

Week of August 11 - What Now? Small Group Lesson 13

Connect

"Unless wealth and honor are aids to the service of God, we are making false use of them."

-John Calvin, A Harmony of the Gospels (commenting on the role of Joseph from Arimathea)

What about us? How can we be careful to use wealth and honor which are not being used to serve God? What are the limitations of how and when to do this?

Verses - Matthew 27:57-66 (CSB)

57 When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who
himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 He approached Pilate and asked
for Jesus's body. Then Pilate ordered that it be released. 59 So Joseph took the
body, wrapped it in clean, fine linen, 60 and placed it in his new tomb, which he had
cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the entrance of the
tomb. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there, facing the tomb.

Parallel Passages: Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56a, John 19:38-42

62 The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests and the
Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember that while this
deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 So give orders
that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may
come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the
last deception will be worse than the first." 65 "Take guards," Pilate told them. "Go
and make it as secure as you know how." 66 They went and secured the tomb by
setting a seal on the stone and placing the guards.

Study

1. Joseph of Arimathea appears in **each** of the four gospels. What can we conclude? Why is he so important to the gospel story?

2. *Matthew describes Joseph as a rich man and disciple of Jesus. John says that Joseph was afraid of the Jews and so kept his discipleship secret. But Mark says Joseph was bold when approaching Pilate. Both Mark and Luke describe Joseph as an honorable and godly man who was looking for the kingdom of God, although neither refers to him as a disciple of Jesus.*
    a. If someone were to ask you why Joseph is described a little bit differently in each of the four gospels, how would you explain this?
    b. Do differences such as these make you **more** or **less** confident in the truthfulness of the Bible?
    c. How was it **significant** and **useful** thatJoseph was rich, honorable, godly, bold (with Pilate) but afraid of the Jews; and (secretly) a disciple of Jesus?

3. After Joseph has taken away Jesus' body and placed it in his tomb, the chief priests and the Pharisees begin to worry that Jesus' disciples might steal the body and begin to claim that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
    a. how did they come to **fear** that this might happen?
    b. what action did they take to **prevent** this from happening?
    c. how did their action ultimately help to ***promote*** the gospel?
    d. Why do you think the two Marys are mentioned seated there? (v.61)

4. **SHARE:** How have you been blessed by the Lord that allows you to minister to His body, the church? How can we see His blessings upon us, in this way, and have joy?

Prayer

Please pray for one another as the Spirit guides you and, in addition, ask God…

- …to help us understand and apply today's Bible reading correctly,
- …to make us thankful for all of the blessings he has bestowed on us,
- …most especially our salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and
- …for helping us to grow spiritually as we constantly seek to imitate Christ.