

In Secret No More

Scripture Reading — John 19:38-42

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council . . . went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. — Mark 15:43

Jesus was not condemned by all 71 members of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of priests and Pharisees. One member, Nicodemus, had previously gone on record in warning the Sanhedrin against running roughshod over court rules in their eagerness to condemn Jesus (John 7:50-51).

Another member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph from Arimathea, had not consented to what the court had done (Luke 23:50-51). But, out of fear of the other leaders on the court, Joseph had not spoken out. His voice was unheard, and he remained only a secret follower of Jesus.

But by the end of that terrible day, Joseph had resolved to make a public declaration: he went boldly and openly to the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, demanding that the body of Jesus be given an honorable burial. In doing this, Joseph courageously implied to Pilate that the execution had been unjust. He also courageously put the Sanhedrin on notice that their verdict against Jesus was a fraud, and he courageously admitted to all that he, Joseph, should not have been just a secret follower.

So Joseph and Nicodemus honored and buried the beaten, bloody corpse of the one their colleagues had condemned, laying Jesus' body in Joseph's "own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock" (Matthew 27:60).

Prayer

Forgive me, Lord Jesus, for I have sinned. I was in a position to speak, but I felt intimidated, so I remained silent. Help me to know how to act faithfully in the future. Amen.

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