

Matthew 27:57-66 | Jeffrey Smith

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Preacher: Jeffrey Smith

[0:00] All right, good morning. Did everyone who was there enjoy Pinecrest? Yeah, I thought Pinecrest was great. As David said in the midst of just the craziness of fall.

! Pinecrest is this like forced just break. You know, I know it's another thing on the calendar. It's another weekend away. There's packing. There's involvement. But to like go somewhere else that is not your home to where you're looking around like that needs to be fixed and that needs to be done and laundry needs to be done.

All these things to be able to just step away from that and to be kind of forced into that retreat, fellowship, break. It's just awesome. And so it's also amazing to think year 30. That is crazy. That's a long time to be doing something.

So, all right. Well, I will say just a couple weeks ago, we're going to continue on in Matthew 27. But just a couple weeks ago, Teresa and I were helping down at the junior church downstairs. And so I missed Dave's message live. So I had to go back and watch it on YouTube. And I thought it was a great message. So thank you for that, brother. And I just I thought it was extremely powerful. And I really appreciated just to call something out initially your recognition of how Jesus in the garden praying before he's betrayed is saying, Father, he's calling father.

[1:30] And, you know, he's saying, Father, this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. And to see that transition to where he is on the cross dying, saying, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And that subtle change, that subtle but extremely powerful change of father to God and just the weight of sin in that moment, I think just really speaks volume to.

To what was happening. Dave, you also drew the parallel between just some of the mocking that was happening of Jesus and his death and kind of how we're seeing that in culture today.

And you use the example of Charlie Kirk and, you know, post his assassination, there was a variety of responses. And one of them was, you know, mocking and a bit of a celebration of that.

And I'd like to kind of continue that parallel just a little bit further. And, you know, we've been talking about Charlie Kirk for what has it been like three and a half weeks now? I mean, it's been some time.

[2:34] And I don't want to, you know, lift up just a mere man. But I do think there's just a lot that can be gleaned from that and a lot we can kind of draw.

You know, when he first was assassinated, I think everybody kind of felt a mix of emotion, maybe a mix of sadness. You know, you see a guy publicly killed in a pretty brutal way in front of his family. Just a lot of just sad things with that. And then there's like a part of us and maybe it was just me, I don't know, that's just kind of angry. It's just like, man, this guy was out there, I think, you know, promoting a really good message.

And he got killed for that. He seemed very talented in what he did and just felt like, man, this guy has a lot of potential. A bit of a rising star. And so that was really, yeah, that was really angering. His message, you know, I wasn't a huge follower of his content. But just as you kind of go back and look at it, his message seemed pretty straightforward.

[3:46] He was what seemed to be a believer. His faith was in Christ. It seemed like he had become very outspoken in that as kind of his time went on.

He seemed to be very pro-marriage between a man and a woman. He was very pro-children and pro-family. And like, these are just really basic good things. You know, he also was a very pro-free

market capitalist kind of guy.

And so the third kind of reaction to all of that has been, I think, some renewed boldness. You know, where we have all kind of seen that and seen his message.

And again, it's not like he's like, you know, debating like super nuanced topics in some ways. I mean, some ways they were. But like the big picture was like the gospel, family, a free society. Like, these are just like generally good things. And so I have felt, and maybe you guys have felt, there's a sense of boldness. And there's a sense of like, yes, these things are good and right.

[4:58] And we can stand for these things. And so how does this connect to Matthew 27? What is this response to an assassination of a man here in 2025 connect to Matthew 2027?

I'll just tell you, we're going to look at two men, a man named Joseph of Arimathea and a man named Nicodemus. Two men that, frankly, weren't the most bold and the most courageous in their stance until the Lord died.

And similar to kind of a lot of our responses to Charlie Kirk's death, we see that here. And in a much more profound way. Because, again, not to mix things up.

The Lord, Charlie Kirk is not Jesus. Let me just say that. Let's just make that point clear. And Jesus' death on a cross and what we see in his burial here this morning and his resurrection is the most profound thing.

Is the biggest thing. Is the reason why we can be bold. So I've titled this message, Courage to Take a Stand. Courage to Take a Stand. We're going to read the last ten verses of Matthew 27.

[6:20] If you went into the commentaries that I look at on a regular basis for preparing for a message, you'll typically see multiple pages worth of commentary for a passage. The commentary had maybe like three paragraphs on this one.

And guess what? That is totally fine. That means this message is going to be very succinct. It's going to have kind of one point. All right? And that is, how do we take courage to take a stand for what is right?

What can we learn from Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in doing that? Just as a quick little side story of just like some of this renewed boldness.

I think a lot of you guys are already doing this. I'm not going to say like, oh, you guys didn't do this until, you know, Charlie Kirk's assassination. I think a lot of us are going out and we are boldly sharing the gospel when given the opportunity.

We are looking for that. But I had a chance to meet a new coworker that was just hired on my team. And she's down in Atlanta.

[7:20] And our company does this thing that every time someone new comes on board, they literally set up 30-minute meetings with like everyone that you ever work with. So you come on board and you're meeting like 50 people and setting up these 30-minute meetings.

So I was one of them. She's actually directly on my team. So like we'll be working a lot together. And we're talking, I'm meeting, she's engaged, likes music festivals, you know, has family in Texas, all these things.

And then, of course, she's asking me about, you know, my story, my background. Every time you say, I got five kids, it's like, oh, my goodness, what's wrong with you, you know? And, you know, it's like the most clockwork response.

And so, and she says, well, she's getting married, I think, next year. And she's like, I can tell she's just trying to be nice.

But she's like, I don't, maybe we'll have a kid. I don't know. And it's like, this isn't the gospel. This isn't like something that I need to 100% take a stance.

[8:20] But like maybe like three weeks ago, I would have just brushed it off and just thought, ha, that's her life. You know what I mean? She doesn't want to have kids. It is what it is. But I was like, no, let me just tell you something.

Sophia, kids are a blessing. Kids are a good thing. You don't need to commit to five kids. But I'd really encourage you to like consider having a kid. And then we'll see where it goes from there.

Okay. So there is an example of just like, there's this like new, renewed courage to stand for what is right. So we're going to look at how the death of our Lord emboldened two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, to take, to find the courage to take a stand.

And that's the title of this morning's message. Courage to take a stand. Let's go and pray. Lord, I just pray that truth goes out this morning. I am a flawed person.

I say things that are wrong. I confuse things. I misspeak. I just pray that your word goes forth. That folks here in this room would be lock and step looking at this passage in Matthew 27 and some of the others connected to it and following along.

[9:28] And just we're all individual. We're all, Lord, we're all in different places. We all have different lives, work, family, married, not married, kids, no kids.

Some live in the city. Some live in the country. Some live in, you know, a suburban setting, Lord. Some of us are stay-at-home parents. Some of us are working, homeschooled, out of school. Lord, just there's so many different things. And so I'm kind of giving this blanket challenge to take courage to take a stand. But the way it applies is very different.

And so, Lord, I just pray that you would impress on our hearts like how this directly applies to us. I pray that we can be softened in that and just kind of set away the pride and just look to you in humility.

Understanding that what your son did on the cross for us is an extremely powerful thing. And it's not something that we can or we should be taking lightly or to it's not something that we need to, you know, be hiding from, Lord.

[10:36] But it is something that we can have the courage to be bold in. So, Lord, we just thank you for that. In your son's name, amen. All right. If you want to turn with me to Matthew 27, we're going to be looking at the last 10 verses, 57 through 66.

And I'm going to read this out of Matthew. We're going to call out a few things. This is one of those interesting passages where it's broken into two parts. You have 57 through 61.

And that account is in every single one of the Gospels, which is, I love it. Because I love being able to cross-reference and see kind of the full picture from multiple different authors of what's happening.

And then you have verses 62 through 66 that are only found in Matthew. So, we're going to draw from that what we can. That'll be, I'll just admit that that'll be kind of secondary to what this main passage is.

So, let's read it out of Matthew. We're also going to read it out of John. And then we're going to, you know, draw some interesting insight here. Okay, so if you're with me in Matthew 27, starting in verse 57, it says, When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus.

[11:54] He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own tomb.

Which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

So, just to kind of call out one thing, just to start. Isaiah 53, 9. This is a fulfillment of prophecy. So, that means this is, I mean, all of Scripture is important.

This is really key in that. Isaiah 53, 9 says, Because he had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone, but he was buried like a criminal.

He was put in a rich man's grave. That rich man was Joseph of Arimathea. So, normally the Romans would not, they would just let the bodies of a crucified criminal just rot on the cross.

[13:00] Which is pretty gruesome. Just to see a human just up there decomposing. I'm sure there's, you know, birds picking at the body. It smells. It's not good.

And that's just how it was. But if a family member of a crucified loved one came and said, I would like to get permission to take that body. The Romans would typically grant that request.

Unless it was someone that had really committed a serious, serious crime. Like a high treason crime. And so the Jews, Joseph goes to Pilate and he asks for permission to take Jesus' body.

It is granted. There is also Jewish instruction going back to Deuteronomy where it says that people are to be buried the same day that they die. You can find that in Deuteronomy 21.

And so, it is interesting that the fact that Pilate says, yes, I grant you permission, shows that the governor did not think Jesus was guilty of this high treason act.

[14:05] Okay? So, he gives permission. And so it says, Joseph prepares Jesus' body with Nicodemus. You don't see Nicodemus mentioned yet. You'll see this here in John 19. And perhaps there was others with him.

So, we're really, in Matthew 27, we're introduced to Joseph of Arimathea. Does anyone know where Arimathea is?

Okay, when I looked that up, no one knows, actually. It was a trick question. Many believe that Arimathea was semi-close to Jerusalem. You know, maybe, I don't know, 5, 10 miles away.

It's in the general region. I do think that's interesting because this tomb that Joseph had purchased to be kind of carved out of the stone was very close to Jerusalem.

Very close to Golgotha. And so, many have assumed that Joseph didn't buy this tomb for himself. Did he buy it for Jesus?

[15:13] I don't know. But I do think that's interesting. So, this is Joseph of Arimathea. Okay, if you want to just turn with me, jump over to John 19. John 19 fills in a couple gaps with some additional details.

Starting in verse 38. It says, After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.

So, he kind of corroborates what you see in Matthew 27. He was a disciple. He was a follower of Jesus. But he was a secret follower because he feared the Jews.

There was a bit of some peer pressure there. And so, it says, He came and took his body. I'm sorry. Let me read. I missed a part. He was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.

He went and asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave him permission. So, he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had earlier come to Jesus by night.

[16:28] Remember the story, John 3? Nicodemus, the Pharisee, coming to Jesus at night. And he's asking the Lord, like, you know, they're talking about being born again.

How can someone old like me be born again? And Jesus says, no, it's not a physical rebirth. It's a spiritual rebirth. We'll come back to that.

And it says, so Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds in weight.

That is a lot of stuff. The spices, the aloes, the myrrh. And it says, so they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices in the burial custom of the Jews.

Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden. And in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So, because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

[17:32] So, again, that tomb was close to where Jesus was crucified. So, just to recap, it's interesting that John calls out that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.

In Luke's account, it says, Joseph was part of the ruling council, who had not consented to their decision and action, for he was looking for the kingdom of God.

It says, Joseph was a good and righteous man. Nicodemus, who also came with Joseph, was also there with Joseph. And he, again, was the guy that came to Jesus in John 3.

Remember, he's a Pharisee. He's a member of the Sanhedrin. And he comes to Jesus to kind of recap what I just said. But he says, Rabbi, he calls him Rabbi, teacher. How can I be reborn?

And Jesus says, hey, do you remember that story of Moses? And he lifts up the image of the serpent. And all who, what, did a bunch of good works, got saved?

[18:37] No. Everyone that just looked at this image of the serpent was healed. And in the same way, whoever believes in him has eternal life.

A very simple message to Nicodemus. So we saw Nicodemus in John 3. We see him later in John 8, where he's kind of standing up for Jesus.

And he says amongst his peers, doesn't our law, does our law judge a man first without giving him a hearing and learning what he does? So Nicodemus was, again, a bit willing to stand up for what was right and for Jesus.

He was wanting him to have an opportunity for a fair hearing. But I think it does speak to who Nicodemus was. You know, again, a very prominent man. A man with a high position still coming to Jesus at night.

It does, again, kind of paint the picture of he wasn't the most bold in his nature. You know, similar to Joseph of Arimathea.

[19:41] A rich man, but again, kind of secretly from afar following Jesus. It said Nicodemus brought 75 pounds of aloe, myrrh, and spices to embalm Jesus' body.

And the embalming process was a preservation. It was to help with odor. I was just kind of curious, what is 75 pounds worth of aloe, myrrh, and spices worth?

So a little chat GPT search. There's a big range. But people approximate about a \$50,000 value in today's money to bringing this, to embalming Jesus' body.

And so they would apply all these things. They would wrap in cloth. And that was the process. Mark 15 gives a bit more detail around the interaction between Joseph and Pilate.

And honestly, Pilate was surprised. Remember, he was surprised that Jesus had died so quickly, and he asked someone to verify that. But I think it's really interesting, because it says Joseph of Arimathea, this guy that was a follower of Jesus from a distance.

[20:54] It says he took courage, and he went to Pilate, and he asked for the body of Jesus. He took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

He said, you know, sometimes we are scared to stand for what is right. We can excuse it in many different ways.

Let me give you how I excuse it. Sometimes I think, what's the point? This person is so far down the path of what they believe, and it is so messed up.

There's nothing that I can say or do that is going to change their opinion. It just is what it is.

Sometimes I think, you know what? I have shared Christ with that person.

They have heard the gospel. Check that box. But guess what? You know, I don't know what it is.

There's a stat. David, you may know this. In sales, you have to tell someone something like 400,000 times for them to register that in their brain.

[21:59] Not that many times, but maybe like seven or eight times. You have to repeat the message over and over and over and over again for them to really get it. I'm really good at saying, nope, I've shared the gospel with them.

It's been years, but we'll leave it there. We can act like Nicodemus and we can come at night. You know, perhaps we're kind of scared what people might think.

I mean, think about the impact it would have had on his career as a Pharisee if people had known that he was going to Jesus, their archenemy.

Calling him rabbi. I love when Jesus is like, why do you call me rabbi? You should know what that is. We don't know much about Joseph of Arimathea, but we know that he was rich and that he followed Jesus from afar.

He was a distant disciple. I hope and I pray that his wealth wasn't what was the hindrance, but let's just call it for what it is.

[23:03] Sometimes that is the case. Sometimes when we have things kind of worked out and we're feeling comfortable and, you know, the money is there in the bank and that retirement is looking okay, like that can be a hindrance to fully trusting in the Lord.

Not always the case, but it can be. I pray that we are not held back by worldly possessions. I don't know what it was that made Joseph a follower from afar.

I'm just saying, I pray that we aren't held back. We aren't a distant follower of Jesus because we are focused on worldly things.

Our reward is in heaven. Don't store up treasures here on earth where moth eat them and rust destroys them or thieves break in and steal. Our treasure is not here.

It's not. Our treasure is in heaven. But even this story is a beautiful reminder of the gospel. Despite our sin, despite how we can be distant followers, despite how we can be somewhat ashamed of what we believe sometimes, Jesus offers grace.

[24:22] He offers us something we do not deserve. And that grace comes by faith. Joseph and Nicodemus were offered a second chance to take courage or to find the courage to take a stand.

They were given a second chance. And there's a lot of examples of that in the Bible. They may have missed opportunities in the past, but they had found the renewed courage to go to Pilate, to ask for Jesus' body, to publicly take his body, to prepare it for burial, so they could pay their final respects.

There's a ton of examples of this in the Bible. I've been, you know, I shared this a couple weeks ago during the Lord's Supper, but like the example of Esther.

You know, Esther and her cousin Mordecai. I won't go through the full story, but Esther is, you know, becomes the queen. Mordecai earlier has uncovered a plot to kill the king.

The king realizes that, wants to, you know, reward Mordecai for that. But Mordecai hears about a plot by Haman to kill the Jews. And then it says in Esther 4, Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, Do not think to yourself that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews.

[25:53] For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place. But you and your father's house will perish.

She had an opportunity. She had an opportunity to go to the king to foil the plot. But it was going to be a big risk. You didn't just go into the king's presence without his permission. Mordecai says, And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this.

Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, day or night.

I and my young women will go and fast, will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish. If I perish, I perish.

Are we willing to follow the Lord in courage and in boldness with that kind of attitude? If I perish, I perish. Man. But the Lord used that.

[27:06] Used that to spare the Jews. We see Daniel praying to God despite it being a direct violation from the king's royal decree.

What happened to him? He gets tossed in the lion's den, but the Lord delivers him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to bow to the golden image and being thrown into the fiery furnace. I think about Acts.

There's an example in Acts 2 and Acts 4 where, you know, just not that long after Peter has denied Christ publicly, he delivers this extremely powerful sermon at Pentecost.

And he's recapping Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy. And he ends it with, Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

And it says they were cut to the heart when they heard this and they asked, what shall we do? And 3,000 souls were saved through this bold and powerful message.

[28:16] Again, I'm not saying Peter was, you know, like Joseph following from it as a distant disciple. But my point is, as disciples, there are times where our walk is close with the Lord and there's times where it's a bit more distant.

But the Lord still uses that. And the Lord still provides opportunity. And that is the point of this message, to take courage, to find courage, to take a stand in what's right.

In Acts 4, I thought it was interesting, Tom, you read this during our prayer time. Peter's brought before the Sanhedrin. Him and John have just healed someone. And they say, by what power did you heal this man?

And he says, by Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the guy you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, Jesus is the stone that was rejected.

And there is salvation in what? No one else. No one else. I mean, talk about boldness. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

[29:26] And the rulers charged Peter and John and said, do not speak or say any more of this. And what do they say?

Hey, we must speak what we have seen and heard. Man, that is bold. That is courageous. And it says later, they're praying with their friends.

Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. Boldness. The courage to be bold.

Romans 1.16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. First to the Jew and then to the Gentile. You guys get my point?

We are to find that courage to be bold in our faith and what is right. To wrap it up, just if you want to go back to Matthew 27.

[30:23] I just want to say a couple last things about verses 62 through 66. Just to read it. It says, That's super interesting to me.

It tells me that the Pharisees and the religious leaders, they were hearing the message. I don't think there was confusion around that.

You know, remember when they arrest Jesus before they take him to Pilate, what do they get him on? They get him on the fact that he says, I am God's son. They didn't get him on all these other little nick-knack files.

They got him on the main thing. That means they knew what was going on. After three days I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead. And the last fraud will be worse than the first.

[31:33] And Pilate says to him, you have a guard of soldiers. Go make it as secure as you can. And so they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Again, it's interesting. The Pharisees didn't forget what Jesus said. Remember how that guy said, after three days I will rise? Let's make sure that doesn't happen.

This is a bit of a side commentary. It's interesting how Joseph and Nicodemus, followers of Jesus, are preparing Jesus' body for this tomb.

In the back of their head, were they like, is he going to rise? Or do we need to do this? I mean, you know, there's a bit of a challenge there. And it's like, again, there's a cultural thing of burying him the same day he dies, paying a last respect, probably thinking Jesus will rise however he wants to rise.

I don't know. And then on the flip side, you have the Pharisees like, hey, let's make sure that tomb is sealed because he said he's going to rise. We don't want that. We don't want anyone to steal the body.

[32:41] We don't want this to get any bigger than it already has. And so Pilate tells him, hey, you have guards. You do it yourself. This is a fulfillment of prophecy.

This was a new tomb. It's never been used. I thought that was kind of interesting. Tombs just looking into it, you know, they would typically carve it out of, you know, a rock face.

And you'd have a small kind of entry room. It says you'd kind of duck in and then it would kind of get into a broader room. And there would be kind of like benches there. And a body would be there for roughly a year.

And then it would kind of decompose. And then they would go in and they would take the bones and they would put it into what they called the second burial. It was kind of like a vault container.

This tomb had never been used.

Again, the prophecy in Isaiah, he had done no wrong. He had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal. He was put in a rich man's grave. The Lord used these two men who found courage to take a stand for what they saw to be right.

[33:54] Despite their past. Despite some of the timid, distant following of Jesus. Despite the peer pressure. Despite the comfort of wealth. Despite their reputation.

Despite the position. They found the courage to take a stand for what was right. And I pray that we would also find that same courage to stand for what is right.

To be inspired by these two men. In following Jesus. In standing for truth. Perhaps it's an opportunity to share the gospel with someone. Perhaps it's a chance to share at work. At your class. At your, you know, in your neighborhood. I don't know. Like I said in my prayer. I don't know. Like everybody's life is different. We're all different. Right? I mean, we all have very different lives. Just be praying. Lord, how would you want me to find courage to take your message and your truth forward?

[34:55] That's the bottom line. The musicians want to come up. I'll go ahead and close in prayer. Sorry for giving you guys very little heads up. But let's pray.

Heavenly Father. Heavenly Father. It's interesting just to be reading about these two men. Joseph of Arimathea.

Who mentioned in really no other areas other than these accounts and the gospels. Lord. Lord. How you could use this man to. For our benefit.

For our. For our application. Lord. A man that was a follower of you. And a distant follower of Lord. But. But how he did find bold. Courage to go before Pilate.

And to ask for the body. And to prepare your. Your son's body. Lord. To bury it. To fulfill prophecy in that. Lord.

[35:52] So we say thank you for that. Thank you for just the example. Of. Of Joseph. Of Nicodemus. Lord. We love that story in John 3. I mean. What a. What a clear picture of the gospel. That. By just simply putting our faith in you.

We can be saved. It doesn't get any clearer than that. So Lord. We just say thank you for that. Thank you for this group here. In your son's name. Amen.