



NG Study Guide: Matt. 27:57-28:15 “The King Buried and Resurrected” [10.1.17]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the sign that He said would confirm that He is the Messiah. As we consider the resurrection, we can respond in different ways. God desires that we respond with devotion and faith so that we can experience joy.

Jesus has been crucified and breathed his last breath. We will now study His burial and resurrection.

A. The Devotion of Joseph of Arimathea (27:57-61)

After Jesus has been crucified, we are told that Joseph of Arimathea approaches Pilate to request the body of Jesus for burial. It was customary in this culture that crucified people would be left on the cross to be eaten by animals. However, Pilate would not want this scene in light of the scandal surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. In addition, the Jews would be greatly offended by a sight such as this during the Passover feast. Thus, Joseph’s offer to bury the body of Jesus would be greatly welcomed. John’s gospel explains to us that Joseph was accompanied by Nicodemus (from John 3) who had brought 100 pounds of aloe and myrrh to embalm the body of Jesus with. Both men were respectable religious leaders who were intrigued with Jesus and Joseph is actually called a disciple of Jesus. The tomb which Joseph buried Jesus in was an extremely expensive tomb, illustrating Joseph’s great devotion to Jesus. Joseph’s decision to follow Jesus would not be popular in the social circles he participat-

ed in. John refers to Joseph as a “secret” disciple of Jesus because of his fear of the Jews (John 19:38). On one hand, some may view Joseph as a coward for not wanting others to know he was a follower of Jesus. On another hand, it shows great devotion that Joseph was willing to be a disciple of Jesus when everyone around him was not.

Q1. Have you ever been in a situation where you were the only Christian? How did this test your faith?

Q2. How does generosity reveal our devotion to Jesus?

B. The Unbelief of the Religious Leaders (27:62-66, 28:11-15)

The chief priests and Pharisees approach Pilate to propose a plan. They communicate that they suspect that the disciples may seek to steal the body of Jesus to confirm Jesus’ prediction of His resurrection. Suspecting this would cause even more trouble for them, they ask if Pilate will authorize Roman guards to secure the tomb. Pilate grants their request. These religious leaders refer to Jesus as a deceiver revealing their unbelief in Jesus as Messiah. After Jesus rises from the dead, some of these same religious leaders follow up with the Roman guards to bribe them. The guards had seen an angel roll away the stone covering Jesus’ tomb. This stone would have likely been very heavy requiring multiple strong men to remove it. Rather than receiving this as a sign of Jesus telling the truth, these religious leaders again reject Jesus. They offer the guards a large sum of money if they are willing to lie and say that the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus. In addition, they promise protection to these soldiers should the governor find out about their failure to effectively guard the tomb. Normally, a guard who failed to execute this kind of assignment would be put to death.

Q3. Why do you think certain people would refuse to trust in Christ even if they had all of the evidence they could ever want? What would you say to someone like this?

C. The Joy of Mary² [Why the Resurrection Produces Joy] (28:1-10)

At dawn on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the lesser, come to the tomb of Jesus. When they arrive, there is a great earthquake and an angel descends removing the stone. The Roman guards are present and are paralyzed with fear. The text also says that both Mary's had fear, but they also had joy. The angel tells them not to be afraid because Jesus is risen and instructs them to go and tell the disciples. On their way to announce this good news to the disciples, Jesus meets them. Jesus tells them to rejoice and echoes the charge from the angel to not be afraid. They worship Him and he instructs them to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Q4. How does the resurrection give us joy?

Q5. Why do you think that both the angel and Jesus instruct both Mary's to not be afraid?

“Digging Deeper” (optional or alternative study)

- 1. Read 1 Corinthians 15 as a group. What are some of the other implications of the resurrection for God's children?**
- 2. Read the other gospel accounts of the burial and resurrection of Jesus. Discuss as a group.**
- 3. Read Romans 8:11. What does it look like to live in the resurrection power of Jesus?**

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

- 1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?**
- 2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?**
- 3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:**

Go on a walk in your neighborhood this week. As you pass each house, pray for your neighbors that live inside (by name if you know their names). Pray that God would give you opportunities to love your neighbors.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

- 1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?**

2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

1. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
2. **Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
3. **Feel free to use an icebreaker question or activity** to get to know one another better.
4. **Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. **What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.