

Bold Faith From an Unlikely Place

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[0:00] We're going to be in John chapter 19. Jesus was falsely accused. He had some made-up crimes that they accused him of.

! He was betrayed. He was brought before Pilate, which was the Roman governor, for judgment. He was beaten. He was mocked.

A crown of thorns was made and placed on him, and they mocked him, calling him king of the Jews. And then ultimately, he was nailed to a cross, and he died on that cross.

And as he hung there on the cross, his disciples scattered, nowhere to be seen. They're in hiding for fear, because they were being persecuted.

But there were a few at the cross or nearby. John was there and records this. Jesus' mother, Mary, was there.

[1:01] A few other women. The thieves that hung on both sides of Jesus on those crosses that day, they were there.

Centurions, the Roman soldiers were there. Pharisees, the religious rulers of that day that wanted Jesus dead were there. Many other unknown people, onlookers were there.

And so Jesus died on the cross. But with those you would expect, the devout followers missing from the scene, hiding in fear.

The ones you would say are the disciples of Jesus Christ, hiding in fear. But there were a few you wouldn't expect there, no doubt with many emotions as they witnessed what was happening.

John chapter 19, verse 38. And after this, speaking of Jesus dying on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, he sought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

[2:13] And Pilate gave him leave. He came there and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of mirth and aloes, but a hundred pound weight.

Then took they the body of Jesus and wound it in the linen clothes and spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden.

And in the garden, a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus before, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day, for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.

And so, after he died on the cross, his body was recovered by Joseph and Nicodemus, and they buried him. And today, I just want to speak to you from this thought, bold faith from an unlikely place.

Bold faith from an unlikely place. Lord Jesus, I pray you help me minister this word today. Be in the rest of this service. God, minister to our hearts and minds. God, like only you can. Jesus, let your word penetrate us.

[3:29] Let it become alive to us. Let us understand it. Give us the ears to hear your word today. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. You may be seated. The truth about sin is that sin is man substituting himself for God.

The truth about salvation is that salvation is God substituting himself for man. That's what he did on a cross. He didn't have to do it, but he did it.

Not only did he die for us, the Bible says it pleased the Lord that he did, and that he did it with joy. Hebrews 12 and 2, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.

It was his plan before the foundation of the world. Like I mentioned before service, at service beginning, before he formed man out of the dust of the ground and blew life into him, causing the first man, Adam, to become a living soul.

Before all that, it was already his plan to be our Savior. It is hard to fully grasp all of the gravity that is the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus.

[4:46] This year, I feel the Lord wants us to understand something about his death, burial, and resurrection. And it's what we call the gospel. The gospel is the message of the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus.

That is the truest definition of the gospel. The Lord wants us to see that the gospel, it demands a response. The gospel, the death, the burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior creates the conditions for the people to respond in faith, to respond with emboldened faith.

It creates the conditions for people to have faith, their faith to be strengthened, for faith to be, in him to be brought to the surface of your life.

Amen. For bold, extreme faith to come from unlikely places. And that is what the understanding of the gospel causes. About three years before Jesus' crucifixion, we read in John chapter 3, Nicodemus heard a message straight from the mouth of Jesus.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same came to Jesus by night and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him.

[6:10] Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except the man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter into the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except the man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, remember, it was the Pharisees that wanted Jesus dead. But this man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus came to Jesus by night.

He said to Jesus that he knew Jesus came from God. He had some measure of faith. Not very much understanding, but some measure of faith. He still didn't know who Jesus was other than he came from God.

But he has this little bit of faith and he's starting to believe Jesus. But he's not all in. He wants to meet Jesus by night in secret.

[7:12] Doesn't want anyone else to know because he fears of the backlash. He fears what the other Pharisees may think or do. Maybe he fears how fully committing to Jesus could jeopardize his status and his lifestyle.

And so there's this little bit of faith there but not a lot. But Nicodemus is interested enough, curious enough to want to find out more about Jesus. And Nicodemus meets Jesus in secret and tries to learn more.

And Jesus gives him the plan of salvation. You have to be born again of the water and of the spirit. And that is how it is with all of us. And that's how it was with me.

Is when we first start taking interest in Jesus. Maybe we don't fully know who he is or what is happening but we have a genuine interest in Jesus. We want to learn more about Jesus.

The first thing that he will reveal to us is the first thing that he revealed to Nicodemus that there is a plan for salvation and it is through being born again. Being born again of the spirit has to do with the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

[8:18] Being born again of the water has to do with water baptism. Amen. We have to get it today. The death, the burial, the resurrection, the gospel. Peter said repent, be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Repentance is putting to death your old life of sin. It's nailing it to a cross. It's turning from sin and water baptism is the burying and putting into a tomb your old life and being buried with Christ and his death and the spirit baptism is what allows you to have the power to live a new life in Jesus Christ.

Amen. But the death, the burial, and the resurrection, these three separate experiences that is the gospel, that is salvation and it demands a response from anyone that will take interest in what Jesus has to say about it and hear it.

Amen. Like Nicodemus. Nicodemus was not one of the disciples that followed Jesus all over the place during those three years of ministry. Amen. He had his little night rendezvous with Jesus you know, in secret and then you don't hear anything else about Nicodemus until you're reading about

what happens after he died on a cross.

Amen. Those three years of ministry that you read about in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Nicodemus you don't hear of. Nicodemus was a secret believer. He wasn't committed enough to be publicly known as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

[9:48] He wasn't all in but he along with another secret disciple named Joseph from Arimathea who was a part of the Sanhedrin. Again, a member of the Jews religious leadership that wanted Jesus dead.

Joseph and Nicodemus were not fully committed like Peter and Matthew and John and all the others we read about and hear about all the time because they were afraid to be known to be a disciple of Jesus.

They were afraid of the other Pharisees. Oh, they knew Jesus was special. They knew he was from God. They knew he had the words of eternal life. They knew that he could very well be the Messiah that they were waiting for.

They had a good understanding that Jesus was the answer that they needed but they were not willing to be out front with Jesus. They wanted to keep their lives the way they wanted.

They didn't want to fully commit to being a follower of Jesus and they wanted to stay in the shadows but what they didn't know and what they found out later was that the death the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ demands a response and what we find out by reading their story is that bold faith can come from an unlikely place.

[11:02] Amen. Because it was Joseph and Nicodemus who knew what Jesus was about to go through when he was taken out of the Garden of Gethsemane. Yes, at the last supper which we're going to partake of as Jesus instructed us to do in remembrance of him.

Later, it was all the twelve apostles it was the ones that were out front it was the public servants of Jesus that partook in that but while that was going on the scheming in the background was going on to crucify Jesus.

Amen. And so being on the Sanhedrin which was the leadership the ruling party of the Jews at the time and being a Pharisee ruler of the Jews Joseph and Nicodemus knew what was coming.

They were there when the plans were being made no doubt. Amen. And so they knew everything that was about to happen and when you read it it's like the apostles and the other disciples were surprised about what was happening but they knew what was going to happen.

Amen. And being in the leadership they knew what was planned for Jesus they knew what was going to happen. They knew the brutality that awaited him in Pilate's court where Jesus would be beaten to the edge of death and then taken and hung on a cross and executed.

[12:20] They knew it. And while all the well-known disciples you read about in the Bible were hiding in fear Joseph and Nicodemus were closer to the situation than those you would say were the best disciples of Jesus.

Amen. While he hung on the cross where was Peter? He denied Jesus three times and ran away. All the big name disciples in hiding but as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea as they watched the death of Jesus take place something changed in them.

Amen. They had to respond to it and they did. They responded boldly at the time of the death of Jesus Christ. It was Joseph that went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus to bury him.

That's not a small thing. That was a risky move because Pilate could have arrested him right then and there and executed him right away right then because for being a sympathizer of Jesus.

But after seeing and witnessing the passion Jesus displayed on a cross for all of humanity Joseph Joseph is that rich Jew on the Sanhedrin that before was a secret supporter had to respond.

[13:32] He boldly put his neck out there and he had to do something and so he gained access to Jesus' body and provided the tomb for the burial of our Savior.

Nicodemus with him boldly responding now not caring what the other people thought of him not caring what the consequences would come Nicodemus helped Joseph by supplying the materials needed for a proper burial because of those two men the burial of Jesus in the tomb took place which was an important part of the gospel he died he was buried and he rose again amen he died he was buried being buried the fact that he was buried is an important part of the gospel amen because of the cross because of the cross demands a response bold faith came from unlikely places not only are Nicodemus and Joseph stories examples of the fact that the cross demands response there was also the thief that hung next to Jesus that responded in bold faith there was

also a Roman centurion that responded in bold faith even James the brother of Jesus who wrote the book of James in our Bible he had previously rejected Jesus he responded in bold faith there was there is something about the cross something about recognizing that our God would put on flesh and come to this cursed earth and allow his creation to kill him so that he could offer salvation something about understanding that that demands a response from us we have to respond to the gospel we have to respond to the death the burial and the resurrection of Jesus with bold faith amen if you haven't fully committed to Jesus for whatever reasons if you are a secret supporter I urge you to get closer to the cross and once you fully experience it respond with bold faith the gospel is truly life changing and brings bold faith from unlikely places amen it brings bold faith from unlikely places the gospels it's not a feeling it's not a philosophy it's not some sort of self help program or 12 step plan the gospel is the death the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ everything we preach everything that we believe must flow from these three life changing events we have to experience the death of our old sinful ways by repenting we have to be buried with Christ and baptism in his name and we have to have his spirit in us in that resurrecting power of a new life in him and within us and so what I would like for us to do today as we move into communion let's all stand and come forward as we do let's begin to thank God for the gospel let's begin to thank God for what he did on the cross