

Sunday, September 28, 2025

Responses to the Cross

Mark 15:16-47

- If you were with us last week, we looked at an in depth timeline of everything that happened on the night that Jesus was betrayed
 - In the span of 5 and a half hours, Jesus went through 6 expedited trials and had been unjustly sentenced to execution by the Cross
 - And in chapter 14 there is a very odd inclusion to the narrative in verse 51 it says, ***“And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.” -Mark 14:51-52 (ESV)***
 - Now, there is a lot of speculation as to who this man was and why this detail was included in Mark’s Gospel
- Some speculate that this is John Mark Himself, the writer of this Gospel who shared this from personal experience
- However, I believe that this just speaks to the secretive nature of Jesus’ arrest and trials because this essentially tells me that this young man, was woken up by the commotion of the military cohort marching out to arrest Jesus, he followed them in his P.J.’s and then once he was noticed they tried to seize him to keep him quiet and not notify anyone of what was going on
- If you weren’t here last week you can catch the audio or the written notes to that message on our website
- But now we are entering into the portion of scripture in the Gospel of Mark that accounts for us the death of Jesus.
- You know, very ironically back in 2016 the late Charlie Kirk tweeted this message

- ***“You can tell a lot about a person by how they react when someone dies.” -Charlie Kirk***
- Now, of course this was in context of the death of Fidel Castro, who’s death brought a variety of responses
- And Charlie was condemning those, many of whom were his colleagues, about celebrating the death of another human being
- Over the past one hundred years or so there have been a number of high profile deaths that have sparked divisiveness around the world
 - Going back to the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand that sparked the first world war
 - And in the United States specifically you have the likes of, but not limited to JFK, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Robert F. Kennedy, Rodney King, George Floyd, the latest to be Charlie Kirk
- And not to say that these were all the same circumstances, but what they all have in common, what made them such, high profile cases was not just the lives that those individuals had led, but the wide array of responses that came from their deaths
- But there was never a more high profile death in all of history than the death of Jesus Christ
 - And in Mark’s account he gives us the wide array of responses that took place at the time of Jesus’ death and we will look through those and see how we still have to respond to the Cross today.
- ***“And the soldiers led Him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed Him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on Him. And they began to salute Him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they were striking His head with a reed and spitting on Him and kneeling***

down in homage to Him. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple cloak and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.”

-Mark 15:16-20 (ESV)

- And so for the first response to the Cross that we see is:

- YOU CAN MOCK IT

- Mark says that the whole battalion was gathered. That word is the same exact word that John used when he describes the Band of soldiers that came to arrest Jesus
- It means, a mass of men, a military cohort, in most cases it was used to describes a battalion of 600 troops
- So this very well could be, the same group that came to arrest Jesus, the same ones that got knocked to the ground by Him merely declaring His identity, and witnessed Him put a guy's ear back on His head

- Even after seeing that unmistakable display of power, they still felt confident enough to mock him, spit on him, beat him over the head, make fun of him, dress him up in purple and burry a crown of thorns into his skull

- Why? Because they had mistaken His passivity during the trials and in that moment as weakness...when it was anything but.
- Jesus was God in flesh that had infinite power and wisdom, at any moment could call a legion of angels from heaven to do whatever He asked....so many times when crowds had tried to seize Him or stone Him, they couldn't because it wasn't His time.
- But for Him to allow Himself to be arrested, to stand there silently while His character is falsely attacked and accused, to allow Himself to kneel there and allow Himself to be scourged, and the flesh on His back ripped apart

- Then to stand there and allow a group of gentiles to continue to mock Him and torture Him even before He is led off to be crucified
- That took the greatest act of self control there ever could have been
 - He could have saved Himself at any moment!!
- Even further, verse 22 says ***“And they brought Him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.” -Mark 15:22-23 (ESV)***
- Now that mix of myrrh and wine as one commentator described it was *“a narcotic that was give to the condemned prisoners to dull their senses to the pain that they were about to endure.”*
- It was probably the only humane element of the Roman Crucifixion process
 - But Jesus didn’t even accept the pain relievers
- In His strength...He willing suffered to the full extent
- Then the soldiers begin to make a game out of his execution,
- And what would have gotten me the most is when the Pharisees would have started to chime in after He had been hung up on the cross!
 - Look at verse 24: ***“And they crucified Him and divided His garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified Him. And the inscription of the charge against Him read, “The King of the Jews.” And with Him they crucified two robbers, one on His right and one on His left. And those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself, and come down from the cross!” So also the chief priests***

with the scribes mocked Him to one another, saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with Him also reviled Him.” -Mark 15:24-32 (ESV)

- How Jesus was able to stay there, and just take it, I'll never understand
 - And Pharisees wouldn't even know just how profound their mockery was,
 - Because what they said was almost true....He did save others! He has saved countless others, and the current act of His death on the cross would be the catalyst for the greatest rescue story in all of humanity!
 - But where they were only half right, was when they said “He cannot save Himself.”
- Because it's not that He couldn't save Himself, it's that He wouldn't save Himself

- Because if He were to save Himself, He would not have been able to save us.
- And what He was doing was the greatest act of Love in all of human history.
- Jesus Himself said, ***“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” -John 15:13 (ESV)***
 - And that is exactly what Jesus was doing here in this moment.
 - This was being precluded to, ever since the earliest times in Genesis.
- ***“After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” -Genesis 22:1-2***

- What's interesting is that this is the first time the word love is used in the entire biblical narrative
- Why? Because He was pointing toward something
- So as the story goes, Abraham gets up early in the morning, chopped the wood for an offering and began the journey with his son and a few servants.
 - After traveling for 3 days, Abraham sees the mountain
 - He gets off his animal, and tells his servants to stay there with the animals.
 - He gathers the wood for the offering, gives it to Isaac to carry and they walk up the mountain.
- Isaac gets confused, and says “Dad? Uh, we have the wood and the stuff for the fire, but where’s the animal for the offering?” God will provide it son, “Ok”
- Then they get up to the place of the offering, they build the alter, then Abraham binds up the son that he loves, but before he takes the knife out, God stops him... ***He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” -Genesis 22***
 - God did not just provide a way for Abrahams son to be saved, but he was providing a way for the entire world to be saved.
 - God told Abraham in their very first interaction that he would be blessed in order

to be a blessing and that through him, all of the families of the earth would be blessed

- Matthew, in the beginning of his Gospel, tracks the lineage of Abraham.
 - A man, who Hebrews says was as good as dead, by a miracle of God has a son when he was 100 years old, and 42 generations later, we see another miraculous birth
 - The birth of Jesus Christ, who through His life, His death, and Resurrection, all of the families of the earth found their ultimate blessing.
 - And now at the end of Jesus' life, the picture of Abraham almost sacrificing his son, comes full circle.
- 2000 years later, God is providing His Son, who John calls the Lamb of God, on the same exact Mountain that Abraham took Isaac, and brings about the realization that ALL of this was pointing to a Truer and Greater Sacrifice

- *Abraham made a choice, in obedience, to be willing sacrifice his son.*
 - *God made a choice, in love, to actually sacrifice His.*
- *The wood for the burnt offering was laid on Isaac for him to carry.*
 - *The wood of the cross was laid on Jesus for Him to carry.*
- *God provided the ram to take the place of Isaac.*
 - *Then He provided the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.*
- Again, this is the context in which we see the word LOVE in the bible for the very first time. "Take your son, whom you love, and offer him up."
 - God wasn't being cruel, He was pointing toward the greatest act of Love that would ever happen in human history

- No greater love than this, than a man would lay down his life for his friends
- And what does Jesus tell His disciples two verses later? **“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.” -John 15:15 (ESV)**
 - Jesus, in the greatest show of strength and love, stayed on that cross, so that we could be called His friends.
- And those who reject Him, will reject us as well...if they mocked Him they will mock us... and that shouldn't surprise us!
- Again in John 15, Jesus says, **“If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.” -John 15:18 (ESV)**
- Paul says **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but**

to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” -1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)

- Man, to those who do not know Jesus, His story sounds ludicrous to them.
 - “That God would become a man, come to this planet, live this perfect life, all so that He could be brutally murdered on a cross, and that somehow affects me?”
 - And you can reason and rationalize your faith all that you want with some people but if the Holy Spirit does not grip their heart with the truth of the greatest story ever told, there's nothing you can do about it
- But man, when the Holy Spirit does grip their heart once they are confronted with the Cross of Christ, Paul says it is the POWER of God
 - And we see a few people experience this at the Cross.
- Because it's so interesting to me that Mark tells us that in verse 32 that, **“Those who were**

crucified with Him also reviled Him.” -Mark 15:32b

- We know that He was crucified with 2 others, and we know from Luke that Jesus actually tells one of them that he would be with Him in Paradise.
- So apparently, this man on the cross beside Jesus, was at one point reviling and mocking Him with everyone else...but after a portion of time of being up there on the cross next to Jesus, something changed in Him
- And that thief ends up rebuking the other, Luke tells us, ***“But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And He said to him, “Truly, I say***

to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.” -Luke 23:40-43 (ESV)

- You ever feel like you’re too far gone for God? You ever feel like it’s too late for you? Remember this criminal on the cross! In his dying moments, while receiving what he deserved, he still experienced salvation that the cross of Christ provided
- So here we see that you can mock the cross, or, for the next response:
 - **YOU CAN COME TO FAITH**
 - The thief wasn’t the only one that came to faith this day.
 - You see it was common for the accused to have to carry their own cross to the place of execution
 - But keep in mind that Jesus had just been scourged. That scourging entailed Jesus being beaten with this leather whip that would have

pieces of bone and metal on it, intentionally designed to grab the skin and rip the flesh

- Many times the people would not even survive the scourging and even make it to the cross
 - Sometimes they would do this to speed up the process of death for the person on the cross, because a typical crucifixion would have a person slowly dying over the course of 2-3 days
- So Jesus, is already horribly wounded, already starting the process of bleeding to death after this scourging, and then He was supposed to carry His the horizontal cross beam called the patibulum about a half a mile up hill, where it would be attached to the vertical beam before He would be nailed to it.
- But Jesus so weakened by the scourging, was not physically able to carry the cross beam, so verse 21 says, **“And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was**

coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry His cross.”

-Mark 15:21 (ESV)

- Now Matthew and Luke both give accounts of this happening, but Mark is the only one who references Simon’s sons.
 - And most scholars agree that he did so because he was writing to a predominantly Roman audience, and the Roman Christians would have been familiar with Rufus.
 - When the apostle Paul writes his letter to the Roman Church he takes out the time to say, **“Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.” -Romans 16:13 (ESV)**
- So it seems to be, while Simone was in town from Cyrene, on a family vacation to celebrate the Passover, while He was minding His own business, He got snatched up and forced to carry this cross beam

- He tells his boys to stay with their mother, he'd be right back!
- But as he is on his way on that half a mile hike, something stirs within him.
 - Maybe he feels compassion for Jesus, seeing him struggle and hurt so much
 - Maybe the sneering and jeering, the reviling and mocking, of those who were supposed to be godly men, temple leaders, champions of faith
 - But their unloving hypocrisy made him think deeper about what was really going on
 - And then when Jesus gets hung on the cross that he carried, he reads the inscription that is supposed to name the crime that He committed and there isn't even a crime on there!
 - It just reads, "King of the Jews"...whats the crime that He committed?!
- And who knows if it happened then or over time, but the experience that Simon had, changed him forever, and his faith would be passed down to his sons, hopefully for generations to come, and also to his wife to the point that she would be seen as a mother figure to the apostle Paul Himself.
- Let's continue reading in verse 33, ***"And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, He is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.***

And when the centurion, who stood facing Him, saw that in this way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!” -Mark 15:33-39 (ESV)

- Now, a lot happens here. First we know that the darkness that covered the land was a literal darkness.
 - There have been ancient documents that have corroborated this including a letter from Pilate to Tiberius Caesar documenting this phenomenon of Darkness that took place here.
 - Now, if you are a witness of this, you have to see that something is happening here.
- So while Jesus is on this cross, essentially a three hour solar eclipse takes place
 - The Jesus cries out quoting Psalm 22, now the people think something might happen here

- There was a Jewish superstition that you could call out for Elijah to help you in a time of need or crisis...and they think this just might be the time that Elijah actually shows up
- But the reality of what was happening was that the entirety of the consequences of sin was being poured out onto Jesus in this moment.
- Though this was a literally darkness, this word in the original language was also used metaphorically to mean: **Darkness (skotos): of ignorance respecting divine things and human duties, and the accompanying ungodliness and immorality, together with their consequent misery in hell**
- At this moment, the greatest Light in the World was being eclipsed by the darkness of sin, as the Father poured out His wrath on the sin that separated Him from mankind

- And as a result, the very symbol of that separation, the Temple Veil was torn from top to bottom!
- This veil, this curtain, that was 60 ft tall and 30 ft wide, the thickness of it was the width of palm of a man's hand
- It was so large and heavy that it took 300 priests to hang it!
- And it is physically, supernaturally torn from Top to bottom, signifying that the veil of separation is now done with and all are welcome to come before the presence of God
- So we have this darkness, Jesus cries out with a loud voice, gives up His spirit, Matthew tells us that an earthquake took place, graves were opened, and this Temple veil is torn
- And this Roman Centurion, the captain in charge of overseeing this execution, sees all of this going on and proclaims, "Truly this man was the Son of God."
- Luke says "He Glorified God!"
- You know many times, and some of you may have experienced this yourself, where you look around at the overwhelming evidence and it's just obvious, God is real, He has a Son named Jesus, He lived, He died, He rose again
 - And you're looking around at the other's around you that are still mocking this notion, and you think, "what's the matter with you?! Can't you see?!"
- I absolutely love the fact that the very first post crucifixion convert that we see in Scripture is a Roman Centurion who was in charge of the death of Jesus because that tells me that came for everyone, from everywhere, who have done anything!
- The Cross breaks every barrier man kind or sin could ever put up!
- Just look at the 3 individuals we see coming to faith! We have a criminal, the guy who killed

him, and out-of-towner from Northern Africa that just happened to be passing by!

- The Cross of Christ can bind anyone together!
- D.A. Carson once said this in his book “Love in Hard places:” ***“The church itself is not made up of natural "friends." It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything of the sort. Christians come together, not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have been saved by Jesus Christ and owe Him a common allegiance. In the light of this common allegiance, in light of the fact that they have all been loved by Jesus Himself, they commit themselves to doing what He says—and He commands them to love one another. In this light, they are a band of natural enemies who love one***

another for Jesus’ sake.” -D.A. Carson: Love in Hard Places

- Everyone, no matter what racial, geographical, economical, demographical or even spiritual background they may come from, all have the opportunity to respond to the Cross of Christ by coming to faith...but not everyone will
- It may seem like obvious common sense to you, yet still be foolishness to so many people around you.
- But even when the majority of people and influences around you still choose to stay in darkness, you still have the opportunity to respond how the women in these following verses responded.
- ***“There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. When He was in Galilee, they followed Him and ministered to Him, and***

there were also many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.” -Mark 15:40-41 (ESV)

- So, so far we have seen that we can respond to the Cross of Christ by mocking it, coming to faith, and here we see:

- YOU CAN STAY THE COURSE

- These women stood in stark contrast to the male disciples that Mark described as the all fleeing and leaving Him
- These women, even in the midst of it being dangerous to be associated with Jesus, they stayed the course
- When Peter denied Him, they continued to follow Him
- *If they were with Him in Capernaum they were going to be with Him at the Cross*
- *If they were with Him in Galilee they would be with Him at the grave*

- We would be wise to learn from the consistency of these women’s walk with Christ
- Because Jesus said that the world would hate us
- Jesus told us, in this world we would have trouble

- Paul told Timothy: ***“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,” -1 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)***

- But Jesus also said:

- ***“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” -Matthew 5:10 (ESV)***

- ***“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!” -Luke 6:22 (ESV)***

- Peter would go on to write: ***“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.” -1 Peter 4:12-16 (ESV)***
- Two of the main characteristics of the New Testament believer is steadfastness and endurance
 - In other words: Christians who stay the course
- And now more than every we need brothers and sisters in Christ that will stay the course, and glorify the Cross of Jesus Christ no matter what the world wants to tell us
- And not only would we stay the course, but that we would also exhibit the final response we see to the Cross as this chapter finishes up:
 - ***“And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that He should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether He was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that He was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking Him down,***

wrapped Him in the linen shroud and laid Him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.” -Mark 15:42-47 (ESV)

- This is the part that has gotten me and convicted me the most over this past week.
 - Joseph, a respected member of the Sanhedrin, the group that just twisted the law to have Jesus killed
 - John tells us that he was a secret disciple of Jesus
 - But now, when the stakes are at their highest, when the most people are against Him, when he has the most to lose Mark says he TOOK COURAGE!
- And that's the final response to the cross we'll see today:

- You can mock it, you can come to faith, you can stay the course, and
- **YOU CAN TAKE COURAGE**
- Joseph was laying it all on the line here, and he wasn't alone. John tells us that he and Nicodemus, the pharisee that came to Jesus by night to ask about the Kingdom of God, they went to Pilate together
 - *They chose to identify with the Man on the Cross, more than their prestigious colleagues*
 - *They chose to identify with the Man on the Cross more than their traditions!*
 - *They chose to identify with the Man on the Cross more than their own possessions*
 - *They chose to identify with the Man on the Cross over the social majority*
- There was a time that they feared those things more, which is why they came to Him and followed Him in secret

- But now, in the face of evil and injustice, it stirred them into throwing their fear aside, and being Bold instead.
- The word in the original language literally means “not to dread or shun through fear”
- Now, where does this courage come from?
- Look at verse 43 again: ***“Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.”***
-Mark 15:43 (ESV)
- Now that word Looking for, is also translated waiting for and it literally means:
- **Looking/Waiting (prosdechomai): to expect the fulfillment of promises**
- Joseph had listened to Jesus talk about the Kingdom of God
- Nicodemus talked with Jesus about entering that Kingdom by being born again
 - And they expected what Jesus said to be true
 - They expected the Kingdom of God to be at hand
- Therefore they boldly aligned themselves with Jesus at His darkest hour, in the midst of the most tragedy, heartbreak, confusion, and social dissension
- They didn’t care what everyone else was saying, they didn’t care who was mocking and reviling, they didn’t care the danger it may put themselves in. They took courage, went to Pilate and said, “Give me Jesus”
- The reason why we fail to have courage and boldness in our churches today is because we don’t expect God to do what He said He’s going to do

- We don't expect the fulfillment of His Promises
- We don't take Him at His Word!
- We don't live with an expectation of the Kingdom of God moving in power among us
- We don't live with an expectation of Jesus coming back again!
- And as a result we have seen a lot of Christians and a lot of churches soften on the what the Word of God actually says.
- To the point of which it actually takes courage and boldness just to stand for common sense Christianity
 - It takes boldness to stand for God's original design in Genesis
 - That Human Beings were created in the image of God. Male and Female He created them
- And the male is only to leave his family to marry the female
- And the male and female are to be fruitful and multiply and to raise their children to know God's Word
- And the male is to take the responsibility to be the leader, protector, and provider for his family
- And each member of that family becomes a living being at the very moment of conception when DNA is formed
- These are not political issues! These are theological and spiritual issues that should not be viewed through the lens of differing opinions, but rather through how we can be obedient to God's word
- And it will take courage to do so. But if our faith doesn't require courage, do we really have any faith at all?

- College Students, it will take courage to stand for what God's Word actually says, over a twisted politically correct version of it that many of you are being taught
- And I implore you, don't take my word for it! Don't take your professors or campus ministers word for it! TAKE GOD'S WORD FOR IT!
- Search the scriptures...fall in love with His Word, not just an explanation of His Word
- And the more that you know His Word and Expect His Kingdom the more boldness and courage you will have in your faith. Why? Because eternity hangs in the balance
- ***"...The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God... Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were***

washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." -1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV)

- We boldly hold to God's word, His design, and His values, because we want to speak the truth in love.
 - Because we want others to experience the same salvation that we have experienced!
 - We don't want to be a part of some method of "inclusion" on earth that will lead people to be excluded from Heaven
 - No, we want to care about people's souls
- And we attempt to take courage and boldly stand for God's word because we want the best for people!
 - But even so, we will still be slandered, accused, reviled, mocked, and hated by many
 - But we're not supposed to be surprised, Jesus told us to expect it

- And Peter, probably the most defensive man in all of the Gospels, by the time he had written his epistle had learned this truth.
- ***“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.” -1 Peter 2:21-24 (ESV)***
- The healing of God will always outweigh the hurt of man
- We will all be put in positions where it will take courage to stand for our faith in Jesus
- But we have to care more about our devotion to Christ than the response of man
- That was the example Joseph gave here in our passage
- He was a pharisee, we was not allowed to handle a corpse. But yet, he personally took Jesus’ blood stained body down himself, which would have made him unclean and unable to partake of the passover meal
- He placed Jesus in this expensive grave that he personally bought
- When the rest of the world dishonored Jesus, He honored Him
- Early Christian tradition says that Joseph was imprisoned for his role in Jesus’ burial.
 - But was miraculously freed and became a missionary in Britain
- But like Joseph, I think we have a lot of Christians who have been following Jesus in secret in their everyday lives. But it’s time that we take courage.
- And the time is now...