

Day Twenty-Seven

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

Risky Business

John 19:31-37(NLT) *It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. 33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. 34 One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35 (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) 36 These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," 37 and "They will look on the one they pierced."*

38 *Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. 39 With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. 40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. 41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. 42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.*

Luke 23:50-56(NLT) *Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph. He was a member of the Jewish high council, 51 but he had not agreed with the decision and actions of the other religious leaders. He was from the town of Arimathea in Judea, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come. 52 He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53 Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in a long sheet of linen cloth and laid it in a new tomb that had been carved out of rock. 54 This was done late on Friday afternoon, the day of preparation, as the Sabbath was about to begin.*

Mark 15:42-47(NLT) *This all happened on Friday, the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. As evening approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea took a risk and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. (Joseph was an honored member of the high council, and he was waiting for the Kingdom of God to come.) 44 Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead, so he called for the Roman officer and asked if he had died yet. 45 The officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. 46 Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus'*

body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance.**47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.**

Matthew 27:57-61(NLT) *Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. 59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.*

Jesus has died. The Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to be left on the cross because the next day was the Sabbath. Some victims of crucifixion could survive for days on the cross. To hasten their death, the soldiers would break the victims bones so that they no longer could pull themselves up to breathe, and they would die within minutes by asphyxiation. John writes and states that Jesus was already dead, so they pierced His side and blood and water flowed out. John wants the reader to understand that he witnessed this himself and that his eyewitness account is true. By this, Jesus fulfills the Scripture in that no bone is broken (Exodus 12:46) and that His side is pierced (Zech. 12:10).

What happens next is not just part of the dialogue of the story, but crucial to the fulfillment of Scripture. Two secret followers of Jesus who happened to be members of the Jewish high council step into action. We are introduced to Joseph of Arimathea and we are familiar with Nicodemus. Nicodemus is the Jewish leader that came to Jesus at night (because he was afraid), and needed to ask Jesus some questions. Within that conversation, Jesus said this to him: **John 3:14-15(NLT)** ***"And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,***¹⁵*so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life."*

Nicodemus knew exactly what Jesus was talking about. We see in John Chapter 7 that Nicodemus comes to the defense of Jesus and catches the ire of the rest of the Pharisees. We don't know exactly at what point they became followers of Jesus, but we do know that they kept it a secret for fear of the Jewish leaders. They are witnessing all of the events of that day and something happens to these secret believers. Maybe, as they witnessed Jesus hanging on the cross, His words about being lifted up like Moses lifted up the bronze snake flashed through their minds. Within that hour, these religious leaders, highly respected, highly educated, and highly secretive, followers of Jesus, took an enormous risk. They decided to go public with their love and respect for Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. We know that Joseph was wealthy because Matthew tells us that. We also know

that doing what they did was risky because that is what Mark tells us. I am sure we can put two and two together; a dead crucified body, a rich man, the governor who ordered the crucifixion and a request for the body that is supposed to go to the dump. It was more likely a bribe. This was not all that unusual. The difference being, if you had enough money, you would normally bribe the Roman officer in charge of dumping the body.

It was, however, unprecedented to go directly to the person who gave the order. By doing so, both Joseph and Nicodemus demonstrate their love, respect and complete devotion to Jesus. None of the other disciples even dared to demonstrate this kind of loyalty, except for the women (girls never get enough credit). Pilate is surprised to hear that Jesus has already died and asks the Roman officer if it is true. Once it is confirmed, he allows Joseph and Nicodemus to take the body. In the midst of all the disappointment, despair, anguish, hopelessness, sorrow, fear and a sense of regret and loss, two unlikely characters take a risk that would change the world.

John 19:39-40(NLT) *“With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. 40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus’ body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.”*

John tells us that they followed Jewish burial custom. The body would be washed and anointed with ointment and wrapped in linen. John also tells us they used seventy-five pounds of ointment; meaning, by the time they were finished, the body would have at least a hundred pounds of additional weight. They would wrap the head as well as the body. So, there would be absolutely no possibility of breathing through all of that ointment and wrapping. It was a wrap. Then Joseph used his own family tomb, a brand-new tomb hewed out of the rock, and they laid Jesus in it; fulfilling **Isaiah 53:9(NIV)** *“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”*

Two of the most unlikely heroes; they were willing to risk, and ask, or bribe, a madman for Jesus’ body. Because of the way they handled Jesus’ body, we are sure that He died. The Bible is filled with unlikely heroes; heroes, not in a super hero kind of way, but in a natural-supernatural kind of way. By risking their own lives and reputations, we know Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Are you willing to risk for Jesus’ sake? Are you willing to step up when everybody else is running away? Are you willing to stand before difficult people and represent Jesus well? Are you willing to risk today so that the “Body of Christ” can be fully prepared? Are you willing to risk so that future generations can know and follow Jesus?

What would you consider is risky business for kingdom sake? Would you risk it?

Prayer:

- **Ask the Holy Spirit to empower you, so that you will be able to risk what is needed.**
- **Pray that the Lord will show you specific areas you need to take a risk in.**
- **Pray that the Lord will give you boldness to represent Him before others.**
- **Pray for your fellow believers that together we would fulfill God's purpose for us.**