

Buried with the Rich

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Hallelujah. This is our God. Praise the Lord for that. I love the God of that song. I love that song, but I really love the God of that song. That was just wonderful. And this is our God living and breathing.

This is our God shouldering our sentence upon us. This is our God light invading the darkness. This is our God there in the manger coming to die for us.

Why does God come to earth to take on a robe of flesh? Because it's in that body of flesh that He can come and die for us. The thing that you want to keep as far away as possible is when we talk about a baby is to talk about death.

But the two came together for a purpose. He came here to die for us. And what a wonderful truth here today. Hope we get to sing that maybe as a congregational Sunday night.

[1 : 02] Because I was singing anyway, and I think a lot of people were. I love that. As you know, the song leader, most of you know this. I think all of you do. He's my brother-in-law, which explains our relationship a little bit there.

And he said, if you can't preach after that song, you just can't preach. So I appreciate that vote of encouragement there. I'm pretty sure everybody can after that song there.

Also, if you have the Word of God in your hand, that also helps there, Stephen. All right, Matthew chapter 27. And we will look at the death of our Christ. We will worship what He has done for us, knowing it was His plan from the very beginning, before the foundation of the world.

And definitely was clear there in the manger that that baby would live a perfect life, a sinless life. And then would go to a cross, not just for anybody, but with you in mind.

Not just a nebulous group of people that someday would come. But He knew you. He knew your sin. He would know your need for grace in this moment. And He still sent His Son to the cross. So you're probably in Matthew 27 by now.

[2 : 06] It's the end of the chapter. But let me ask you a little Bible trivia that might help you out later on. Some of you probably already know this. But if there was a foot race between two disciples, between John and Peter, who would win the foot race between John and Peter?

You don't have to say it out, but if you know the answer, would you raise your hand? All right, some of you would know the answer to this. In John chapter number 20 and verse number 4, and so they ran both together.

And the other disciple, this was John, he did outrun Peter, and he came first to the sepulcher. And I think it's pretty funny that on about three occasions, John tells here that he outran Peter there in a foot race to the grave.

And I'll bring that story up there to you. One, because it's fascinating to know that they tell that he had the weight. He got there. He was probably breathing hard because he beat the other one. And Peter gets there, but Peter first goes into the tomb.

But I want to draw your attention to is the fact that the disciples did not know where the tomb was. The disciples were not the one who put him in the tomb. That God orchestrated it so that there would not be the accusation that the disciples took him out of that tomb.

[3 : 17] And we're going to see here who was there. But it was the two Marys that came that were there. And then one comes to them and to the disciple and says, he's not there. He's risen. Remember when they told you to seal it as sure as you can?

Well, they didn't do a very good job because nothing could keep our God in. And so they ran. And that's an important thing to note here is that God in his wisdom and God in his love validated his death.

So the day with confidence we can say that our Jesus really died. It sounds weird to say, but we needed Jesus to die. The disciples didn't see it.

They didn't understand it. They didn't want it to happen. They wanted an earthly kingdom. But they didn't. They needed somebody to die for their sins as we did. And so we celebrate and we thank him for dying for us.

None of the characters seem to understand how God was using them to confirm, explain, and vindicate the claims of Christ towards his resurrection. And that gets us to the story of Joseph.

[4 : 15] I've already read it for you, but there in verse number 27 is where Joseph comes in. When even was come, there was a rich man in Arimathea named Joseph who also himself was Jesus' disciple.

So we know this was not Jesus' earthly father there, but we know this is another man that shows up. Matthew and John and even Luke, they all talk about this man, but very little.

Matthew says that he had become a disciple of Jesus. John adds that but a secret one for the fear of the Jews. He's on the Sanhedrin, a man of position.

Matthew here tells us that he is a rich man, and that matters in fulfilling prophecy that he is a rich man. It wasn't just added there to draw a bigger picture. It's there to let you know this is connected to a prophecy.

Joseph needed to be a rich man there. Mark says he was a prominent member of the council. And then in Luke, it says that he consented not to the plans against Christ.

[5 : 14] So he voted no against it. But he was still secretive in his allegiance to Christ until this came. Until he looked at the fact that he died.

The death of Jesus causes all of us, coward, secret disciples, to come out and to say, we love that person that died. We got to tell you about that person that died.

And I pray that's what happens in here today. As we're in the word throughout this week, we will get out over our cowardness. We'll get over our secret way of doing things. And we'll go out into this world like shepherds and say, come and worship a Savior that was born in a manger.

Come to Christmas on the north side. Come to church. Come to my house. Come to this seat and sit down and let me show you more about our Savior there. So I told you there was another secret disciple that got involved in the burial.

Some of you might know who that is. But that was Nicodemus in John chapter number 3. I told you I called out the original Nick at Night in John chapter number 3. And that story. He comes to Jesus there at night.

[6 : 14] He has the conversation with them. But the two of them collaborated here. In John chapter number 19 and verse number 39, it says that, And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night.

And he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes and a hundred pounds of weight. So Joseph has the grave there that is going to be the tomb. And he brings the burial cloths, which were made for royalty.

He brought fine linen cloth for him. And then Nicodemus meets him there with a hundred pounds of myrrh, which a little study says that this was for royalty as well.

This was not a pauper's grave. This wasn't for peasants, that this was a big deal. Because that's what was supposed to happen to Jesus' body according to tradition there. The Romans would love to leave him upon the cross.

And so people would see that. It would be a warning to everybody. The next day being the Sabbath, the Jewish people wouldn't want that going on. This was a very special Sabbath with the Passover season going on. And so, but Joseph comes to him, and the cross makes him decide he wants to do something.

[7 : 19] And that's where the centurion was at. He said, this is our God. Before, it was just the man on a cross. Before, it was a guy. And I can't believe of how nice he is to these people killing him.

But begin, the earth began to shake. And the thunder came. And God said, this is my son. And the centurion saw that. And I believe this is where we find his saving faith, his profession of faith here.

His confession that this is our God. He saw all of it happen. And he feared and he responded there. Today would be a good day for the secret disciples to stand up and identify with Christ and his death and resurrection.

Joseph had a lot to lose by earthly standards. He would lose his position on the Sanhedrin. He was fearing the other Jewish people there.

Maybe his wife didn't understand the decision he was going to make. With Jesus alive, he wasn't counted among the disciples. He was counted among the Sanhedrin.

[8 : 21] He didn't identify with the life of Christ. But now in his death, he says, I want to identify with this man. I want everybody to know that I have loyalty. I have allegiance.

I love this man that just died. And it speaks of the position he must have had in life. Because he goes there, the pilot, and he says, I got to have the body of Jesus. You can't just throw him out there in any grave.

You can't just leave him upon a cross. I got to have the body of Jesus. I must show reverence to him. I must show respect to him. And he got an audience with Pilate that day immediately, which said his position that he was giving up.

But he said, no more can I live in this secretness. Because it doesn't live in there very long. If you love Jesus, you don't keep it secret. You will confess with your mouth that you love him. And this is where Joseph does this in life.

And he goes there and he says, I want to be identified with Christ here in his death there. Maybe he wasn't understood. But we should never underestimate how your faithfulness in a small matter may be used of God.

[9 : 22] We talked about this on Thursday night. And you can talk about it in any sermon. We find somebody faithful in what seemed to be a small matter. Could you imagine the things going through his head there? As you're trying to rationalize this.

That he's already dead. You know, I should have stood up. I should have stood up with Christ when he was here. I should have said this is our God when it happened. But I didn't. And now he's dead. But now that he's dead, I just can't.

I've got to do something about this. I have a tomb. I have the ability to talk to Pilate. I have the resources. I can do something. And he goes to Pilate. And the word that he uses is that he begged Pilate for the body of Christ.

He wanted to be associated with Christ in his death. And we have a way that we'll talk about where you can be associated with Christ in his death. Which is to say, I believe that was Christ that died.

And I believe in his resurrection. I will rise again. The Bible lays that out. And closer to the end, I want to make that application and ask you if you've made that decision. Are you a secret disciple or have you identified with him in his death?

[10 : 24] So the doctrine of death, all the teaching around the death is very important here to us. Remember what I told you they called Jesus? Not a very kind word. They didn't even say his name. They called him the deceiver in verse number 63.

When I read it first, I said deceiver. And I thought, who are they talking about here? Because surely it ain't Jesus. And then you look at the verses around them and you said, they're talking about the son of God here when they call him the deceiver.

Saying, sir, shown respect to who they're speaking to, we remember that the deceiver said, while you are yet alive after three days, I will rise again. And we will get to find out who the real deceivers are in this story.

What did they mean by this? They said, so the last error should be worse than the first. This man called Jesus, he's been saying that he was God. He's been saying that he had the power to forgive sin.

He said that he could take the temple down and bring it back in three days. But if that deceiver gets taken out of the tomb and they pretend like he never died or never resurrected, then that lie would be worse than the first.

[11 : 28] That's what they're saying there is that we got to seal this tomb so nobody can come and get them. And so look at Matthew chapter 28, verse number 12 through 15, one chapter over.

This is what plan B happens. Plan A, seal the tomb, keep the disciples away because he makes sure nobody gets in there. Keep him in the grave there. But it doesn't happen, does it?

The resurrection happens. So this is plan B for them, verse number 12. And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye his disciples came by night and stole him away while he slept.

And if this come to the governor's ear, we will persuade him and secure you. And so they took the money and did as they were taught. And the saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

You are getting the first account of a lie that's being told for 2,000 years and being still told to the ears of Jewish people today. Talk about a payoff there.

[12 : 30] Where did Satan get a good return on his investment? Whatever amount of money he went to those original people there and he said, here's some money. When people ask you what happened, say that he was stolen away there.

And the lie continues. Do you see Satan and the world's attack upon the death of Christ? Because if this is true, it changes everything, right? If there's a death of Christ, then this changes everything.

Because if he died and he rose again, then how can we argue that he is the son of God? And so there's this strange irony that kind of pervades the story that goes on here. The unbelievers fear that Jesus might rise from the dead and the believers fear that he wouldn't.

Kind of turned around, isn't it? The unbelievers wanted to keep him in the tomb and the believers should have been waiting for him and greeting him, but they weren't there, always under attack. This teaching is always under attack.

And you say, I'm making a straw man today. Say, nobody's attacking you in this room. Well, this is a safe haven. This is the green zone. This is where we don't attack the death of Christ. But in most rooms and in most places, this is attacked.

[13 : 33] That Jesus didn't die for our sins. That he swooned or that he fell asleep or he was stolen away. And it didn't happen. It happens at universities. It happens in living rooms.

It happens in small, casual conversations. But anywhere where there's one of us, let it not be said that there's not somebody that defends the fact that he died and you want to be associated with him.

We're not a secret disciple. We don't allow conversation to take place within earshot of us that says that Jesus didn't really die without us saying, thus saith the word of the Lord. This is what God says about it.

So know that that's true. Teenagers listen to it. You say, I've never heard anybody say this. Just wait. You'll find it as you go off to college in different places. People will attack the death of Jesus.

The death burial have happened completely as Scripture said that it would. 1 Corinthians 15, 3, it says, And that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

[14 : 28] His life was according to the Scriptures. His burial down to the exact letter is going to be to it. And then his resurrection is going to be just like it. It says in Isaiah 53, 9, and this is the prophecy that Joseph helps bring a fulfillment to.

It says, And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death because he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth. How is this going to happen? That Jesus is going to be dying with the wicked?

I mean, we know that when people die, they're not going to get put up into a grave of a rich person. If they died as a murderer, it wouldn't matter if your family was very rich and you died as a murderer, you're not going to get all those rights to it.

But because of this happening, he died with the wicked even though he was not a sinner, but he was buried with the rich. Those ladies that were there at the tomb, these ladies didn't have the ability to put him in that tomb.

The disciples were not wealthy, but there was a disciple, Joseph. He was activated for that moment. He stepped up. There's a fulfillment of prophecy here, and he did what he could.

[15 : 29] And in him doing what he could, we are now worshiping this today. He was used to help further the gospel by being obedient, just to do what he could do. He is put to the test.

The resurrection will prove or disprove anything and everything about the life of Christ. How many of you have ever heard the story of Lee Strobel? Lee Strobel, S-T-R-B-O-B-E-L.

Okay, that's Lee Strobel there. And he wrote the book called The Case for Christ. And it's interesting because he set out to do the opposite in his book. He said, I'm going to gather up all the evidence, and I'm going to prove that this historical figure either didn't exist or if he did exist, there's no way he came and he just thought it.

Well, the disciples must have believed it because they all died according to history, and then we find that. And he's like, all these things continue, and he finally gets to the point, and he says, if he died and he rose again, then this is our God.

And he believed it and has now become a witness for Christ. A resurrected Christ challenges every false religion and authority in the world. And it's no wonder countries like China, where the De Los Reis family, Ed and Beth, are going to, and others and so many places of the world would fight to minimize that message because it's not like any other truth.

[16 : 44] Because if that's true, it changes everything there. Why in the world? It's why the world can agree with so many things about Christianity, but on the death of Christ, they want to keep distance. Hey, we like praying angels.

Walmart will sell you a praying angel, okay? We like Easter bunnies. We like a lot of things. The world likes a lot of things about Christianity. But where our conflict comes in is that he was God and he died because you were a sinner.

That's where we can't agree on. And so that's why this is being disputed and people argue against the death of Christ. The burial makes proof of the death as the resurrection makes proof of his power to overcome.

1 Corinthians chapter number 15 says, but if there be no resurrection of the dead, then there is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain.

That's the negative side of it, which means because he has risen, preaching the gospel today is not vain. It's not empty. That this is a worthwhile endeavor. Inviting people, talking to people is not vain.

[17 : 43] But verse number 19, if this life only we have in Christ, we are all men most miserable. So if he didn't die, if he didn't rise again, we're most miserable.

Are we most miserable in here today? Are we most miserable in here today? I'm expecting a little response here, people. All right? We're not most miserable. We are not most miserable. We are joyful people because the resurrection happened, because the death happened, because his life happened, because he chose for those to happen.

So here's the implications of his death. That's why we're going to be adamant, dogmatic, and all those things about the death of Christ and the way that he was buried, that fulfilled prophecy. And if God, in his wisdom, hadn't orchestrated it and the disciples would have buried him and all those things that you would have thought should have happened, then all these accusations, but God made it so that, okay, Romans, you have a guard outside of there.

All right? Is this how you want it, Jewish people? You want him taken down and buried now? We're going to let you, world, tell us exactly how you want us to do this. Tell us what tomb you want us to put him in. Tell us what all the conditions you are because he wants to prove his power.

Over those things. And so we are not miserable today because there was a death and there's a resurrection and there's full proof of it here. In the death of Jesus, Hebrews 9, 26 says, But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

[19 : 07] In his death he puts away sin. We need Jesus to die because we need our death. We need our sin to die with him. We need him to put away our sin.

He becomes our propitiation, Romans 3, 25, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. It's a turning away of our wrath by an offering.

His death in that tomb is an offering that turns away our wrath there. If there's no death, there's no offering. Romans 5, 11 says he reconciles us to God. Remember, we were in communion and fellowship with God in the garden, but then sin entered the world, and now we need something to reconcile us, to bring us back into a right standing before God, and our righteousness must exceed the Pharisees, but every one of us know we've been doing a horrible job at it, but his death reconciles us to it.

So we needed Jesus to die. He redeems us from the curse of law, Galatians 3, 13. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having we made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

We were cursed because the law says we don't measure up. We were cursed because the law said we're not righteous, but the curse of the law has been removed because he fulfilled it for us, and he received our curse.

[20 : 24] He died upon a cross. He died in what ought to be the most shameful way for anybody to die there, taking on our sins, taking on our shame, taking on our guilt here.

You're probably familiar with John Bunyan's book, Pilgrim's Progress, and it's not really a sermon unless you quote Pilgrim's Progress, so let me make this a real sermon for you, Stephen. Okay? But in the story of John Bunyan, tells of Pilgrim's Progress, as you know, he's carrying around the burden.

At the very beginning, he has this burden upon his back, and now I saw in my dream that the highway up, which Christian was to go, was fenced on either side with a wall, and the wall was called salvation.

Up this way, therefore, did burden Christian run, but not without great difficulty. Because of the load on his back, he ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a supPLICar.

So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosened from off his shoulders, and fell off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulcher, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

[21 : 39] Our guilt, our burden, our sin, was taken away at the cross, and at the death of Jesus there. Did you hear it there? It says that, and it fell off my back, and began to tumble, and it continued into the mouth of the sepulcher.

Isn't that a beautiful picture? We talk about our sins being as far as the east is from the west. We call it being in the bottom of the sea, but here it says that our sins all rolled into that tomb, and it went in there, and it died in there, and it's gone now.

And so that's why we not only celebrate the life and the death, but we look at the burial, and we think about how wonderful it is, and how it has an implication. It gives us power over our sins. It gives us power over death, because death no more has dominion over me, because it had no dominion over him.

And all this happened because he was willing to die on a cross, not just to be born as a human, but as to die. 1 Peter 2, 24. Who his own self bear our sins, and his own body on the tree, that we being dead, the sins shall live, and the righteousness by whose stripes we are healed.

Christ must die, because we are dead. He met us where we were at, and you, all of you, being dead in your sins, and circumcised unto the flesh, he has quickened together with him, having forgiven you all his trespasses.

[23 : 00] He died because we were dead, and he came to us, and we need him to really die, so we could really live. Now, there's a picture of this, I told you at the beginning.

A secret disciple, Joseph Nicodemus, said, I had an opportunity to stand with him in his life, and I didn't, but my love for Christ, I can't be silent anymore, and I want to be associated with him in his death.

I want people to know that I am a follower of him, and in our lives, we have baptism as a picture of this. Baptism portrays our death in the death of Christ.

In Romans chapter 6, verse number 3, we are not the same people we once were. Our old sin has died, and we are not the same. Our physical death will not have the same meaning for us that it would have if Christ had not died our death.

What this says is that baptism portrays our union with Christ, that is, we are united to him spiritually, so that his death becomes our death, and his life becomes our life.

[24 : 02] And so, in the baptism over here, they go down, and sometimes it's said, either in the baptism, the buried in the likeness of his death, the raised, the walking newness of life.

His death is our death, and that's why we study it, and we defend it. If he didn't die, then you're still dead. If he didn't die, then your sins are still alive. But he died, and we are now alive because of it.

And we show this picture. Baptism portrays our newness of life in Christ. Romans 6, 4, Therefore we buried with him by baptism in the death, that life as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so also should walk in newness of life.

And the Colossians 2, 12, makes explicit what Romans 6, 4 just leaves implicit. It says this, Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith, in the powerful work of God, who raised him from the dead, baptism expresses our faith in the working of God to raise Jesus from the dead.

In baptism, we told everybody that in Jesus' death, we believe that he was God. In Jesus' death, we believe that he died for our sins. And today in here, if you're a secret disciple, and you've never been obedient to Christ in baptism, today you should choose to identify with him and his death, that this death is your death, and you should let other people know that.

[25 : 28] I believe as you would read through this, and with all sincerity, I look at this in my life, and I think this is a very clear application for every one of us in this room. But if you're in here today, next week some people being baptized in here, they will make public their profession of faith, they will make public that his death was their death of sin, and you should join them.

And the next week you should get with somebody through foundations, you ought to talk to somebody, you ought to look at it, you ought to be able to celebrate it, you ought to get on the phone, you should email some people, you ought to get people here to let them know what you think about the death and resurrection of Jesus, and let us rejoice with you.

But the rest of us in here, like myself, who was baptized, I was saved at the age of nine, and baptized shortly afterwards, I don't feel like I get off the hook here either, just because I'm baptized, because I know what it's like to be a secret disciple.

I know what it was like on Thursday night when we stopped by Subway, because they have \$2 subs, shameless promotion, I get nothing from it, okay? But I stopped by Subway there, and there was a guy in his mid-twenties, and he was making the sandwich, and there was nobody else in there, and I'm at the fountain getting a Sprite, and it says, talk to him about me, tell him about what you know, tell him what you know about my death, tell him how his future death here on earth doesn't have to be the end, it doesn't have to be all he sees, but he will live forever somewhere, either in hell or in heaven, that his sin can be all rolled up, and be put in the suppurator, that the guilt and shame that he feels, just because he's an average American, not because I thought anything bad of him, but you don't make it through life without accumulating guilt and shame, and wanting some place to put that, tell him about me, but no, the secret disciple takes the sandwich, and he leaves the store, and he feels the guilt and shame, but my God doesn't love me any less, and I stand here today, and I'll preach the gospel in this moment,

I'll fill him again later this week, but I don't want to, and I'm going to fight against it, and I think you do too, we're not secret disciples, so would you please, would you look at this passage here, and if you've never been baptized, you know the scenario that works out, is a lot of times, maybe you were baptized when you were younger, but you know you weren't saved then, you know you made a profession of faith, and you don't know what happened, and later on in life, you came to a point, and several of you came, and you follow the Lord in baptism, here in this baptistry, because you said, that's my story, I want to be identified with Christ, after my salvation, has happened in my life, get with somebody, talk about it, talk with me afterwards, make that decision today, that you want to get baptized, here in a second, raise your hand, and let me pray for you, if you want, we can send somebody to you, and they can talk to you about it, but identify with Christ and his death, and then the rest of us, don't block it, don't make excuses, don't put your arms up, let this passage hit you in the heart, and say, no more secret discipling here for me, this week, I just want to be, I want to talk about his death,

[28 : 22] I want to talk about his life, I want to make sure, while all this is going on, when people say, Merry Christmas to me, I want to make sure, they know what they're talking about, I want to talk about, who he was, that this is our God, we must be thankful, for the death of Christ, we needed Jesus to die, but we were most men miserable, we must be thankful, that God in his wisdom, provided irrefutable proof, of his death, so that there would be, irrefutable proof, of his resurrection, in his death, we're no longer miserable, in his death, it was our death, we now have newness of life, and let's show that to the world, take the step of faith, and show this church, through baptism, take the step of faith, and show the world, by living it out, all the implications, of his death, we have a lot to celebrate today, because of his death, and we know it, this message was recorded, at Vision Baptist Church, in Alfred, Georgia, for more information, log on to, www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find, our service times, location, contact information, and more audio, and video recordings,