

Matthew 27

“Joseph of Arimathea”

5th Sunday af. Pentecost

February 9, 2020

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Think of actors on the stage and the scene is Good Friday.

Joseph of Arimathea is a critical actor.

He is a critical actor in the burial of Jesus.

This Joseph, not the earthly Father of Jesus.

And not the man with a coat of many colors.

This Joseph at the burial of Jesus is

mentioned in all four Gospels.

He came from a small village called Arimathea.

You know, Arimathea in the hill country of Judea.

Arimathea, as in Joseph of Arimathea.

He was a respected member of the Sanhedrin,
that Jewish religious council in Jerusalem.

He was presumably wealthy,
since he owned his own unused tomb
in a garden not far from the site of Jesus’ crucifixion (Matthew 27:60).

But more importantly...
Joseph was a man waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God.

Like Simeon and Anna.

They waited to see the coming Kingdom

²⁷ ... and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him
according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ [Simeon] took [Jesus] up in his arms
and blessed God and said,

²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant^[e] depart in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation

³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

[*Show Hospitality*]

So when Jesus died,

Joseph went to Pontius Pilate and asked for Jesus' body (Mark 15:43).

Along with Nicodemus,

Joseph removed the body and placed it in the tomb (John 19:38-39).

This is the first lesson we can learn from Joseph of Arimathea.

Show hospitality!

Here is hospitality!

Here is love of a stranger –philoxenia!

Joseph of Arimathea went out of his way.

He took on danger.

And yet he extended to the dead body of Jesus – Hospitality.

He invited Him in.

Gave His dead body a place to lay.

The public devotion shown by Joseph of Arimathea

contrasted greatly

to the fearfulness of the disciples who had abandoned Jesus.

So, if a congregation were to do a Passion play,

to tell again the old, old story,

sure, the role of Joseph would be a bit part,

just one or two lines.

Yet, his role is crucial.

Most of us will ever and only have a bit part in the life we are called to lead,

yet your part is crucial.

Your part is critical in the lives of someone else.

Yes, we will flub our lines and make missteps and miss our cue.

Yet, the Lord will teach us the role we are assigned and it takes practice,

the practice of discipleship,

the practice of hospitality.

This is how God normally works.

Yes, our God performs miracles, He works supernaturally.

But most of the time our God works naturally.

He works through people.

This is why the book of James says our works are necessary.
They are necessary for our neighbor.

Our works are not necessary for our salvation.
For God needs nothing from us.

And there is nothing we can give God.

After all, we are dead in our trespasses and the last time I looked,
a dead person can do nothing.

“A dead man tells no tales.”

Thanks, Pirates of the Caribbean.

God doesn't need our works, but our neighbor does!

And Joseph of Arimathea performed a good work for his neighbor.
He showed hospitality.

This is the first lesson we learn from Joseph of Arimathea.

[*Body of Christ*]

Now for the second lesson.

Actors follow a script. Right?

The Church has a script as well: we call it Script-ure.

We need to learn our lines.

Joseph of Arimathea was looking for the Kingdom of God
which means he heard the Word.

Jesus opens up the Scripture as every word is the Word of God.
Joseph followed the Script and Jesus followed the Script perfectly.

Joseph loved the Lord and when you love someone you love what he says.
He also followed the stage directions, otherwise he was lost.

He did not ad lib lines that would not be in keeping with the Scripture.
He did not add his own lines or run off stage.
Joseph of Arimathea – took care of the Body of Christ.

We also are to take care of His Body.

The body of Christ is His Church
and we are to take care of one another.

We are to take care of others in this body of Christ.

In the roles assigned to us by the Lord, in our various vocations,
we need to take care of the Body of Christ.

We are to have care for His Body in suffering or rejoicing (vs. 27).

We take care of the Body of Christ,

And the opposite is also true...

The Lord cares for us with His Body

by feeding us His Body and Blood.

The body of Christ,

This cast is a cast of millions

Millions upon millions

and each are dependent on each other.

If you think about it, this lesson isn't really different from the first.

We are to show hospitality.

We are to care for those in the Body of Christ.

That is the lesson we learn from Joseph of Arimathea.

[Conclusion]

The passion play is all set.

Jesus is the lead and this is not acting.

It was not a "stage cross" to which He was nailed

nor a fake styrofoam stone in front of the tomb.

Joseph of Arimathea was looking for the Kingdom of God

and he buried Jesus' Body.

When he put Jesus in his tomb,

he may have thought that he was entombing the reign of God.

But even the large stone in front of his new tomb

could not hold the Lord of life. Jesus is risen.

By his service to the Lord,

Joseph of Arimathea,

helped form The Apostles' Creed:

"and was buried and on the third day..."

Do not minimize nor maximize your calling in the Lord's work.

You just may have the 'line',

the part that the Lord uses for His work of salvation.

The Script is solid. Scripture is solid. Amen.

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)
