Lesson 52 – John 19:31-42 Jesus' Death and Burial
English Standard Version (ESV) Bethel Bible Resources

(31) Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a 'high day'), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear; and at once there came out blood and water.

(35) He who saw it has borne witness --- his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth --- that you also may believe.

(36) For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled:

"Not one of his bones will be broken." (Psalm 34:20)

(37) And again, another Scripture says,

"They will look on him whom they have pierced." (Zechariah 12:10)

(38) After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away His body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

(41) Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So, because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

<u>Think on these things:</u>

1) Why were the chief priests so insistent that the three bodies on the crosses be removed before Passover? See Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Do you know why breaking the legs of someone being crucified would hasten death?

   Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy) forbid leaving crucified people on crosses overnight. They were "cursed by God," and the Jews were not allowed to let their dead bodies defile their lands. Death by crucifixion, despite the many horrors, was death by suffocation. By breaking the legs of any still alive, they would be unable to 'heave' themselves upward to breathe --- and would die!

2) How did the soldiers deal with Jesus, thinking He was already dead (v.34)? What does it mean that "blood and water" flowed out of His body?

   Soldiers? **Since Jesus appeared dead already, they confirmed it by stabbing Him in the chest with a Roman spear.**

   Meaning? **Nothing mystical or unique here. From the wound came out blood and water, a confirmation of Jesus' physical death as a human on the cross.**

3) Can you figure out who, "he who saw it has borne witness" (v.35a) is? What reason does this witness give for sharing his truthful testimony (v.35b)?

Who? **John the disciple, the writer of this book and the account of Jesus' death by crucifixion.**

Reason? **His true account is intended to help people come to belief in Jesus (as Messiah)**

4) Joseph of Arimathea is described as a "secret" disciple of Jesus. In your life, what groups of people make it uncomfortable or unsafe for you to be known as a committed Christian? How do you handle this? How do you feel about "secret" disciples? Explain why.

   Groups or situations? **Different per student. (For this author, being amongst a group of vocal non-believers and/or politically liberal people. Culture war environments….)**

   I handle this by: **Different per student. (Again for this author, I tend to become quiet to give no basis for public arguments or confrontations. At the same time, I will teach my family and personally think and act in keeping with Biblical instructions and principles.)**

   "Secret" disciples? **Individual replies. Jesus said that if anyone denies knowing Him in our world, He will deny knowing him/her before the Father (Matthew 10:32-33). At the same time, some folks are raised in very difficult environments, very anti-God situations, and will be met with hostility even in their own homes if they own up to 'saving faith.' Joseph showed us that there is a time to step out of the shadow of anonymity and take a personal (public) stand!**

5) Joseph of Arimathea is no ordinary citizen of Israel. Name at least two indicators found here in John 19 that hint at his stature (vs. 38-41). See also Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:42-46; and Luke 23:50-54.

   Indicators of status? **Here in John, we see two things: 1) Joseph was given an immediate and direct audience before Pilate; and 2) he had his own private family tomb. Matthew says he was a rich man, and confirms that he took Jesus to his own tomb. Mark reveals that he was a respected member (i.e., in good standing) of the 'Council' (Sanhedrin), eagerly looking for God's Kingdom, and who gathered his courage to go see Pilate that day. Luke states Joseph was a good and righteous man, a member of the Council who did not consent to their actions that morning with Jesus.**

6) Nicodemus brought along how many pounds of burial spices to help Joseph of Arimathea (v.39)? When Jesus was put into the tomb, was He put into a casket (v.40)?

   Burial spices? **About 75 lbs. of myrrh and aloes.**

   A casket? **No casket. In the tradition of the Jews, Jesus' body was bound in linen cloths with the spices. (It was only a partial job, the reason the women returned on Sunday morning.)**

7) Whose tomb was Jesus laid in? (Matthew 27:59-60)

   Joseph of Arimathea's family tomb, in which no one had yet been placed.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: