

# His Burial

By Jeff Noblit

**Bible Text:** Mark 15:40-47  
**Preached on:** Sunday, April 5, 2020

**Anchored in Truth Ministries**  
1915 Avalon Ave.  
Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

**Website:** [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth](http://www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth)

Well, amen. Let's take our Bibles and let's go back to the Gospel of Mark. I'm not sure if I'll stay in Mark for next week but for this series of sermons entitled "God's Unrelenting Love for His Children," I've mainly been in Mark, one of the Gospels I've preached through, and, ah, how rich it has been for me to pore back over the narrative of our Lord's suffering and his betrayal, his arrest, his, his crucifixion we saw last week and now we're gonna talk about his burial, or rather we saw his death last week, crucifixion was before that, but now his burial and some powerful powerful things.

One thing I want to remind you is that, ah, well, let me say it this way. Often folks will say, "Well, is that text descriptive or prescriptive? Is it just God describing, he's just describing the story or is there something prescribed there for us to honor and obey?" Brothers and sisters, it's both. It's actually true history. It is a description of what happened but there's glorious truths here for the child of God and what we have in this church age, or the new kingdom age that has begun that you and I are living in.

Now we begin in Mark 15:40, we're going through verse 47.

40 There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome. [And He was, or rather] 41 When He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and there were many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem. 42 When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. 45 And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Joseph brought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where He was laid.

Now to begin our thoughts, I want to read Revelation 21:1-5. Revelation 21:1-5 tell us,

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things [note that] the first things have passed away." [Verse 5 now] 5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

That's what I want you to hold onto to. "I am making all things new."

Now this is a picture of the end of times. This is a picture of our Lord establishing what we call the eternal state, the last thing he's going to do. So actually, in effect, instead of just saying, "I'm making all things new," you could say he's finishing up his making of all things new. That's what we see in Revelation 21. You see, right now in time and space history, Jesus is, in effect, building a new world order, sometimes it's called the new kingdom or the kingdom of God; sometimes it's called the new creation. Ah, in this text, Revelation 21 I just read, it's called the new heaven and the new earth. But one thing that is for certain, his church, his redeemed children is the centerpiece of it. Call it what you want, the new kingdom, the new creation, the new heaven and earth, whatever else it is, the church is the centerpiece of it all, and in one sense you could say the church is the new kingdom. I understand there's some theological questions about that, but nevertheless at the least the church, his redeemed ones, are the centerpiece of all that he's doing both in time and when he fully establishes or finally establishes the new created order at the end of time.

Now as we, you and I, live here today, God is creating a new righteous people, his church, to inhabit this new world order, or this new creation, or this new kingdom. The new citizens must fit the new kingdom. The citizens are those he's redeemed through his suffering and bleeding on the cross, and therefore he has bought them and brought them out of the kingdom of Satan and darkness and put them into the kingdom of the beloved Son, or the kingdom of light sometimes it's called.

Now that's what he accomplished when he died, not we come to his burial. After his death and the events that surround his burial, the things of this new faze of God's work, if you will, begin to unfold. They begin to be unveiled. They begin to be manifested. You see, in his burial, a brand new faze of God's purpose begins to unfold and in the circumstances and events surrounding the burial, we begin to see the character and the nature of the church. Something radically changes from when Jesus said, "It is finished," and he dies and the burial begins. Something new has started. I say it's a foreshadowing. The way "foreshadowing" is the idea of "to show or to prefigure before." You might even

call it a blueprint though it's more than that. There's a blueprint, there's a prefiguring of this new age, this new work, this building of his church that begins to be unfolding during the burial of our Lord. Isn't it amazing, only God could take a funeral and a burial and turn it inside out to be the start of something gloriously new. Only God could do that, but I'm telling you, that's what we're gonna see here.

So let's look at some things that are foreshadowed of the church age or the new kingdom in his burial as recorded in the text. Four different things. 1. Let's note the foreshadowing of the Christian profession of faith through baptism. Of course, that should be there because that's when you come a part of outwardly and formally God's church. It's through the ordinance of baptism, but it is so powerfully pictured in the events surrounding the burial of Jesus Christ.

In verse 43 again, we see this man named Joseph of Arimathea coming to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph of Arimathea, the, another Gospel writer tells us, had been a secret disciple out of fear of the Jews. What I think that means is he had been effectually called by God, he was beginning to, to learn of Jesus, he was beginning to embrace the things of Jesus, had a love for Jesus, but I don't think he was yet converted until now when he saw Jesus suffer and die the way he did. I believe that's the moment he went from being effectually called to effectually converted.

So Joseph of Arimathea is a secret disciple no longer. Boldly, one translation says, he comes to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. Literally the New American Standard is right, it means he gathered up courage. By the way, as a child of God when you face trials and difficulties, if you're persecuted for your faith, or covid19 is raging through the world, sometimes you have to grab yourself and gather up courage and that's what this word means. He gathered up courage and went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. I mean, this wasn't easy. Joseph of Arimathea had fear. He had every human reason to have fear, but he would not allow fear to control his actions. He chooses to function on faith and disregard the fear.

Think about it for just a moment. Jesus is hanging on a pole as a dead corpse. I mean, it, no one would want to be, no humanly speaking, no one would want to be associated with that. First of all, only a relative would ever come and ask permission of the body of an executed, ah, criminal, and Joseph of Arimathea is not a relative. Secondly, Jesus, in effect, has been tried openly and convicted as a traitor. He's, he's guilty of treason against Israel and here a leader of the Sanhedrin, literally it's the Supreme Court of Israel, the Sanhedrin that chose to have Jesus arrested, chose to have Jesus tried and found him guilty of treason that had him crucified, a member of that Supreme Court now boldly comes forth to say, "I love this One. I'm devoted to this One." There's a lot going on here. It was a clear and open confession of his personal faith and loyalty to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, a man hated so bad by the Jews in general and particularly the Sanhderin, or the Supreme Court, that they would rather have Barabbas, a convicted true criminal released to them rather than have Jesus released.

Verse 43 says something else about Joseph of Arimathea, it says he was a man who was waiting for the kingdom of God. Well, look, Joseph had been saved by now and this waiting is the root and the source of Joseph of Arimathea's righteousness. He's moved from the Jewish notion of law-keeping as a way to obtain righteousness to now his confidence is in Christ to be his righteousness. You see, Joseph grasped that the promised Messiah would come but Joseph understood something that the rest of Israel was not getting. Joseph understood, first, that this promised Messiah, this Savior would come and renovate men's hearts first, then he would renovate Israel, and then renovate the entire world and universe. Joseph gets it and he's one whose heart has been renovated by the power of Jesus Christ. He's been converted. He heard Jesus teach and preach, he's been watching Jesus, he's been drawn to him, and then when he sees Jesus died on the, die on the cross, by the work of the Spirit in his heart, he grasped by faith this was the Savior. No, more than that, this is my Savior.

So Joseph of Arimathea goes public with his faith. He makes a profession of faith by there to take down the body of Jesus. You see, all the Jews accepted that the Messiah would come, all the Jews looked forward to this Messiah coming and establishing, a, a, a holy and righteous kingdom in the earth, but all the Jews missed something that Joseph of Arimathea now sees and this is to have a holy and righteous physical kingdom in the earth, first there must be holy and righteous ones to make up the citizenry of that righteous kingdom. Joseph trusted in Jesus first to forgive himself, to liberate himself from sin, and then later to liberate the nation and the world from sin. And by the way, that's coming in the Second Coming of Jesus. We're waiting for that but it's gonna happen just as sure as the first coming.

Now very interesting. In John's Gospel account in John 19, John tells us that Nicodemus joined Joseph of Arimathea in taking down the body of Jesus. In John 19:39, Joseph "also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds." Quite expensive. So now we don't just have Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Supreme Court, the Sanhedrin, we have Nicodemus, another prominent wealthy member of the Supreme Court or the Sanhedrin, both coming boldly publicly to identify with Jesus Christ.

Now you remember Nicodemus, don't you? Nicodemus is the man in John 3. What did he do? He sneaked at night to speak with Jesus. He knew there was something real about Jesus, so he comes in the night, he kind of like Joseph of Arimathea, he's becoming a secret learner or disciple, disciple doesn't mean absolutely converted, it just means he's beginning to learn and follow and want to receive more. He comes and, remember, Jesus just totally blew his mind. Well, you might just say Jesus blew past his mind because Nicodemus says, "What's all this teaching," and Jesus said, "Nicodemus, if you want to see the kingdom of God, if you want to enter the kingdom of God, you must be born from above. You must be born again. There's gotta be a new birth." And remember Nicodemus just couldn't grasp that, but something's changed from the time Nicodemus was blown away by Jesus saying there's gotta be a new birth, a, a, a regeneration of your heart and what Nicodemus is doing now without, without any concern for his own safety, the rejection he's gonna receive by his, his companions on the Jewish Supreme Court or the nation in general, throws all of that away with Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus comes

and say, "I want to take care of this precious One's body." What happened to Nicodemus? I'll tell you what happened to Nicodemus, he's been born again. He's been born again. He's changed. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea both have become true born again disciples of Jesus Christ.

Here's one additional insight on Joseph and I bet it was true for Nicodemus also, and that's Luke 23:50-51, "And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God." So somewhere along the way Joseph of Arimathea told the rest of the Council, "I don't go along with this." Maybe at that time he didn't know exactly what to think but he knew by the work of the Spirit in his heart he should not stand against Jesus who is called the Christ.

So Joseph and Nicodemus already being effectually called, but when they saw Jesus crucified, I'm convinced are effectually converted and by coming and asking for the body of Jesus, taking him down off the cross, anointing him, wrapping him with the linens, the Bible says, anointing him with those hundred pounds of spices, showing honor and dignity to Christ by laying Jesus in a new tomb, they were making publicly, "We profess our faith in Jesus Christ."

You know, every truly saved born again believer is required to make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. I mean, anything less is absolutely unthinkable and this episode in the burial narrative of Jesus is a foreshadowing because the church has not yet formally been established, and the ordinance of baptism hasn't yet been formally established. The Bible says in Matthew 28:18 Jesus has risen from the grave, he's meeting with his followers before he ascends back up into glory. He said, "Okay, here's what you're to do, go everywhere and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Brothers and sisters, baptism is the profession of faith that's a first step of obedience for everyone who's come to faith in Christ. My challenge to you this morning: have you been saved, have you been effectually called, are you drawn to Jesus? What's holding you back from making a profession of faith in Jesus Christ through baptism? Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, threw their entire everything on the line to come public with their loyalty and faith in Jesus. And God's ordained this side of the cross, on this side of the establishment of the church in the world, that now we're to come forward and be baptized to show forth we have been changed in our hearts too. We love this Christ. He's our Savior and we want to serve him in this church as our Lord.

The Bible says in Acts 2:41 as Peter begins to preach and the church age begins to unfold, "So then, those who had received his word," that means received it and believed it, they're saved, "were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls." Now think about the parallels between Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and their profession of faith and the New Testament ordinance we now have as our profession of faith through baptism.

1. Both are to be public. No question about Joseph and Nicodemus. They'd come in front of everybody. Don't care what anybody says. You just can't, you, you just can't fathom what it meant in the Jewish culture of that day for men of this prominence to take his dead corpse off an execution pole. I mean, they were doing something radical and it was public, and when you stand before a church, you're going public by being baptized and making a statement of identification with Jesus.

Secondly, both of those are a testimony of a changed heart. It's clear, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea have been changed by the Gospel, by this man Jesus Christ, and you're not to be baptized in a church unless you've become a disciple, unless you've been changed, unless you've been regenerated, you've come to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Both of them, Joseph and Nicodemus and New Testament baptism are a testimony of a changed heart.

Thirdly, both of them are an identifying with Jesus Christ. You're identifying. When you're in the baptismal waters, you're saying, "I identify with Him. I believe He died for me. He's buried and He rose again." And when you go down in the baptismal waters, you're saying, "I want you to know, I've died with my old viewpoints, my old priorities, my old purposes. I've buried the old and I'm rising to learn to follow Jesus." Well, that's what Nicodemus and Joseph are saying, "We're done." Now I don't know what history records, we don't know exactly what happened, but these men in their hearts had to be at least saying, "It doesn't matter about the Sanhedrin. It doesn't matter about our prominence in Israel. It doesn't matter what our fellow men think." And very likely they were putting their very lives on the line. We are identifying with Jesus.

And then the fourth thing, not only is it public, not only is it a testimony of a changed heart, not only is it identifying with Jesus, but both Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and New Testament baptism is a joining with Christ and his church and a leaving of your old associations. Everyone who comes forward is saying, "I'm making a new family that I am joining. I now want to be identified with the church." It doesn't mean you have to leave your other family or even your old organizations, but it means in your heart, "My new priority, the centerpiece of who I am is God's church and God's purposes." And these two men certainly threw to the wind all their old associations.

Now this side of Calvary, this side of the finished Gospel work of Jesus Christ, it is unthinkable, I think it's impossible to in a prolonged fashion be a secret disciple. You must go public and you must go public God's way and that's baptism in a local church. Something for sure happened to Joseph and to Nicodemus after Calvary and if you can look on the Savior on the cross and refuse to identify with him through New Testament baptism, then you need to go back and look again because you missed something. No, you missed everything.

The Bible tells us in Matthew 10:32-33, "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven." You know, isn't it amazing the things people will identifying with? We wear caps. We wear shirts and they

say this is who we identify with. I'm not saying all that's bad. Our ball team, our politician, whatever it is. We put stickers on our cars saying what we identify with. Some have hunting stickers. I probably like those better than others. Some have other things, but to be honest, a lot of it is just silly worldly stuff and to be really honest, a lot of it's stupid, and some of it's outright sinful and wrong. Brothers and sisters, or whoever you are if you've come to Christ, why not identify through God's baptism with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

These men are a powerful foreshadowing that a new age is starting, a new thing has begun, God's church, and it centers in those who are saved coming forward to join it through a public profession of faith in believer's baptism.

A second thing in this new work, this new thing God's doing that we see here, is a foreshadowing of Christian perseverance and faith. It's a foreshadowing of Christian perseverance, that is, that everyone who's truly saved perseveres to the end with Christ. We see that in these women. Ah, again in verse 40, "There were also some women looking on," and, ah, verse 49, ah, verse 40, "There were some women looking on." Verse 41, these women were also with him in Galilee. Then verse 47, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where he was laid. The Bible says they've actually been honoring Jesus and serving Jesus for a long time. The Bible says in Galilee, verse 41. During his earthly ministry in teaching. They would minister to him, literally it means to wait on him. There was just a group of ladies who said, "It doesn't matter what's needed. We'll serve them food, we'll bring them water." The Bible says they gave of their material possessions to support the work. Their point was, "Whatever our Lord and whatever the disciples need to carry on this work, we're here to support it." Brothers and sisters, these were the first nightshift workers in the church. Now you may be out there and say, "What's a nightshift worker?" You need to go online and get my sermon and listen to it, not because it's my sermon but because the truth of the sermon. They were those who had a, a testimony of faithfulness.

Now it's quite clear the way this is described that there were numbers of other women who have fallen off, numbers of other women who are no longer faithful. These are the women that the New Testament in the King James version calls "silly women." They loved Jesus when he was feeding them miraculously, they loved Jesus when he was performing the miracles, they loved Jesus when he would raise the dead, they loved it when Jesus would refute and embarrass the Pharisees in his preaching and teaching. When he was arrested, he was shamed. People were turning against him. He was tried. He was crucified and those silly women who follow their emotions fell off. But these women in Mark 15 persevered. They're not silly women, they're what I call godly principled women. They're held by their faith. They're not swayed by silly fickle emotions.

One of the things I think I see in our culture today is a lot of effeminate men who act like silly women, follow, they're just drama queens, they follow this thing and that thing and this. You don't know where they stand. It's wherever their emotions are that day, well, that's what they're gonna chase. Not these ladies. These are godly, faithful, principled

women. Matter of fact, Mark 14:50 simply states they all left him to fled. Who all left him to fled? That means the men. The disciples. We do know from the Gospel narratives that John was there for a while, but likely didn't stay long, but the ladies stayed all the way through. These ladies were faithful through it all. The Bible text tells us they were with him, serving him in Galilee, they were with him when he came to Jerusalem, they were beside the cross when he was crucified on the cross, they're with him now as he's being buried, and they'll be there right after he's resurrected. This is a picture of Christian perseverance. It's a picture of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

Now through the ages, as I've told my church many times, we've kinda diluted this doctrine down. We've kinda cut it in half and we use the phrase "once saved, always saved," which I believe. Or we use the phrase "the eternal security of the believer," which I believe. But that's only one half. The other half is not only is God gonna keep all that he saves, those he saves will remain and persevere all the way through. Now we stumble, we fall. I mean, you might fall in a mud puddle but you're not expected to lay in it all week. That's the difference, you get up and you repent and you persevere on with the Lord. These ladies are such a glorious picture of that.

Matthew 10:22 says, "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved." Matthew 24:12-13, "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, shall be saved." This text is not teaching your endurance to the end saves you, it's saying that those who are really God's persevere in overall faithfulness to the end.

Now we do know the disciples fell out but they came back, but these ladies are a better example. They were faithful, persevering all the way through. These ladies are indeed a testimony, a foreshadow of the church New Testament doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

I've thought many times this week studying this about the, the ladies in my church and if you're a pastor out there, you're not a member of Grace Life, or a church leader, whoever you might be, you might think I'm just saying this and here's why I'm saying you might think I'm just saying this: because pastors notoriously have problems with the women in their church, and I mean, typically with women who are out for power and control, women who esteem themselves spiritual giants and they chase this author and then they chase this seminar teaching and they chase this philosophy, and they're just all over the place and it just drives the pastors crazy trying to keep the flock together because Aunt So-and-so or Momma So-and-so or Sister So-and-so is always following some emotional tangent. Well, that's just common in churches but I'm gonna tell you, it's just the truth, Grace Life Church is not like that. God has given me an army of women just like these. They serve. They honor. They support. They work. They don't care if they're seen. They've been, and I was just thinking, some of these ladies have been with me 40 years and they're still faithful. What a picture of the perseverance of the saints.

3. Jesus is doing a new thing. From the moment he died and said, "It's finished," he begins to unfold this new thing, this new church age. One of the things that's



foreshadowed in this burial is the exalted glory of Jesus Christ. A foreshadowing of the exalted glory of Jesus Christ. Let me quickly just say a word about the fact that Jesus died first. Of course, you do have to die to be buried. Well, it's best if you do it that way. I actually saw, I think I saw it on some history instagram thing, where, ah, the ring a bell thing was a literal thing. They had so many people who died centuries ago who were alive, they literally put a string in there with a bell up above the grave so if he's in there and he's alive, he can ring the bell and say, "Get me outta here!"

Well, that's what history records, but Jesus literally died on the cross and this is a key doctrine of the Christian faith, and it's been attacked through the ages. I can't tell you the number of ways so-called Christian scholars, they're just worldly liberal scholars is what they are, have tried to take the narrative and massage it and explain it away because they do not believe in the authority, the inerrancy and the sufficiency of Scripture, and they'll just rearrange it and say, "Well, he really didn't die, and he really didn't rise from the grave, and that really didn't happen the way the Bible says," and on and on we could go. And the reason why they attack it is because Satan hates it. Jesus must die to redeem the children and free us from the power of death.

1 Corinthians 13, or 15 rather, 3 and 4 says, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Hebrews 9:22, "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

Now the point is, unless Jesus dies, we're still in our sin and we're still under the power of sin, and that we're still subject to the sting of death which is sin, but the Bible shows us that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus could attest to his death. The text here says that Pilate asked the centurion, "Is he dead?" because they wanted to take him down and Pilate was surprised because crucifixion is a slow horrid death, and he hadn't been on the cross all that long compared to most executions. And so Pilate heard the word back from the centurion, the text tells us, he's dead. The centurion testified he's dead so that's ahead of the state and military official. These women who are here can testify he was dead. And of course, the tomb itself testifies he was dead.

Jewish law required that a corpse of the Jew could not be left out on the Sabbath. Now it's Friday and when it gets dark, it becomes the Sabbath. The Sabbath began at sunset on Friday, so Joseph of Arimathea now joined by Nicodemus is in quite a hurry to get him down and get him buried before the sun goes down. Jewish law required it but let's remind ourselves there's more than the honoring of Jewish law at hand, there's more than just the devotion of Joseph and Nicodemus involved. No, God himself is conducting the preparations and the burial of his Son. He's doing it through men he changed but God is doing it.

Think about the fact that when Jesus died, the foundation for the new work was laid. In his burial, the building starts coming up and you can see it. Matter of fact, when, when, when our contractors, when our men who build houses lay a foundation, it's not much to

look at and most people don't notice it, or there's some gravel, some concrete blocks and before that there were strings and stakes to lay it out, but nobody pays much attention. But oh, let the walls start coming up, the windows and the doors are put in, the roof's put on, then it starts to get our attention. Well, see, in his burial, we start to see things come together. Something has changed. We've passed from one faze to another. The old faze was his shame, was him being cursed, was him being spit upon, was him being punched and ridiculed, arrested, suffering, bleeding and dying. But note that there's no more of that. Something has changed.

It was common when the Romans executed a criminal that after he died, they took his corpse off and chunked it in a ditch, but notice, not Jesus. His body's not thrown in a ditch. He's laid in a new tomb. Not just any new tomb, the tomb of one of the most wealthy and powerful men in Israel. It's a statement that, "The beginning of My exalting and glorifying My Son has started." I could run through that wall back there.

Note the burial attendants. Nicodemus and Joseph are honorable men, powerful men, wealthy men. It's likely they'd never touched a corpse before. Their servants would have done that, but here they, these honored, dignified men handle the body of Jesus with preciousness, with care, and with love. Hundred pounds of special spices. Spent a lot of money on it. They lay him in a new tomb, a costly tomb. Not everybody in Israel could afford to have their own tomb custom hewn, but this one was. It was a special place. There was a dignity and an honor. It was a tomb of a wealthy man and an esteemed citizen.

Note it was also a new tomb. The Bible tells us in Colossians 1:18, he's the firstborn from the dead, and in 1 Corinthians 15:20, he's the firstfruits among them that rise. That's why Isaiah reminds us in his prophecy in Isaiah 53:9 that his grave was assigned with wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death. Why is the Bible, this isn't just incidental, ah, documentation, God is saying something here. He's saying something here. "From the moment My Son finished the work to redeem and purchase His church, now begins the time when He will start the exaltation in glory." Because the church today does not worship the humbled, spit upon, battered, crucified Savior. The church today serves an exalted, glorified Savior and we see before a shadowing of this in the way and the people involved in his burial. No more punching him. No more spitting upon him. No more ridiculing of him. No more suffering. No more shame. No more humiliation. No more scorn. Now begins his exalted glory. Even in the burial, the Father can't hold back but wants you to see, "I honored Him. I showed dignity to Him in the way He was handled and who handled Him and where He was buried." This is the foreshadowing of the exalted glory of Jesus Christ.

Well, in just roughly 36 hours from right now when they put him in the tomb, a force of heavenly power will hit that tomb, a force that has not been felt in the earth since God breathed life into Adam in the original garden of Eden, and he will rise from this honorable tomb with exalted dignity and glory far beyond earth's dignities and earth's glories. Brothers and sisters, this isn't just a narrative. It's important that you see the purposes of God in this. You see, God did such a work in the hearts of noble, esteemed

and wealthy men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, that they would face loss of everything to give this Jesus the most honored and dignified burial they could.

Now think about it, it's one thing if they honored Jesus while he's living, but to take the corpse of one the world viewed as a treasonous criminal and cherish that corpse and honor that corpse, that's radical. Here's my point: it was God himself working through Nicodemus and Joseph. It was God himself making a statement in this burial. God is saying, "The old faze has ended. He did it perfectly. When He died, He said, 'It is finished.' And now He begins His exaltation and His glory." Woo, church, we serve a risen Savior! He's in the world today. I know that he is living whatever men may say. I hear his voice of mercy, I hear his voice of cheer, and every time I need him, he's always near. You know why he's always near? Because he's exalted in glory throughout in the Father. That's the Savior the church worships. Yes, we look back and cherish the cross but he's not there, he's risen and glorified. Here even in his burial the Father says, "Page is turned. Now it's time to begin His exalted glory."

One last brief word. We see also the foreshadow of Christian hope. There is no hope like Christian hope. I mean, beat us, torture us, put us through suffering, kill us, we win. We get a new body. We get to be glorified with him in heaven. We become perfect and whole in infinite wondrous pleasures of being in his presence forever. There's no hope like Christian hope. No matter the circumstances, hope remains for the Christian. Now you remember that during the coronavirus. No matter the circumstance, our hope remains. Here in these events surrounding his burial, we see that hope kinda crawls up out of the lower level and hope comes up on the top platform. Hope gets up here and says, "Hey, I'm a centerpiece of this new work." This is what we're all about. Can you imagine the hopelessness of being under a works of law and law-keeping? That's over. Jesus was the law-keeper and he kept it perfectly and he took our place as the perfect law-keeper and that's all been done. It's finished and now we live in the hope, the glory, the confidence of what he's accomplished.

Well, it's something of significant encouragement of all we've said about Joseph of Arimathea and all we've said about Nicodemus because God had to do that, and on top of it all, the Bible text Old Testament and New Testament points out specifically they were, or at least Joseph was, rich. It's not just a narrative. It means something. Think about it. Does not the Bible teach us this? Matthew 19:23-24, "And Jesus said to His disciples, 'Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.'" There's some debate about what going through the eye of a needle is but whatever it is, it's hard to get a camel through one. The point is there's something about wealth where a man typically feels he's somewhat inoculated from whatever might happen to him both in time and in eternity, but in this burial situation, God chose two of the most powerful and wealthy men alive to devote themselves to this. You know what it means? God can save anybody. Can change anybody. I don't care who you're burdened about, your husband, your wife, that child, that grandchild, that relative, that person at work, you think it's been so long and they've gone so far and their hearts are so hard. It's not any harder than Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus.

You see, rich people are basically hard. Rich people are either enslaved to Christ and use their wealth to honor Christ and his church, or they're enslaved to their wealth and to idolatrous servitude to their riches to the doom of their own soul. But humanly speaking, it's, it's glorious beyond compare that these two men, powerful, wealthy men, become devoted, loyal followers of Jesus Christ even to the extent of taking his corpse off the executioner's pole and handling it with the utmost dignity and care all the way through to the tomb.

Brothers and sisters, there's always, always, always hope for the child of God. Let me share this with you as I close, and I'm on holy ground here but I have the permission to share this. Forgive me, I don't remember the day exactly but this last week, Tina Borden, her husband Doss Borden who teaches in our senior adult small groups, her father had literally been at the point of death or close to death for several days. He was in the intensive care unit. I called them toward the end of the week and I talked with Tina and prayed with Tina, and somewhere in the conversation she said, "Brother Jeff, you know the protocol for the coronavirus, I can't go be with my father." She was heartbroken, just heartbroken. He had no, she's the only child, nobody was there. So she said, "Brother Jeff, I've prayed, I've prayed that God would put somebody with him in my place that would show him comfort and love because I couldn't do it."

I'd finished praying with Tina and I thought I heard a beeping, it was the intensive care unit, and Tina answers the phone and the lady on the phone said, "Ms. Borden, your father's close to death." She said, "Well, I heard the phone beep but I couldn't call you right away, I was talking to my pastor, Brother Jeff." And the nurse said, "Did you say Brother Jeff?" And Tina said, "Yes. Brother Jeff, Grace Life Church of the Shoals, he's my pastor." And the nurse in the intensive care unit said, "He's my pastor. He's my pastor. I'm, I'm Taylor Wallace. I'm Nick Wallace's wife." And she said, "Here, I'm gonna put my phone to your daddy's ear and you can speak with him because he's close." And Doss and Tina were able to share with Tina's dad their love for him and that it was fine for him to go on and go on home to be with the Lord.

I don't know what else happened, but I do know a moment later my phone rings and I'm telling you, Doss and Tina Borden were having revival. They were so full of joy, tears of joy and tears of happiness that God answered their prayer and gave them someone to comfort Tina's dad in that moment, someone that they felt like could care like they could care, someone out of their own church family. How do you explain that? And they were just praising God for answering prayer and let them actually talk to Tina's dad right before he passed away because after they talked to her dad on the phone, he breathed his last. He's gone to glory.

Look, it matters not the circumstance, it matters not the difficulty, it matters not the improbability of a situation, listen, if you're God's, he has your back. He cares for you. He's gonna take care of you. He's gonna come through for you and in this text narrative of our Lord's burial, we see the resounding foreshadowing of Christians in this new age are gonna people who live in a divine hope no matter what. No matter what.