

Where Did They Lay Him?

John 19:38-42

It is good to be here with you again today; thank you for being here. Heralds of Hope is honored to study and share God's Word with you. We count it a privilege to teach from the Bible and Thank God for the opportunity to share this teaching around the world via radio. Along with Bible teaching, we also do Bible distribution, and I share this example from one of our partners in Uganda. We had purchased native-language Bibles for him, and he was distributing them in his area. One of the pastors was overjoyed to have a new Bible because the Bible he was currently using started with Numbers 16 and ended at I Cor. 11; the front and back of his Bible were missing. Again, we were thankful to God to be able to help this man with His Word. As you think of us, pray for Heralds of Hope and ask God to guide us as we share His Word.

Today we are looking at the last few verses in John 19. Before we go there, imagine with me. Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples. You just spent the last three years with Jesus. You saw Him calm the storm. You were there when He healed sick people. You even saw Him call Lazarus out of the grave. You are convinced this is the Messiah. This is the one God promised; generations have been waiting for Him. You are convinced that He can do anything; this is the Messiah who will conquer and rule the world.

Unfortunately, all your hopes and dreams have been killed, just like Jesus. He is lying in a tomb, and your vision for the future is there with Him; it's over. How could you have been so wrong? How can God be so far away and so silent? Why is God not listening, does He even care? You remember one of Jesus' last questions, "My God why have you forsaken me?" You feel the same thing. It is dark, it's difficult, and it's depressing. You question everything: why am I here? What is true? Who is God?

This was a very hard time for the disciples. I am guessing you also have been in a season where God has been silent and felt far away. This is the desert, and the desert is God's place of preparation. It is not easy or fun, but we can see how God has shaped many people through hard times. James and Peter call this the "trying of your faith." Many have experienced a season of this, and if you are there, take courage; you are in good company.

For example, look at Moses; he spent 40 years in the wilderness before God called him to lead the children of Israel. That is a long time. Remember Joseph; his journey had many ups and downs. Just when things seemed to be going well with Potiphar, he was soon back in prison. I am sure Joseph wondered Where is God? I was doing what God told me to do. Think about David and how he was anointed king as a young man. Then he spent many years running for his life as King Saul tried to kill him. Psalms show us

he wrestled with many of these big questions. Even Jesus spent 40 days in the desert. It was after the desert when He began His public ministry.

These are just a few of God using very difficult circumstances to mold and shape His servants. There are others in the Bible, and I am sure you know some of these stories.

If you are in this place where life doesn't make sense, I offer two thoughts of encouragement. One, you can do it, hold on, and continue trusting God; every promise He has made is true. The only basis I have for saying this is the second point. If I could go back to the disciples in today's lesson, I would have told them this, the resurrection is coming. Jesus is dead, but He won't stay dead. I offer the same encouragement to everyone who finds themselves in a desert. Jesus is alive! Because He is alive, we have hope in every situation. We know someday soon, He will conquer and rule the world, just like the disciples were expecting Him to do, way back then. That's when it will make sense, save your big questions, for then, Jesus Himself will be able to answer them. Take courage, Jesus cares and sees, and His Word says, "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Don't give up.

Now let's give our attention to Pastor J Mark for today's lesson, *Where did they lay Him?*

Some who read the records of the crucifixion of Jesus claim that Jesus never died. This is hardly possible if we are honest with the record. We can hardly say Jesus never died.

Then there are others who even claim that He was not crucified. But the record in the Bible leaves no doubt. When we take the words in their true sense, we are led to the conclusion: yes, He was crucified, and yes, He died. He died sooner than the thieves. His death was validated by the soldier.

Because it was a religious holiday, it was necessary to bury the bodies quickly. Two men who loved Jesus, unknown to His disciples, come upon the scene to fill that need, as recorded in John 19:38-42.

38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is

to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.

As we watch the actions of these two men, certain **DETAILS** establish the fact of the burial of Jesus. They answer the question, **WHERE DID THEY LAY HIM?**

The first Detail: **The Permission.**

Joseph of Arimathaea was the spokesman. He went secretly to Pilate for fear of the Jews and asked him for the body. He obtained permission to take down the body of Jesus. Apparently, those who loved Him were much too frightened.

Mark's Gospel reports that Pilate was not sure that Jesus was dead already, so he asked the centurion who was in command at the crucifixion. The captain of the soldiers verified that Jesus was dead.

To get this permission, Joseph was a bold man, even though he went secretly. The Jewish feast of the Passover was near. He must act quickly to take care of the body of Jesus so that he would be able to eat the Passover. He risked his reputation, indeed. But he was willing to do it. So, there was the detail of the permission.

The second Detail: **The Preparation.**

Another came to help Joseph. His name was Nicodemus. He had come to Jesus by night. We learn this in the early part of John's Gospel. Jesus called him a master in Israel. And once after that, Nicodemus stood in defense of Jesus when the Sanhedrin would have condemned Him before they heard Him.

He must have been a believer; he must have been. He came to help Joseph take care of the body of Jesus. He was prepared. He came with a mixture of spices, myrrh, and aloes, about 100-pound weight (fifty kilograms). They took the body of Jesus down from the cross and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as was the practice of the Jews, to bury.

Nicodemus was a man of forethought. He came prepared with the spices and linen because they knew they must take care of this quickly. They did not have much time. These dedicated men with loving hands did what they could to the body of Jesus. This is a beautiful detail, the preparation that they made.

The third Detail: **The Place.**

I read, "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden." It was near the hill of crucifixion. And there was a new tomb there, a tomb that had never been used. I have stood at the foot of Calvary, outside of Jerusalem's old city wall. The garden and the tomb: I have seen them. There they laid Him.

They acted quickly because it was the Jewish day of preparation for the feast of the Passover. The sepulcher was near at hand. Matthew wrote that Joseph used his own new tomb. So they laid His body in the tomb.

These details leave no doubt that Jesus died and was buried: the centurion acknowledged that He was dead; Pilate gave permission to remove the body from the cross; these men prepared their spices and linen to take care of His dead body. They selected a place prepared for a dead body and entombed His body in the sepulcher in which no one had ever been laid.

Thank you, J Mark, for this teaching from God's Word, and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's Word and learn from it. Now take what we've heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible is for us, and it is meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who sees himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like; instead, be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the Word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching, just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson; it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are a few ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is mail@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Another way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching. There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is heraldsofhope.org.

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.