

John 19:38-42 “Secret Disciples!”

Preached @ Harambee Church by Pastor
Michael Gunn on September 16th, 2007

“What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Romans 6:1-4

Intro

We saw last week that the cross and death of Jesus, though either mocked by the likes of Metallica (*The God Who Failed*), or System of the Down's (*Chop Suey*), or relegated to a cultural fashion by cross wearing superstars like Madonna and 50 Cent, has had significant impact on the world, and has been the topic of controversy for nearly 2000 years. His death was not a mistake, or a “Suicide,” but was a designed plan of God to fulfill the many prophecies and cultural “Myths” that called for a savior (**Acts 2:23**). Jesus was the perfect lamb, unbroken, sinless, who took away our sins!

From the Head...

What does this small passage say to us today? Well in of itself not a lot, except the fact that two religious politicians began their conversion to the king of kings. We don't know much about these men except that they were on the “Council” (Sanhedrin), which meant that they were either Pharisees (Which is the case for Nicodemus) or Sadducees (Who made up most of the council). We know that Joseph of Arimathea was a good and righteous man who though being on the council did not consent to have Jesus killed (**Luke 23:50-51**). We also know that he was a wealthy man (**Matthew 27:57**). It's also interesting to note that he was “Waiting for the kingdom of God” (**Luke 23:51**). We know that Nicodemus was also a “Ruler” and member of the council, and that he was a Pharisee (John 3:1). We know that he too was wealthy, since the burial myrrh and aloe itself was worth a fortune. We also know by his clandestine meeting with Jesus that he too was searching for the kingdom of God (**John 3:1-13**). Both of these men were afraid to reveal their faith in Christ, and yet they are there to bury Jesus. Was this just to fulfill the prophecy that the Messiah would be buried with the rich (**Isaiah 53:9**)? No, there's more. The detailed mention of these men in a few accounts cries out to tell us a bit more. They were both wealthy, religious, good men, searching for the kingdom, which is the right thing to do. They were righteous dudes, but they were overcome by the life of Christ, and ultimately changed by His death. They didn't realize He was going to raise from the dead. They thought they were burying a great prophet, yet the life, and death of that prophet began to transform them from “Secret Believers” to courageous men of God. What they had witnessed was the glory of God in their midst. This is a manifestation of God's righteous kingdom that came as a result of Christ entering this world (**see Mark 1:14-15**), and then carrying out God's justice and love on the cross (**see John 12:23 cf. Romans 3:25**). This is an outworking of John 1:14-18 in the lives of Nicodemus and Joseph. They “beheld His glory,” previously veiled in His every day persona, yet revealed at the cross. There was something that could be seen in His person. His greatness was obvious yet incomplete. His death revealed truly who He was, and ultimately His resurrection would seal the deal with those that God has revealed Himself to. It is in our identity with Christ at His death that we believe that that Christ has destroyed our sin, and it is in His resurrection that we begin to realize that He has conquered death and that we are alive in Him.

...To the Heart

Are you a “Secret Disciple?” Is Jesus a convenience? It's all too easy to add Jesus to your already busy lifestyle and not be struck by His death, and buried with Him. What causes us to be transformed? First it is the power of the Holy Spirit transforming our lives, but secondly, it is our belief that in Christ, we are “Dead to sin!” We too need to be struck with the reality of the cross in our life. When we gaze on Christ for who He is, and what He has done, we are struck with the reality that our life is to live for Him. We put to death daily the passions and desires that do not satisfy, because we know we are seated with Him at God's right hand (**See Colossians 2:8-15; 3:1-14**).

For Further Reading: “*The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*” William Barclay; “*The Gospel of John*,” F.F. Bruce; “*The New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of John*,” William Hendriksen; “*Preaching the Word; John: That You May Believe*,” R. Kent Hughes; “*The NIV Application Commentary: John*,” Gary M. Burge; “*The Pillar NT Commentary: The Gospel According to John*,” D.A. Carson; “*The Word Biblical Commentary on John*” George R. Beasley-Murray

Next Weeks Verses: John 20:1–29

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