

# SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

## WEEK FORTY-FIVE: THE BURIAL OF JESUS

### READING

38 Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. 39 With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. 40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. 41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. 42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. John 19:38-42 (NLT)

### TEACHING

After Jesus died, there were two significant obstacles to him receiving a proper burial.

First, Jesus died without any money to his name. His only earthly possession was his seamless tunic and the Roman soldiers had cast lots to determine which of them would keep it. Jesus died penniless and homeless – he was a travelling teacher who relied on the generosity and hospitality of others. It is unlikely that Jesus' family had the money for a tomb and proper burial, but one of Jesus' followers provided for the need. Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy member of the Jewish ruling council and he gave up his own tomb for Jesus. Joseph would not have known this at the time, but as we all know now: Jesus only needed to borrow it! Nicodemus, the Pharisee we met in John 3, provided myrrh and aloes to anoint and clean the body for burial, but it was only about 12 ounces of perfume--not enough for a proper burial. It's obvious that these two men were in a rush. Why?

The second challenge with Jesus' burial was the Sabbath. These Jewish men were not allowed to do any work on the Sabbath and that including burying their friend. Jesus died on Friday afternoon and the Sabbath began at sundown on Friday – they only had a couple hours. They didn't have enough time to do a full proper burial ceremony. The women who were at the cross planned to come to the tomb after the Sabbath – on Sunday morning – to finish the burial ceremony and anoint his body with more perfumes and spices. Again – they didn't know then, but there would be no need for Jesus' burial ceremony to be finished. He wouldn't be there on Sunday morning when they arrived – he would be alive!

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## RESPONSE

### OPENING QUESTION(S):

- Have you ever attended a funeral? What do you remember about it?

### TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who was buried?
- Joseph gave Jesus his tomb – did Jesus need it forever or did he just borrow it?

### CHILDREN:

- In this story, what did Joseph and Nicodemus do for Jesus?
- What couldn't Joseph and Nicodemus do on the Sabbath?
- What do we know now that Jesus' followers didn't know then?

### TEENAGERS:

- What were the two obstacles to Jesus' burial?
- What did Joseph and Nicodemus do for Jesus?
- We know the end of the story. But what do you think this day was like for Jesus' followers?

### ADULTS:

- Jesus died without any wealth. What might this teach us about what we should most value?
- Two men used their resources to honor Jesus. How do we do the same today?

## PRAYER

*God, thank you that even in the darkest hours of my life there is hope. When Jesus died and was buried I am sure that many of his friends and followers thought all hope was lost. Thank you that there is always hope because of who you are and what you've done. Help me to trust in your plan and in your timing. Teach me to be generous with the blessings you have given me – I want to use your blessings to bless others. Thank you that you provide good things for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

This was not just any normal Sabbath – this was Passover weekend. Passover was a religious holiday to remember when God “passed over” the Jewish people when he brought the tenth and final plague on the nation of Israel – the death of the firstborn son. The Jewish people were instructed to kill a lamb and to spread its blood on the doorposts of their homes. This was a beautiful foreshadowing of Jesus, the greater Passover lamb. As Jesus was dying on the cross, it is likely that lambs were being sacrificed in the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was slain and his blood was shed and “applied to the doorposts of our hearts” so that we can know God's welcome and be spared his wrath.