

Friday: Courageous Followers

For today's journey, read Mark 15:42-47, John 19:38-42

REFLECT

Friday is full of activity but one activity stands out for its courage and it doesn't happen until after Jesus is dead. Two prominent men in society, Joseph and Nicodemus, step out and put their careers and reputations on the line to ask for the body of Jesus. Since Sabbath starts in a matter of hours, they must act quickly in order to get Jesus in the tomb by sundown. Their devotion to Jesus went so far as to include this act of love for Jesus' mother in taking care of her son's body. While their own hearts were breaking over Jesus' death and they were navigating their own disappointment over Jesus seemingly not fulfilling His Messianic role, the Bible says they took courage to ask Pilate for his permission to complete this outstanding action of devotion. Both men had much to lose in taking this step. That's why the Bible wants us to know "they took courage" to ask for His body. They had no guarantee that they would be respected or allowed to keep their jobs after making this request. That didn't seem to bother them. They were compelled out of love for Jesus and His mother that they were willing to risk everything simply to honor Jesus in His death.

Sometimes we are tempted to think we are all alone in our devotion to Jesus. Be encouraged, church, you are surrounded with followers of Jesus. You may not see them everyday. Some you may never even meet. But like these influential men in Jesus' day ready to answer the call to serve their Savior when needed, there are many surrounding you ready to appear when called upon by the Lord. May each of us be prompted by the actions of Joseph and Nicodemus to courageously step forward, not only at extraordinary moments, but everyday moments taking more opportunities for our lives to shine a brighter light upon the One we worship.

ASK

- How might the act of caring for Jesus' body after his death be seen as a continuation of the disciples' devotion to Jesus? Do you think this was despair or faith?
- Describe a time you felt isolated in your devotion to Jesus. How did you find support from other believers?
- How might the disciples' courage to approach Pilate inspire you to be bold in your own expressions of faith?
- What are some practical ways you can show your devotion to Jesus in your own life?

Pray for a courageous faith that is willing and ready to step out for Jesus when needed.