

What might you be missing because it all seems so familiar?

Mark 15 42 – 47:

It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

This passage is probably very familiar to many of us. As with most things however, the more familiar they are, the easier it is for us to miss subtle but important messages. I read it again and found a couple of things worth noting in the passage,

1 - *“Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went **boldly** to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.*

The New Living Translation states that *“Joseph of Arimathea **took a risk** and went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.”*

We are later told that Joseph was a prominent member of the Jewish Council. The risk he took might have been to do with his reputation, his standing in the Council, or perhaps even danger to his life. It is interesting to see how it was after Christ died that he became emboldened. We find ourselves in strange times with this coronavirus issue, but we will undoubtedly have occasion to stand up and be counted for Christ, to let our lights shine. I pray that by His Spirit, we might be emboldened to do this when the situation arises.

2 – *“Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.”* I find this last section particularly interesting. The women who were there at the time saw where the body was laid, they saw the stone rolled into place. When they came back after the Sabbath, they stone had been rolled away and they could see into the empty tomb.

I have often read this and assumed that the stone was rolled away so that Christ could come out of the tomb. Clearly this is wrong, as he had already left the tomb before the stone was rolled away. The women and the disciples perhaps had to see that the tomb was empty first to be able to believe that he had risen.

You may read this passage and find other things I haven't seen. I pray that God's Holy Spirit will help us look again at the familiar and see hidden gems and that they may be a blessing to us and those we meet this Easter period.

Happy Easter.

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