. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons
- C. Priscilla, Lydia, and Phoebe
- D. Elizabeth, Anna, and Salome's sister

Answer: B

8. What contemporary concern did the sermon connect to the question, "Where are the men?"

- A. Men serving too much in the church
- B. Men dominating higher education
- C. Men absent from workforce, family, and church responsibilities
- D. Men refusing military service

Answer: C

9. Who is the rich man from Arimathea mentioned in Matthew 27:57?

- A. Nicodemus
- B. Simon of Cyrene
- C. Joseph, a respected member of the Sanhedrin
- D. Caiaphas the high priest

Answer: C

10. What key risk did Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take in caring for Jesus' body?

- A. They risked being arrested by Roman soldiers for theft
- B. They missed their opportunity to see their families
- C. They became ceremonially unclean during Passover and risked their status with the Sanhedrin
- D. They lost their Roman citizenship

Answer: C

11. What was the first keypoint drawn from Joseph and Nicodemus?

- A. Wealth guarantees spiritual maturity
- B. Joseph and Nicodemus chose Jesus over religion
- C. Secret disciples are always wrong
- D. Political power is necessary for bold faith

Answer: B

12. According to Keypoint 3, why are the women at the tomb so crucial for the church's testimony?

- A. They organized the first women's ministry
- B. They brought food for the disciples
- C. Without their eyewitness testimony, the church would have no testimony of the burial and resurrection events
- D. They wrote the Gospel of Matthew

Answer: C

DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. MONDAY: The Historical and Theological Necessity of the Burial

- a. Read Matthew 27:57–60. How does the burial of Jesus confirm that He truly died and was not merely unconscious or “swooning”?
- b. How do the various false theories about Jesus’ death and resurrection (substitution theories, swoon theory, stolen body, etc.) undermine the Gospel?
- c. How do the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed strengthen our confidence in the historical reality of Jesus’ death and burial? How might creeds serve the church today?
- d. In what ways does Jesus’ burial show that the Father is sovereignly in control even in the darkest moments?
- e. How does Jesus’ burial connect to Romans 6:4? What does it mean that we are “buried with Him” and “raised... to walk in newness of life”?

2. TUESDAY: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus: Choosing Jesus Over Religion

- a. Consider Joseph’s background: rich, respected, Sanhedrin member, initially a secret disciple. What did it cost him to go public with his faith at this moment?
- b. The sermon highlighted that Joseph and Nicodemus became ceremonially unclean by touching Jesus’ body during Passover. How is this an example of choosing Christ over religious appearance and comfort?
- c. Where might we be tempted today to choose religious routine or reputation over costly obedience to Christ?
- d. Have you ever felt like a “secret disciple” (quiet, unnoticed, not on the platform)? How does Joseph’s example encourage you regarding God’s timing and purposes for your gifts?
- e. What might it look like in our church for “quiet” or overlooked believers to step into courageous obedience when things get dark?

3. WEDNESDAY: Men—Responsibility and Courage

- a. In Matthew 27:55–56, many women are present while the male disciples are hiding. What does this contrast reveal about fear, courage, and faith?
- b. The sermon mentioned modern “absence of men” (home, church, society). Where do you see this most clearly in our culture? Where do you see it in the broader church?

- c. For men: In what specific ways do you sense God calling you to step up—at home, in the church, and in the community? Be as concrete as possible.
- d. For women: How can you pray for, encourage, and appropriately challenge the men around you to be faithful spiritual leaders without taking over their God-given responsibilities?
- e. As a group, identify one or two practical steps men in your congregation could take this month to be more spiritually present (e.g., family worship, serving, discipling younger believers).

4. THURSDAY: The Faithful Women: Presence, Witness, and Grief

- a. Why do you think Scripture is so intentional about naming these women and recording that they stayed at the cross and at the tomb?
- b. The sermon noted that without the women’s eyewitness testimony, the church would have no testimony at the burial (and later at the resurrection). What does that teach us about how God values women in His kingdom?
- c. How can our church honor and encourage the quiet, faithful, often unseen service of women (and men) who “just keep showing up” when others run?
- d. These women remained and grieved at the tomb. How does their example challenge the way we often avoid lament, pain, and grief in the American church?

5. FRIDAY: Grief, Lament, and the Hope of Resurrection

- The sermon mentioned Lamentations and the psalms of lament as God’s gift to help us voice our suffering. How comfortable are you personally with bringing raw grief and questions before God? Why?
- Think of a season of suffering you have endured (or are in now). How might the biblical pattern of lament (honest pain, appeal to God, trust in His character) reshape the way you process that season?
- How does the burial of Jesus dignify grief—showing that real death and real sorrow are part of the story—while at the same time directing us toward certain hope in the resurrection?
- Where do you see the tension between “It is finished” and “we are still waiting” in your own life right now?
- How can you better support others in seasons of grief so that no one suffers alone?

6. SATURDAY: Courage, Presence, and Faithfulness When Darkness Falls

- a. “When darkness falls: show up, stay faithful, honor Christ, trust God’s providence, stand firm in the Gospel.” Which of these five calls is most challenging for you right now, and why?
- b. Where might you be “hiding like the disciples” instead of stepping forward like Joseph and Nicodemus?
- c. Identify one specific context this week (home, work, neighborhood, church) where you sense God calling you to show up and be courageously present.
- d. How does the truth that Jesus’ humiliation is over and His exaltation has begun (even at His burial) give you confidence to persevere in obedience when it feels costly?
- e. How does meditating on the simple Gospel summary—“Christ died for sinners, was buried, rose again, and saves all who repent and believe”—comfort and stabilize you in times of fear or doubt?

7. Prayer Prompts

- a. Thank God that Jesus truly died, was truly buried, and truly rose again.
- b. Ask God to raise up courageous, faithful men and women in your church.
- c. Pray for “secret disciples” to be strengthened for public, costly obedience.
- d. Pray for those in your group who are grieving—that they would learn to lament with hope.
- e. Ask the Lord to help your church make space for both grief and joy as you stand firm in the Gospel.

Main Keypoint of the Sermon:

The burial of Jesus is not just a detail in the story, but a crucial part of God’s redemptive plan—it proves His real death, fulfills prophecy, and serves as the bridge between the cross and the resurrection. The burial demonstrates the completeness of Jesus’ sacrifice, marks the beginning of His exaltation, and highlights the faithfulness of those (especially women, as well as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) who remained present and faithful when others did not.

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