

The Counterintuitive Kingdom

Mark 15:40-47

The humble and lowly are exalted.

1. The passage is bracketed by the eyewitness account of a few women (v. 40-41, 47).
 - a. Mary Magdalene - had been possessed by 7 demons (Luke 8:2)
 - b. Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses
 - c. Salome - mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John)
 - i. These were the disciples who asked if they could be seated at Jesus' left and right (Mark 10:35-40).
 - ii. It was their mother who was faithful at the hardest time.
 - d. They were counted among those who ministered to Jesus (v. 41).
 - e. God used these faithful women to be the foundation of a credible witness.
2. They were fully and faithfully present even in the midst of the chaos, the tension, and the grief (vv. 40, 47).
 - a. They continued to care for Him even in His death.
 - b. They did what they knew to do - to watch and attend to their Savior even though they did not know how things would turn out.
 - c. During a dark and somewhat hopeless time, this faithful group of women is exalted as those who watched and ministered to Jesus even in His death.

[Application]

1. Where do you feel the tension of living in the in between?
2. What does ministering faithfully to Jesus look like for you right now?
3. Whatever doubts you have, whatever excuses you may think of, remember, God takes the humble, the lowly, and the weak, and He uses them for great glory.

The rich and powerful risk everything.

1. Who was Joseph of Arimathea?
 - a. Prominent member of the Council, the Sanhedrin - powerful (v. 43)
 - b. Wealthy (Matthew 27:57)
 - c. A secret disciple up until this point (John 19:38)
 - i. Fear of losing everything (John 12:42)
 - d. Waiting for the kingdom of God (v. 43)
 - e. Had not consented to the plan to kill Jesus (Luke 23:51)
 - f. Church history tradition says he may have been the rich young ruler.
2. What did he do?
 - a. He risked everything.
 - i. Once ruled by fear he now gathers courage and does the next faithful thing to do (v. 43).
 - ii. "When evening fell..." probably about 3pm - the "first" evening
 1. It was not lawful to leave a dead body on a tree overnight (Deut. 21:23).
 - a. It would have been extra offensive to leave a body on a cross during the Sabbath.
 - b. This was a special Sabbath - Passover (John 19:31).
 - iii. At his own cost he purchased burial garments and buried Jesus in an expensive tomb.
 1. Joseph was publicly aligning himself and his family with the person of Jesus.
 2. There was no one else to do it - the disciples had all fled (Matthew 26:56).
 - b. Accompanied by Nicodemus (John 19:39-40)
 - i. Came to Jesus at night (John 3:2)
 - ii. Now boldly takes care of the body of Jesus (John 19:39)

[Application]

1. What would it look like for you to risk everything? What's at stake? What are you not willing to risk in order to follow after Christ?
2. What might be the next faithful thing to do?

The Counterintuitive King

1. Jesus was the ultimate humble and lowly one who became exalted (Phil 2:8-11).
2. Jesus was the rich man who risked everything (Phil 2:5-7).
3. Jesus was the suffering servant who brought healing to all who believe (Isaiah 53).
4. In Jesus' finished work on the cross He has paid for our fear, our faithlessness, and our rebellion.
5. We take courage because Christ has freed us from our guilt and leads us in love.
 - a. What else could convince these men to come forward *after Jesus died?!*
 - b. What else would keep the women ministering to Jesus in the midst of their grief?

[Application]

1. The already and not yet - the motivation of love lets us live in the tension.
2. We respond to the love that Christ demonstrated by faithfully and lovingly following Him, by doing the next faithful thing in response to His great love.