

NEW SERIES

The
CROSS

AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR FALLEN HUMANITY



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WEEK 3
JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.



CONNECT

- Have you tried implementing new habits this year in some area of your life? How's it going so far?
- When you were younger, what was some aspect of your life that you preferred to keep secret from your friends at school?



INTRODUCTION

Joseph of Arimathea appears in all four Gospel accounts. He asked Pilate for the body of Jesus and buried it. Although his task was simple, each Gospel writer includes details about him that tell us something about discipleship. Perhaps the most curious detail is the fact that he was a “secret disciple” of Jesus. After witnessing Jesus’ death on the cross, however, the secretive nature of his discipleship changed, and he decided to publicly honor Jesus.



OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Matthew 27:57-60 & John 19:38

Discuss: John tells us that Joseph was a disciple “secretly for fear of the Jews.” We don’t know exactly what he feared, but he kept his discipleship a secret because of that fear. In our city, Christians may not experience physical abuse like they do in some countries, but many Christians feel pressure to be secretive about their faith. What fears do you think drive this secrecy?



OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Mark 15:42-47 & Luke 23:50-53

Discuss: What stands out to you about Joseph's actions? We're told that Joseph "took courage" and asked for Jesus' body. We don't know exactly what he took courage from, but we can be fairly certain that Joseph witnessed Jesus on the cross. If you were in Joseph's shoes, how do you imagine witnessing Jesus' public death would have impacted you?



APPLICATION

- Do you find yourself being secretive about being a disciple? What does that typically look like and what fear drives the secrecy?
- Joseph used his wealth and status to honor Jesus publicly. What do you think honoring Jesus publicly could look like for you?
- How does the cross give you courage to honor Jesus?



PRAYER

- Spend some time thanking Jesus for his willingness to give up status, wealth, and his very life on the cross.
- Confess any fears you have that cause you to be secretive about your discipleship.
- Ask God to grant you boldness to be public about your faith.



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