

# Identified with Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Go ahead and take your Bible this morning. I'm going to Mark chapter 15 this morning! Mark chapter 15 as we're going to continue finishing up here in the book of Mark here. There's another section here this morning as we've been going through the book of Mark there.

We find that here in Mark 15 that Jesus has been falsely accused and condemned and he was had been beaten and abused and crucified.

You know, we'd understood that he gave his life as a ransom for many. You know, but as he hung there on the cross that day and he ended up as he died there about three in the afternoon and he hung there lifeless on the cross.

He was rejected by everyone that he came to save. Those that should have known him refused to acknowledge him. You know, and we see here as there as Jesus has died on the cross, we know that it was a they wanted the Sabbath was near which was a high Sabbath.

And that's a lesson for another time. Talk about there's being a high Sabbath and a regular Sabbath. But it's a special feast day. You might say that the Jews had set aside. We know this was Passover week.

[ 1 : 13 ] And so we have that high feast day. But we see here as Jesus had died, something needed to be done. Something needed to be done with the body of Jesus because it so it would not remain on the cross or to be discarded with just the thieves that were hanging with them.

The Romans would have just thrown it in a pit with the others that died that day. But the Jews had already wanted the body of Jesus. And we're going to look today at a man who decided, made a decision as he saw Jesus and what was taking place, made a decision to be identified publicly with Christ.

Because I want you to understand why salvation is personal. Your identification with Christ is public. There's a difference between them. And one, it starts privately between you and God.

But it also becomes public to say, am I going to stand? Am I going to identify with my Savior? You know, because that's a hard question, a hard place that we find ourselves.

Because we're going to read this morning, there was a man that stood up that day to stand and identify himself with Jesus. So we understand that he stepped up in a dark hour.

[ 2 : 31 ] And we're going to look at a man that's mentioned just here in the Gospels, each in this same area. And that is bearing of Jesus, that's Joseph of Arimathea.

And so if you found Mark chapter 15 this morning, let's stand together in honor of the reading of the Word of God. And we'll pick up here in verse 42 this morning. It says, And now when even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

And Pilate marveled, as it were, if he were already dead. And calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

And he brought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone under the door of the sepulcher.

And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Moses, beheld where he was laid. Let's pray.

Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning, Lord.

[ 3 : 43 ] We just thank you. Lord, we're thankful for salvation, such a great thing that you provide for us. But Lord, help us not to be ashamed of that identity with you, Lord, that we might identify with you, Lord, even in your suffering, even in the dark times.

Lord, to understand that's where you are with us. You walk each day with us. And Lord, we pray just to have your hand upon each one here today. Lord, we might be challenged, encouraged. Lord, if there's one that doesn't know about their salvation, that today would be the day they would call upon you.

And Lord, we just love you and thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. You know, this morning as we read here about Joseph of Arimathea, he was a man that stood up when it was not convenient or popular to do so.

But yet we find he stood with Jesus. Just as you and I must also take our stand, we need to identify with the Savior, identify with Christ.

Because we want you to see here a little background to understand what's happening here, because the Bible tells us that Joseph of Arimathea had been a disciple of Jesus for a while.

[ 5 : 01 ] He'd been one that followed Christ. And we'll look a little more at that here in a moment. But I want you to understand that he'd made a decision to trust Christ as the Messiah, but he had not yet come out and said, I want to publicly identify with Christ.

I want others to know also where I stand, to understand the importance of this, because what we do know about this man is he took a, he made a bold decision to go before Pilate to request the body of Jesus.

You know, here Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in all four Gospels. All four Gospel writers make mention of this, and he's giving us a little different perspective of who he is, because today we need to be more like Joseph in many ways.

This man was a man that he understood Christ was the Messiah. He was a disciple. He was a follower of Christ. But we're going to find here that he did not take a public stand until this point. He did not take a stand to say there's going to be a difference. And today we really need more people like Joseph that's willing to connect and to identify with the cause of Christ, to identify with what God would have for us.

[ 6 : 17 ] You know, we understand first the character of this man, because, you know, this wasn't just anybody, you might say, in a sense of the culture. This is a very prominent man, a very influential man.

It was a man that many would have known or recognized, even if he didn't recognize them. He was one that would have been identified. And so, who is Joseph of Arimathea? You know, what kind of person was he?

You know, and so we find throughout the Gospels different characteristics. We know he was from a place called Arimathea, and it's suspected. This is the Old Testament town of Ramah, the hometown of the prophet Samuel in the Old Testament there in 1 Samuel.

And we find here that that's where he was from, but now his residence is in Jerusalem. There with the council. And Mark, it tells us here, look at our text as we read here in verse 42.

It says this, that Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, an honorable counselor, which would put him as part of the Sanhedrin, that governing body.

[ 7 : 22 ] And interesting enough, the very same body that had condemned Jesus to death. The very same ruling council that had condemned Jesus to death.

Here is Joseph was part of that, and he's the one that, but it talks about him being an honorable counselor. You know, honorable means he was influential or respected amongst his peers.

You know, he would have been easily recognized. Everybody would have said, hey, that's Joseph. People would have known him and understood who he was and his influence was great.

And we know Matthew reveals to us in Matthew chapter 27, verse 57, reveals that he was a wealthy, he was a rich man. You know, and we're going to find that's how he could afford a new tomb that he was going to place Jesus in.

A tomb he had already purchased, and we understand he didn't purchase it for Jesus, he purchased it for himself. But you know what? He was willing to use what he invested to say, if I'm going to identify with my Lord, then what's mine is his.

[ 8 : 24 ] To understand what we're going to see here this morning, in Luke 23, verse 50, says he was a good and just man. Look here what it says in verse 50 of Luke chapter 23, and behold, he was a man named Joseph, a counselor, and he was a good man and just.

Now I want you to understand he was a man that possessed a good reputation, being known as a man of virtue. When the Bible here talks about a good man, it means he was a moral individual.

Upright, when people looked at him, they said, hey, that's an honorable individual. It's somebody that had a character. And there was a man that was also here as jest.

He did that which was right towards others and towards God. But I want you to understand, Joseph was a man known for his character and example. But I want you to also understand, look back in our text in verse 43, tells us something else about him.

It says this, it says that he waited for the kingdom of God. Now the context here is a Jewish context. I want you to understand that he was waiting for the Messiah.

[ 9 : 34 ] He was looking for the Messiah. He was waiting for God. And we understand that he had recognized Jesus as the one that fulfilled that.

He made a recognition that Jesus was the one who fulfilled that promise that was there. Joseph wasn't fake in his belief. He truly believed the word of God.

He said, God said there will one day be a deliverer. And I'm looking for that deliverer. He says, I'm going to trust what God says. And his faith was real and longed to see the promised Messiah.

You know, we find others in Jesus' day. You remember around Christmas time, oftentimes we might mention Simeon and Anna in the temple that were good and just individuals that looked for the kingdom of God in Luke chapter 2.

I want you to understand, Joseph wasn't the only one that had that attitude or that spirit about looking and trusting what God said. They were trying to figure out, is this who God said he is?

[ 10 : 37 ] But I want you to see here, Joseph was a man of character. But it's very important, he's a man that still needed a savior. Because I want you to understand, there's a difference between having good character and being honorable and being redeemed.

There's a difference. There's a lot of honorable individuals. You know, the sad part is, there's a lot of lost people that sometimes are more honorable than people that are believers. The reality is, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't get you to heaven by being good. It doesn't get you to heaven by being a just individual, you know, doing that which is right towards others. And we understand that Joseph, though, well, he would possess many qualities that were honorable and right, but it was his faith in Christ that made a difference.

You know, I want you to understand, we cannot be saved by good character, but I want you to understand also, he's a very religious man. You don't get saved by religion. Practicing religious things does not save anybody.

You know, oftentimes people rely on, when you go talk to people, well, they'll say, I was baptized in such and such a church, or I do this, or I do that, or I believe this. But I want you to understand, there's only one real ultra-critical belief, and that's belief of who Jesus is.

[ 11 : 58 ] To understand the importance of that, that's the pivotal thing. I'm not saying the rest of the Bible's not critical, important, but I want you to understand, if you miss the point about Jesus, the rest becomes irrelevant.

Right. Jesus is the focal point of everything, and I want you to understand that he needed a savior.

You know, Titus chapter 3 tells us this, but after that, the kindness and love of God our savior toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

You know, Ephesians chapter 2 tells us, for by grace are you saved through what? Faith. And not of yourselves. You know, there's a lot of people today that think they're saved because of who they are.

I'm a good person. I'm not as bad as, you know, whenever, whenever you see as bad as, you know, they always will point to somebody else to justify themselves.

I want you to understand we're all sinners that need to be saved. There's not a one of us exempt. And it goes on. It says, not of works, lest any man should boast. There's nothing we can boast about our salvation.

[ 13 : 13 ] You have to come to Christ humbly recognizing that he is the one that came and died upon the cross for you. Matter of fact, it tells us in Acts chapter 4 and verse 12, it says clearly this, neither is there salvation any other, for there's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

I want you to understand that Joseph made a difference because he was a disciple, a follower of Christ. He had not identified or connected himself with Christ though publicly.

You know, because sometimes when we trust God as our savior, sometimes the pressure of this world hinders us from coming out and saying, I'm going to stand with Christ. I'm going to stand with that which is right, that which is proper to do so.

You know, we need to understand that's an important element because we're going to see here next the concealment of Joseph, the concealment of Joseph. You know, Matthew 27 reveals to us here.

Take a look over there in your Bible, turn over a few pages there to Matthew chapter 27. Matthew chapter 27 tells us this, that he was a disciple of Jesus.

[14:26] And he tells us here in verse 57, it says, And when the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple.

He was a disciple of Jesus. Now take a look over to John in John chapter 19. John chapter 19, we see something else about this man that's very important.

As we look here in John chapter 19, look at verse 38. John chapter 19, verse 38 tells us this. It's very clear of this dynamic because you know what?

I think a lot of us can find ourselves in the place Joseph was here. We find here in chapter 19, verse 38, it says, And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus.

Now notice that next phrase, but what? But secretly for fear of the Jews. But you know, he had been secret until now. Because notice what the rest of it says, He besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

[15:31] And Pilate gave him leave and came therefore and took the body of Jesus. Now I want you to understand, we're not told the where and the when that Joseph trusted Christ. You know, he would have had many opportunities.

As oftentimes the Sanhedrin would send out individuals to go listen and try to entrap Jesus. And it wouldn't be hard to imagine that Joseph here, being a leader and honorable among them, that he wasn't one that they would have sent sometime.

And he would have heard Jesus. Maybe he saw Jesus heal somebody. Maybe he saw the reality of many things over and over. And understand that what Jesus taught about the kingdom and the way of salvation became clear to him.

This must be the one. This must be the one. This is the one we're looking for. You know, maybe it was the testimony of someone that Jesus had touched.

You know, a personal testimony goes a long ways. The reality of what Christ has done for you changes others. It impacts others.

[16:37] You know, we don't know, but we do know that he did let others know at this point. You know, he didn't want people to know, but then he came to a point where he says, I have to make a decision that says I'm going to stand up and identify with Christ.

You know, today we read this passage and maybe if you do your Bible reading all the time and you've read through this many times and you just kind of brush over it. But I want you to understand, it was not an easy thing for him to stand up.

Here's a man of position, authority, wealth, influence, and he risked them all to go get the body of Jesus. He had tried to keep it secret, but he understood there was a time when you have to say, I need to stand with Christ.

He had been afraid of the reaction of those that looked up to him. I mean, he was kind of a pillar in the society. And people were saying, well, what about Joseph? I want you to understand, he took a lot of risk and a lot of personal cost to say, I don't care what it costs.

I don't care what others think. I'm going to take a stand. I'm going to identify with Christ. You know, consider what it tells us over in Proverbs chapter 29. You know, look over there at Proverbs chapter 29.

[17:49] The Bible makes it clear, the reality. It says, the fear of man bringeth a snare. You know what? When we fear others, it ensnares us, it traps us, it holds us.

It becomes something that keeps you from moving forward with the Lord. But notice this, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

You know, I want you to understand, it's good to understand that Jesus is the Savior, but with that you need to understand that you are now safe. You're secure in Christ.

If you have Jesus as your Savior, you can't lose him. He'll never leave you. He'll never forsake you. You don't get any more secure than that. You know, it's something that we understand the fear of

man, but look over to Psalm 107.

Psalm 107 in verse 2 tells us this. It says, let the redeemed of the Lord do what? Say so. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

[ 18 : 56 ] Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. You know, if you're saved today, you ought to be willing to say so. You know, there's a lot of people that want to stay hid.

You know, I want people just to think I'm a good person. You know, there's a difference between being a good person and identifying with Christ. I'm doing this not for my benefit, because of my Savior's.

To identify with the Savior. But sadly, many believers fit the profile of Joseph beforehand. They want to hide their faith because they're afraid of what people may say about them.

They want to hide their faith thinking they might lose something. You know, oftentimes we try to hold on to things, and Jesus says, trust me, obey me, move with me, follow me.

They're willing to be changed and modify their behavior to fit into the world, but not take a stand for the truth of God's Word. You know, sometimes it's a matter they want to break religious ties and stand on the truth of God's Word.

[ 19 : 59 ] You know what? Sadly, religion is one of the biggest entrapments of people you'll find. Over the years, I've seen many people who said, I trust Christ as my Savior, but I won't leave a church that's teaching contrary.

You know what that tells me? It says, my people and the people there, what they think of me is more important than identifying with my Savior. To identify with Christ, to say, I'm going to take a stand, and I'm going to put those things behind me.

I'm not going to be entrapped by man's religion, and I'm going to be a follower of Christ, and I'm going to be obedient unto the things that God would have to take a stand on the truth of God's Word.

I want you to understand, you can't have hundreds of denominations and everybody be right. The reality is, if there's a difference of opinion, there's only a couple of options. Or should I say, a few options.

You're either right, they're either right, if there's a contradiction of opinion, or you have a third option, you might both be wrong. Because if both of them go contrary to the Word of God, you know what, you just got outvoted.

[ 21 : 04 ] You got out-authority. I want you to understand that it's the Word of God that we must stand upon, not on our opinions. You know, I want you to understand and to be identified with Christ.

You know, one of the things as a believer, a New Testament believer, salvation. But then there's baptism. You know what baptism is? Public identification with Christ. When you're baptized, it's saying, I want to identify with Christ.

I want everybody to know that I have called upon Him to save me. Baptism doesn't save you, but it does identify you. And throughout history, you'll understand, baptism identifies.

If you doubt what I'm saying, talk to somebody. Well, I was identified in such and such a church.

You know what they're saying? My baptism identifies me with this doctrine. When you're scripturally baptized, it's saying, I want to identify with the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to identify with the doctrine of His Word. I want to identify with what Christ says. I don't want to identify with a religion. I want to identify with my Savior. I want you to understand that true church isn't just a religious place that people meet.

[ 22 : 23 ] Now, I want you to understand, in another context of the words, you ought to be religious about coming to church. The Bible says not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together. You know, you can be religious about a lot of things.

You know? Let me ask you a question. How many drink coffee in the morning? This isn't a trick question, but you know what?

People that drink coffee are pretty religious about their coffee. I get up in the morning, and you put it in there, and you mix it, and you hit the button, and if the little light doesn't glow, and you don't hear the gurgling, it's like you start panicking.

I want you to understand, religious means it's something that you do. And as a believer, there's things we ought to do. The Bible tells us there's things we ought to be doing when it comes to our faith in Christ.

But I want you to understand that doing doesn't save you. The choices you make, the things you do, ought to identify you with Christ, because those things ought to identify us or connect us with Christ. [ 23 : 25 ] And understand, you know, Romans chapter 6 tells us this in verse 3. It says, Know ye not? So many of us, as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, we're baptized into His death.

You know what? I want you to understand, Romans 6 reveals something here about baptism, because it's a picture of what happens. That at the moment of salvation, you are buried, you're crucified, the old man with Christ, and you're raised again, just as Jesus was resurrected. When you're baptized, that doesn't save you. It's a picture of what's already happened. It identifies you. You know, identification with Christ and His doctrine.

I want you to understand, the teaching of Christ is important. You know, oftentimes today, we have so many religious people who say, Well, as long as they preach the gospel, you know what the problem is? They do gospel plus many places.

Gospel plus this, gospel plus that. They add this, they add that. You know? I want you to understand, being baptized doesn't save you. Being a member of this church doesn't get you to heaven. Me being your preacher doesn't give you any brownie points.

[ 24 : 30 ] Doesn't gain any favor, let me tell you. But you know what? Identifying with Christ gets you favor. The identity with Christ makes a difference. Here's Joseph of Arimathea.

He understood that dynamic. You know, 1 Peter chapter 3 in verse 21 says this, In like figure whereunto even baptism does now save us.

Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but notice this, but an answer of what? A good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You know what baptism says? I want to identify not with the death of Jesus.

I want to identify with the living for Jesus. Because as a believer, you're dead in Christ, but you're raised to walk in newness of life. The Bible says you're a new creature in Christ.

At the moment of salvation, you're different. Baptism is a picture that says, I want to identify with my Savior. And the doctrine surrounding baptism is important.

[ 25 : 30 ] But I want you to see here why Joseph had hid his faith from others. We find there was something that changed. Because there was something in his life at this moment, some things that took place that said, there's some things that need to be different.

Just as salvation happens in a moment when the Spirit of God convicts a lost sinner that says, I understand that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him.

We understand that reality. And we understand that we have to call upon him. We have to do something with it. And I want you to understand, you can know a lot of things, but there's a difference when you take action with it. You know?

I want you to understand, salvation isn't a YouTube video. You know, a lot of people do DIY YouTube videos. You know, I'm now an expert. You know, and then they find out and they get in trouble.

But I want you to understand, the reality is, is Christ isn't just a theory. It just isn't a concept. Salvation is a reality that happens when a person calls upon the Lord and they are transformed, they are changed in Christ.

[ 26 : 36 ] But Joseph, even though he trusted Christ, he said, this is the one, I'm a follower of Christ. He did so secretly. He said, I don't want others to know. You know, the same thing is true today.

It's safe being religious. It's safe being a secret disciple of Christ. But I want you to understand there comes a time when you have to say, if I'm going to truly follow Christ, I have to take that step to identify and let everybody know that I'm with Christ.

It's to take a stand for Him and understand that courage that is needed, that courage to come forth. Now let's look back at our text here in Mark chapter 15 for a moment.

because we've talked about Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God. And it says, he came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.

I want you to understand that it took some courage to stand with Christ. It took some courage. I want you to understand that to come in boldly means to muster up courage.

[ 27 : 44 ] In other words, I want you to understand he wasn't going in confidence. He was going in courage and in the fear of the Lord saying this is what's right and I'm going to trust God. I'm going to take a stand.

I'm going to identify. There was a moment that Joseph knew he could no longer have his faith in Christ just in the background. As a member of the Sanhedrin, that council of 70, he was presented that early morning.

He was there present that morning when the council met together with Jesus and where the high priest and others began questioning him. Here's Joseph there that day.

The Bible says that at that last council, the whole council had gathered. So in other words, we know he was there. We know he was present that early morning when Jesus was tried and condemned. But you know what? Right there is when I think he made a difference in his decision. Because the Bible tells us something about Joseph of Arimathea. Arimathea. He tried to keep it silent, but there was a point where he says, I could not anymore.

[ 28 : 47 ] Look over to Luke chapter 23 for a moment. Luke chapter 23. Look here in verse 51. The Bible says this about Joseph. During that meeting, they do like most meetings and most councils, they took a vote.

What are we going to do with Jesus? The same, notice this, the same had what? Not consented to the council and the deeds of them. You know what? I think that's the moment that Joseph made a decision.

I'm going to identify with Christ. He said, what's going on here is wrong. They're going to kill my Savior. He said, I'm not going to consent to it.

He took a stand earlier that day. Now I want you to understand most councils, how most councils work are the same they work today. You can get outvoted. I believe not every individual there said yes, condemn Jesus to death, but there was enough overwhelming majority of them that there was no choice of the direction of the council.

But we see here that Jesus, that the Bible tells us that He had not consented to the council and the deed of them. In other words, He looked at what happened and said, what you did was wrong.

[ 29 : 53 ] He took a stand. And now He takes a big stand because as He had witnessed the mockery of justice during the trial of Jesus and had voted against the proceeding with it, but something changed.

For now He boldly went to Pilate to request the body of Jesus. Notice it wasn't just a hopeful request. The Bible says He craved the body of Jesus.

I want you to understand something very important here. That word craved implies with it that He had His heart set, He had His mind set, He had a direction to say, this is what I'm going to go in there and do.

He had a vigor behind what He was doing. He knew somebody had to take action. You know, the Jews had requested the body be removed before the Sabbath began.

Now I want you to understand, this was a pretty short time frame. Jesus died at 3 in the afternoon. In the Jewish calendar, the Jewish day starts at 6 p.m. From the time Jesus died to the time of the beginning of the Sabbath, was three-hour window.

[ 31 : 02 ] And when you consider what happened in that three hours, there's a lot going on. You know? Now, let's just think about today. Dealing with government bureaucracy, what's three hours?

You know? He went into Pilate, the leader of the local government, you might say, the Roman government. In less than three hours, he craved the body of Jesus. He got Jesus. He prepared the body and put Him in a tomb.

Things were happening fast. Things were happening quickly here. I want you to understand, as he began there, it was not much time for what was needed to be accomplished.

He understood what was required. And we understand here, Pilate granted him the request after the centurion returned with the confirmation that Jesus was dead. Now, I just want you to point out something here.

When you read the Gospels, it's very clear that Jesus died. You know, there's some weird things of history. There's people who try to say, well, Jesus didn't really die. He just swooned on the cross and He recovered in a cool tomb.

[ 32 : 04 ] It's like you guys are, I don't know what you're reading or what you understand, but I guarantee you when the centurion came back and said Jesus is dead, he was pretty sure. A

centurion, he was a leader of a band of men.

In other words, he'd been around a while. I'm pretty sure he understood if he was dead or not. There wasn't any question in his mind when he had the soldier put the spear in the side of Jesus and the blood and water came out.

He said, there's no doubt. Probably wasn't the first time he'd seen it. The centurion came back and said, yes, he's dead. But we see here that Joseph could no longer hide that he was a disciple of Jesus.

He can courageously request the body of Jesus. He took him down from the cross, preparing his body and placing him in a new tomb that he had purchased for himself.

Now I want you to understand this was a tomb that was hewn out of the side of a rock. I want you to understand it would be expensive today to do that. It was expensive in Joseph's day to do something of that nature.

[ 33 : 08 ] That tomb that he had dug was a picture to the prominence of his wealth and position and his authority, the place that he had served. He had an honorable place, a place above others.

You know, I want you to understand it was a place that people could see and understand who he was. But he takes Jesus down from the cross and he prepares his body and he takes him to his own tomb.

Now we don't have time this morning, but I want you to understand that the Bible tells us in Isaiah 53 that when he died, his body took a place with the rich or the wealthy.

You know what? He did. A rich man came and took Jesus and put him in his own tomb that nobody had used before. We don't have time to get into all the dynamics of early New Testament tombs and that they wouldn't do like today, but they would actually put, have a family tomb and they have multiple people buried in the same location.

So to have a brand new one was a big deal. It was expensive. Matthew 27 verse 60 tells us that he laid him in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.

[ 34 : 23 ] I want you to understand here if you're willing to identify with Christ, it makes a difference in your life. But I want you to see here as we read the Gospels, I want you to understand it's made a difference in somebody else's life. There's something else here that when you take a stand with the Savior, when you identify with Christ, when you let others know that you are going to identify with Christ and His doctrine and what He wants, it impacts others also.

Turn over to John chapter 19 for a moment. John chapter 19. And we find here in John chapter 19 in verse 39 that when He took a stand, it impacted others.

You know, when you take a stand to identify with Christ, it helps others to take a stand. Look at verse 39 in chapter 19 in the Gospel of John. It says, and there came also who?

Who? Nicodemus. Now, who was Nicodemus? If you remember John chapter 3, Nicodemus was the ruler who came to Jesus by night.

And Jesus had spoke to him about ye must born again. That religion and practice of religion is not going to do it. That's the same Nicodemus.

[ 35 : 38 ] Nicodemus had not publicly identified with Christ either. But you know what? When Joseph stood up and said, I will, Nicodemus said, I'm with you. These two men, there may have been others we don't know, but at least these two are the ones who went to the cross, took Jesus' body down, carried it back through to where the tomb was, prepared the body.

I want you to understand it was where everybody could see. There was no hiding who they were identifying with. When they went up to the cross of Jesus and took Jesus down, there was no doubt in anybody's mind. Joseph said, I'm going to identify with my Savior.

I'm willing to be courageous to step forward and to do what I ought to do. Nicodemus was influenced by the courage he saw in Joseph. You know, we find here these two took the body of Jesus, prepared it for the grave, placed Jesus in the borrowed tomb from Joseph.

You know, this passage here in chapter 15 closes with Jesus being laid in the tomb. But you know what? I want you to understand that's not the end of the story. That's not the end of the story.

And we're going to see here that it makes a difference and the story continues because though Jesus is dead, they may have thought their hopes and their dreams, but they said, we're going to honor the one that we recognize that we follow.

[ 37 : 01 ] I'm not sure they fully understand. I doubt they fully understand what was going to happen. They may have heard Jesus even telling His other disciples that I'm going to go to Jerusalem and I'm going to be crucified.

I'm going to be buried. But rest assured, I'm going to rise again the third day. You know what? Even the 11 that were there were doubtful of the resurrection. Jesus told it to them multiple times and all they could hear is you're not going to die.

And Jesus says, yes, I am, but rest assured, I'm going to rise again. That day when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus walked away to go home, it was but three days later that Jesus was no longer in that tomb.

They returned and found it empty. You know, 1 Peter chapter 1 tells us this. It says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the what?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I want you to understand the gospel is great not just because He paid for our sin.

[ 38 : 10 ] The gospel's great because you can be a new creature in Christ because Jesus resurrected from the dead. He has victory, it tells us in Corinthians. Oh, victory over death and to give us life.

There's a life in it, that living hope, that lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You know, we find here today a man named Joseph who said, I'm going to make a difference.

I'm not going to say I believe in Christ. I'm going to take action and say I'm going to identify with Christ. I'm going to identify with who He is. You know, today let me ask you a question. What kind of disciple are you?

What's your testimony? Is it a private testimony or a public one? Do you tend to hold back out of fear for what others may say or think about you? Maybe you need to say I need to be bold in my faith to trust God to do with the Scripture and to identify with Christ.

You know, this morning, most importantly, have you been saved? You know, have you ever told somebody about your salvation? You know, as a believer, you ought to have a testimony about what happened when you accepted Christ as your Savior.

[ 39 : 19 ] Because I want you to understand the Bible says that we can know that we have salvation. But you know, there's a lot of people today when you talk to them, it's like they're kind of wishy-washy about their testimony.

The reality is your testimony ought to include some things. I recognize who I am. I'm a sinner. I've broken God's law. I'm separated from God because of my, who I am.

But He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die upon the cross to pay the price of the penalty of sin. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

It's through Christ. You ought to have a clear testimony that you can tell to somebody, say, this is what happened. You ought to be able to go back to a place in time when you said, that was the moment I recognized I was a sinner and needed a Savior.

not back to the fact somebody got you wet or threw some water on you. Not to the fact that you confirmed some creed or some catechism.

[ 40 : 24 ] The Bible says, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Has there been a moment in time when you can look back and say, my testimony is I recognized I was a sinner. I knew Jesus was the Savior and I responded by faith saying, Christ, I'm a sinner, save me.

It's needed. It's required. It's the only way to heaven. Maybe you have that testimony but you kept your faith a secret. Maybe you need to take a public stand with your Savior to stand up and identify with Him.

You know, this morning as the Spirit spoke to you about any area of your life because you know as we get ready to conclude the service it's a great opportunity to say, Lord, I need to spend a few minutes with you.

Lord, I need to be bold. I need to identify with you and not worry about what somebody else has to say. As heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning, I want you to just consider those things today.

What about you today? Where are you? Do you know Christ as your Savior? If you say, I hope so, in a wishful sense, there's a problem. You ought to be able to say, I know that was the moment

Christ saved me.

[ 41 : 39 ] that's what the Bible says. Just like when he talked to Nicodemus, he says, you must be born again. When you're born, everybody knows. When you're born again, you ought to know that you're saved.

Maybe the Lord spoke to you about your testimony. Say, I'm going to take a stand for the Lord. Heavenly Fathers, we come before you this morning, Lord, we just thank you and praise you for the day, for the opportunity.

as we look into your word, Lord, even in a, the reality and light of your death on the cross for us.

But, Lord, also the reality of identifying in your victory over death, your resurrection.

Lord, help us to take a stand for you. Help us to be bold for you today. And, Lord, as we have an opportunity to respond here this morning, Lord, you might work mightily in the hearts of individuals here today. And, Lord, we just give you all the praise and glory and honor.

Amen. As the piano plays, what about you?