

“SO THAT YOU WILL BELIEVE”

JOHN 19:31-42

SUNDAY, 24 MAY 2009

2ND STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH

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.PPT 1 ...

It's good to be here with you this morning ... worshiping God, and seeking the presence and the voice of Jesus Christ ... so that we can listen to Him and learn from Him and take on more of the character of our Rabbi, Jesus Christ ... so that we'll be encouraged, pruned, and equipped to more fully live out the will of God in our interactions and relationships with the people God brings across our paths.

None of what is happening in our lives is happening by accident. **ABSOLUTELY NONE OF IT.** God has plans and designs. Because of the free-will God has given us, and because sin has busted up this world, bad things happen. But neither our sinful choices, or the pain that's in this world because of sin, defeats God's purposes for us.

Because what's also happening, sometimes in ways in focus and plain as day, and at other times in ways out of focus and hidden, is that as we surrender to God, He is able to use **EVERYTHING** that happens in our lives ... the **GOOD** and the **BAD**, the **JOY** and the **PAIN**, the **SUCCESS** and the **FAILURE**, the **NOBLE** and the **SHAMEFUL** ... God is able to use **ALL THESE THINGS** to lead us into **LIVES OF DEPENDENT TRUST** with Him ... so that we become people who are making daily choices to surrender to Him, to love Him, and to follow Him, not just when things are going great, **BUT NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES MIGHT LOOK LIKE.** And our God, who is crazy in love with you and me, invites us to step into this **GREAT ADVENTURE** of life with Him. Do you see it?

In his recent book *Wild Goose Chase*, Washington DC pastor Mark Batterson writes about this **GREAT ADVENTURE** this way ...

The Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard believed that boredom is the root of all evil. I second the notion. Faith and boredom are antithetical. The rich young ruler Jesus talked with had money, youth, and power. But he asked, “What do I still lack?”

I'll tell you exactly what he was lacking; spiritual adventure. His life was too easy, too predictable, and too comfortable. He kept all the commandments, but those commandments felt like a religious cage. I think there was a deep-seated longing within him for something more than simply not doing anything wrong.

And like the rich young ruler, I see many Christians bored with their faith. We know our sins are forgiven and forgotten. We know we will spend eternity with God when we cross the boundary of the space-time continuum. And we're trying our best to live our lives within the guardrails of God's good, pleasing, and perfect will. But still we have a gnawing feeling that something is missing.

And for us to move past boredom, to find what is missing in our life with God, we've got to live **LIVES OF DEPENDENT TRUST** with Him, lives that are surrendered to His presence and His voice, lives where our own agendas are turned over to Him so that His life, His will, and His purposes can be lived through us. Here's how King David's son, Solomon wrote about this life of **INTIMATE, DEPENDENT TRUST** in *The Old Testament* book of **PROVERBS** ...

.PPT 2 ... PROVERBS 3:5-7a (THE MESSAGE)

^{5-7a} Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; He's the one who will keep you on track. Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God!

And the greater our **INTIMACY LEVEL** with God, the more real this **GREAT ADVENTURE** with God becomes, and the more we'll be able to follow Solomon's words, and **listen for God's voice in everything we do, everywhere we go**. If you look up the word "intimacy" in a dictionary, here's some of what you'll find ...

.PPT 3 ...

Intimacy | noun | close familiarity or friendship; closeness of observation or knowledge of a person, place, or thing.

So "**What's your INTIMACY LEVEL with God?**" We've got to answer that question with honesty if we want to move past the spiritual boredom we too easily settle for, and be used by God in any significant way in our life with Him.

Listen to me ... Jesus Christ will **ENTRUST US WITH MISSIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE UNITED WITH HIM IN CHANGING THE WORLD, BASED ON THE LEVEL OF THE INTIMACY OF OUR LIFE WITH HIM**. Do you want to really partner with God in your life? Do you want to be used by God to really make a difference? Great! But for these goals to move off the drawing table and become a reality, our **INTIMACY LEVEL** with God has to be both **INTENTIONAL** and **CONSISTENTLY GROWING**.

In **JOHN 19** we see this truth in the life of John the Apostle at the foot of the cross, as Jesus asks him to take care of His mother, Mary after He's gone. He makes the choice to stay close to Jesus when many others have run away. And we see it in the lives two men named and Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Joe and Nick to their friends) after Jesus died on the cross. They become more public with their faith in Christ, even though the cost associated with doing this was higher than you or I can possibly imagine.

And so the questions that the last twelve verses on **JOHN 19** raise, bring us to our first **FAITH LESSON** of the morning ...

.PPT 4 ... FAITH LESSON ...

Jesus Christ will always entrust us with missions and opportunities to be united with Him in changing the world, BASED ON THE LEVEL OF THE INTIMACY OF OUR LIFE WITH HIM.

1. What mission or opportunity is God trusting me with lately?
2. What is God asking me to join with Him in?
3. How does what I've been entrusted with reflect my current level of intimacy with God?
4. Do I long to be entrusted with more concrete, meaningful things to do “*with* and *for* Jesus Christ”?

Please turn with me to **JOHN 19**. We're still looking at the night of Jesus' crucifixion, and we're now in between the **CROSS**, and the **TOMB**. Let's begin with **v. 31** ...

.PPT 5 ... JOHN 19:31 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

³¹ Then the Jews, because it was the *Day of Preparation*, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a “High Day”), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Jewish days begin and end at sundown. This is why the Jewish Sabbath begins, not on Saturday morning, but at sundown on Friday, and ends, not on Sunday morning, but at sundown on Saturday. You probably remember John talking earlier in his Gospel that as the crucifixion of Jesus drew nearer, so did the *Jewish Feast Of The Passover*. And this was God's plan all along.

It was a God-inspired convergence of time, destiny, theology, and ceremony, where just as the Jews sacrificed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorposts of their homes in remembrance of the first *Passover* that happened when God delivered them from Egyptian slavery – now, after thirty-three years of life on earth, and three years of active ministry on earth Jesus Christ, the “**lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**” (cf., **JOHN 1:29**) would be sacrificed on the cross **ON THE VERY DAY THE JEWS CELEBRATED PASSOVER**. And as His blood was poured out for the sins of the world, a doorway would be opened and make it possible for you and me to have our relationship and our fellowship with God restored.

The Old Testament is filled with people, images, and stories that **REFLECT** or **FORESHADOW** *New Testament* realities. And we see some of these here. The first day of the weeklong *Feast of Unleavened Bread* was on Sabbath – which was a day Jews weren't allowed to work. So even though, according to the calendar it was technically still *Passover*, because they'd celebrated it the night before, the Jews would use the daytime of the Sabbath as a *preparation* for *The Feast of Unleavened Bread*, which would begin at sundown.

And this is why we find this day in between the cross and the grave referred to in all four Gospel accounts as “**the Day of Preparation.**” (**MATTHEW 27:62; MARK 15:42; LUKE 23:54; JOHN 19:14, 31, 42**)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was held annually to remind the Israelites of their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness between leaving Egypt and entering into the Promised Land. When the Exodus began the Israelites had to pack quickly, so they didn't have time for their bread to rise – and they had to take *unleavened bread* with them on the journey.

And now, centuries after the Exodus, the **Day of Preparation** was being used to *prepare Jesus Christ's crucified body*, the One Who thirty-three years earlier had been born in **Bethlehem** (cf., **LUKE 2:4, 15**) which in Hebrew mean "**City of Bread**", and Who, in **JOHN 6:35** said He was the **Bread of Life**.

Just as the Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness after leaving Egypt, so too, Jesus would remain in the grave, *unleavened, unrisen* ... dead for three days, before He would rise again, and share the Good News of the completed work of salvation with His friends. The cross had just finished **THE WORK OF SALVATION**. But the empty tomb would soon become **THE HOPE OF SALVATION**—that new life through Jesus was available.

.PPT 6 ... JOHN 19:32-34 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

³² **So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;**

³³ **but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.**

³⁴ **But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.**

The first day of *The Feast of Unleavened Bread* fell that year on a Sabbath, making it a "**High Day**" as John refers to it here, or a "**Special Festival**." Jewish Law said that it was "*work*" to take a body down from a cross, and so for that reason, and because it was also unlawful to not bury a person on the day they died, the Jews wanted the three crucified men taken down before sunset so Sabbath law wouldn't be violated.

When the people on crosses didn't die as quickly as the Romans wanted them to, they would take a iron mallet or a stone and break their legs, so they wouldn't be able to lift themselves up to breathe ... and they'd suffocate in just a minute or two.

So giving into the requests of the Jews once again, Pilate commanded the soldiers to break the legs of the three crucified men. But when they came to Jesus He'd already died. And so instead of breaking Jesus' legs, the soldiers, disobeying a direct order from Pilate, pierced His side with a spear **and immediately blood and water came out**. I understand how **blood** flowed out of this wound in Jesus' side. But **water**?

Doctors say that blood flowing into the pericardium (the sac about the heart) would coagulate and separate into the **RED CLOT (blood)** and the **LIQUID SERUM (water)**. And so when the soldier jammed his spear into Jesus' side this separation would be visible, indicating that Jesus' heart had ruptured. Dr. Stuart Bergsma of Grand Rapids, Michigan writes about what happened this way ...

.PPT 7 ...

It is extremely rare, well nigh impossible ... for the normal heart muscle to rupture. Jesus Christ, however, suffered as no man before or since has suffered. No human heart ever made could handle the anxiety, the pain, the sin, and the guilt that Jesus had laid on Him; and His heart burst under that pressure.

So what did Jesus die from? Not the **scourging**. Not the **crucifixion**. Not from the **spear** in His side. But from **A BROKEN HEART** ... from a heart broken by the sin of the world ... by the weight of your sin and my sin.

But “why would these soldiers risk being put to death by disobeying this direct order from Pilate?” Gang, it all happened because God will go to great lengths to make sure that His WORD is fulfilled. **EXODUS 12:46** and **NUMBERS 9:12** describe the lamb that was to be sacrificed for Passover ...

.PPT 8 ... EXODUS 12:46 (CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION)

⁴⁶ No bones of the Passover lamb may be broken.

These instructions in **EXODUS 12** and in **NUMBERS 9** aren't a direct prophecy about the Messiah. But I believe God wanted there to be as many **PARALLELS** between the Passover in Egypt and the death of the Messiah on the cross, as possible, so that as many Jews as possible would recognize Jesus Christ as the One God had sent into the world to provide redemption, as the Messiah they'd been waiting for, and looking for.

You may remember me telling you two Sundays ago about an ancient cemetery that was discovered outside of Jerusalem in 1968 when a bulldozer exposed a cave during road construction. And the cave contained a host of stone boxes called *ossuaries* ... which were made to hold the bones of the dead. And for the first time, specific archaeological evidence of Middle Eastern Roman crucifixion, at or near the time of Jesus Christ, was discovered.

One of the *ossuaries* found contained the remains of a man named John, who was around 30 years of age when he was crucified. And after examining John's bones, Dr. Nico Hass, Professor of Anatomy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, discovered not only that nails had been pounded through his anklebones and wrists; but that his leg bones had been broken. Providing one more confirmation to the truthfulness of Scripture and history when they say that this was a common crucifixion practice.

But while *The Old Testament* description of the Passover lamb's bones **not being broken** is a foreshadowing of Jesus' death on the cross, and not a direct prophecy, some words God spoke through King David and the prophet Zechariah, are Old Testament prophecies about Jesus' legs not being broken, and about the spear wound Jesus would suffer on the cross.

.PPT 9 ... PSALM 34:20; ZECHARIAH 4:10 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

²⁰ He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken.

¹⁰ I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication [*to beg for earnestly or humbly*], so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son.

.PPT 10 ... JOHN 19:35-37 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and

he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

³⁶ For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, “Not a bone of Him shall be broken.”

³⁷ And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

John doesn't refer to himself directly throughout this Gospel bearing his name. But he tells us here in v. 35 that this is his own first-hand, eyewitness testimony about what happened that day ... and that every word is true. And so John is saying ...

- That Jesus had the Last Supper with His disciples in the upper room of a home in Jerusalem.
- That Jesus washed His disciples' feet and called them to love and serve one another and the world with extravagance.
- That Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and to have God's will about the cross, confirmed in His heart.
- That Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane ... taken back to Jerusalem and shuttled back and forth between Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish Religious Leaders.
- That Jesus was then beaten to within an inch of His life.
- That Jesus was crucified on the hill called “Golgotha”, while hanging in between two thieves ... one of whom, before he died, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah and asked Him to forgive his sins
- That while Jesus hung on the cross, He asked John to take care of His mother Mary, as if she were his own mother.
- And that while Jesus died on the cross, His legs remained unbroken, even though His side was pierced open with the spear of one of the soldiers.

And in all of this testimony, John is saying, “Everything I've said is true. And I'm telling you this, so that you might believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, the way I have.” And I see another FAITH LESSON for us here ...

.PPT 11 ... FAITH LESSON ...

Jesus knows all of us struggle in varying degrees, with belief. “Is Jesus Who He says He is? Am I separated from God unless I come to Him through Jesus?” And we can struggle with issues of belief even if we've loved Jesus for a long time. It's part of being human.

But when we let God shape our worries into prayers, and when we let doubts become “*the ants in the pants of faith*” (Frederick Buechner), our faith will be kept alive and moving instead of stagnant and dead.

Do you want your *intimacy* with Jesus Christ to move past boredom, and go to a deeper level? To a place where your *intimacy* with Him, [**your close familiarity or friendship; closeness of observation or knowledge of Him**] is rooted in your love and devotion to Him and to His plans for your life? It's possible. It's possible. Just don't let doubt kill your faith. Because the truth is that doubt is a part of faith and we need to learn how to journey through it together.

This is one of the reasons it's so important to be in relationships, on ministry teams, or in Community Groups with other followers of Jesus Christ –where questions can be wrestled with, where we can provide pastoral support and care to one another during hard times, where serving the church and the world together can allow us to be the hands of feet, the eyes and the ears, the words and the presence of Jesus Christ to people who desperately need to get to know Him. This is how we come to the place where we **OWN OUR BELIEFS**, instead of being **OWNED BY DOUBT**, and where we come to know the truth the Apostle Paul prayed that the followers of Jesus Christ would come to know in **EPHESIANS 3:17-19** ...

.PPT 12-13 ... EPHESIANS 3:14-19 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

14-17 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

18-19 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Do Paul's words of prayer ring true for you and for the life of faith you're living? They can, as you begin to go deeper in your **LEVEL OF INTIMACY** with God.

.PPT 14 ... JOHN 19:38 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

All four Gospel writers mention that Joseph of Arimathea was a righteous man. Matthew tells us in **MATTHEW 27:57**, that Joseph of Arimathea **was a wealthy member of the 70-member Jewish Ruling Council, called "The Sanhedrin"**.

Archeologists aren't exactly clear on where **Arimathea** is, but many think it's a town referred to as **Ramathaim**, in the hill country of Ephraim, 20 miles NW of Jerusalem. Apparently, Joseph's high standing in the Jewish community gave him access to Pilate. And the Apostle Luke tell us in **LUKE 23:50-51** that Joseph didn't consent to the charges made against Jesus, to **scourge** Him and **crucify** Him.

And so, this wealthy man, this man with political and religious connections, believed Jesus Christ to be Who He said He was ... the Messiah ... even though he hadn't gone completely public with his belief. But you have to admit that asking Pilate for Jesus' body tipped his hand. And by providing Jesus a tomb in which to be buried, another *Old Testament* prophecy was fulfilled ...

.PPT 15 ... ISAIAH 53:9b (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

9^b But He [the Messiah] was buried like a criminal; He was put into a rich man's grave.

So how did this fearful, tentative, secret disciple change into a follower of Jesus Christ who is remembered for his **COURAGE** and his **ACTION**? I believe it was seeing Jesus' **scourging** and His death on the cross with his own eyes, in all of its gruesome reality. And I see another **FAITH LESSON** for us here ...

.PPT 16 ... FAITH LESSON ...

When we fully understand what Jesus went through when He died for us, then it's a natural next step to be willing to die to ourselves and live for Him ... to come to Him in confession and surrender, to ask Him to forgive us of our sins, and teach a whole new way to be human.

This is why we shared in Communion earlier. Because when we remember the death of Jesus Christ ... His body broken for us, His blood poured out for us ... and when we look intentionally and intently at the cross of Jesus Christ, the driving passion of our lives will be to live every moment of every day for Jesus Christ.

And so this morning, if you're still living life as a secret disciple, fearful of your family, or afraid of the people at work ... or if you've settled for a mediocre, boring Christian life, then I want to exhort you to look intently at what Jesus did **PERSONALLY FOR YOU** on the cross. Because I believe that if you do, you'll have the courage to step forward and proclaim Jesus Christ as the One you've pledged your life, your heart, your mind, your passions, and your future to. Think back with me again to our original question this morning ...

What's your LEVEL OF INTIMACY with Jesus Christ? What has Jesus Christ been asking you to do with Him and for Him? Remember, as I've said before during our study of the life of Jesus as we've gone through *The Gospel of John* ... like the prophecies concerning Jesus' burial here in the verses we've looked at together this morning, there are over 300 specific *Old Testament* prophecies concerning the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ. And He fulfilled all of them. What are the odds?

Peter Stoner wrote a book entitled *Science Speaks* that applied the science of probability to *The Old Testament* prophecies of Jesus. Stoner began by looking at just eight of the 300something prophecies ... and he concluded that the odds of any one man fulfilling all eight of these prophecies over the course of two nearly centuries are 1^{17TH}. That's a one with seventeen zeroes after it! Or one in ten to the 17th power.

And that's only figuring the odds of eight of the more than 300+ prophecies. **GANG, ISN'T IT TIME THAT WE TAKE THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD SERIOUSLY?** Oh, how God longs to speak to us through the truth of His WORD. Oh how He longs to see His followers make the choice to base their lives on this supernatural book!

AND ISN'T IT ALSO TIME THAT WE TAKE JESUS CHRIST SERIOUSLY? Do you realize how important it is that you pay attention to Jesus Christ? Your eternity depends on it.

But Joseph of Arimathea didn't come to get Jesus' body alone. He came with his friend, a man we first met in **JOHN 3**, a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus.

.PPT 17 ... JOHN 19:39-40 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

³⁹ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

You might remember when we studied **JOHN 12** that Jesus told the crowd at the home of Lazarus, that Lazarus' sister Mary would prophetically anoint His body for His burial. And when the people heard Jesus speak these words, and then when they saw Mary anoint Jesus with the expensive perfume that she spilled all over Him –from his head to his feet –they didn't understand that Jesus would soon be put to death.

But Mary saw it. Mary knew the truth of what was around the corner. You see, Mary had spent time with Jesus, worshiping at His feet, confessing her sins and asking for forgiveness. Mary's **LEVEL OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS** was deep and real. And because Mary's **LEVEL OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS** was deep and real, her worship of Him was also deep and real. And because of Mary's choice to take her **LEVEL OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS** deeper, her eyes had been opened wider than the eyes of the people around her about Who Jesus was and what He'd come to do. And because Mary's **LEVEL OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS** had gone deeper and was real, Jesus invited Mary to participate with Him in one of the most holy, beautiful, and sacrificial acts of worship recorded in the Bible.

Gang, remember that the ministries and opportunities God opens the door for us to walk into with Him, are only completely related to the **LEVEL OF INTIMACY** we're pursuing in our life with Him. Don't kid yourself into thinking this isn't true. It is.

JOHN 12, where this story of Mary's pre-death anointing for Jesus is recorded may seem like it took place a long time before the part of the story we're reading and studying now in **JOHN 19**. And while it was quite a while ago when we studied it ... it was actually just a few days, or maybe a week before this day when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came with linen and spices to prepare Jesus' body for burial.

When Jesus was still a young child, Wise Men from the East came bearing gifts for Him. Matthew tells us in **MATTHEW 2:11** that the Wise Men "**came into the house, saw Jesus, fell down, worshiped Him, and gave Him their treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**" Gold is the precious metal used throughout the WORD of God in association with **A KING'S RULE**. Frankincense was the most costly spice used by **THE PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE**. And myrrh was so expensive, that it was used almost exclusively in **EMBALMING THE BODIES OF ROYALTY AND THEIR FAMILIES**.

So by bringing gold to Jesus Christ, the Wise Men proclaimed that **HE WOULD BE A KING**. And by bringing frankincense to Jesus Christ, the Wise Men proclaimed that **HE WOULD BE A PRIEST**. And by bringing myrrh to Jesus Christ, the Wise Men proclaimed that **HE WAS BORN TO DIE**.

.PPT 18 ... JOHN 19:41-42 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

⁴² Therefore because of the Jewish Day of Preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Matthew tells us in **MATTHEW 27:57-60** that this was Joseph of Arimathea's own grave, and that no one had yet been buried in it. Even today in Jerusalem you can see Mount Moriah, with its skull-shaped features, and next to it is an ancient garden that many people believe to contain the actual tomb where Jesus Christ was buried.

The tomb is carved into solid rock, and there's a small entrance that you have to duck down to enter through. And once inside, like most Middle Eastern tombs, you find several compartments or niches where bodies were laid out after being somewhat mummified with spices, ointments, and linen strips like Jesus' body was.

Customarily, the Jews left these bodies alone for a few years until they decayed down to just the bones, and then the "linen cocoon" holding the bones, was cut open and the bones were taken out and placed into an *ossuary*, which was usually not much bigger than a small chest. And then the *ossuary* stayed in the tomb with the remains of other family members.

And like you've probably seen in movies, or in paintings, the door to the tomb was typically made of a heavy, circular shaped stone, running in a groove and settled down into a channel, so it was nearly impossible to move except by several strong people. This was done to ensure that no person, and no animals would disturb the remains left in the tomb, as well as to keep the smell of the decaying body inside.

Tombs were very expensive. And so it was quite a sacrifice for Joseph of Arimathea to give up his own personal tomb for Jesus –but what an honor it must have been for him. And yet little did he know that Jesus would only use it for a few days! So as we close, let's return again to the original questions we asked at the beginning of our time together.

.PPT 19 ...

- 1. What mission or opportunity is God trusting me with lately?**
- 2. What is God asking me to join with Him in?**
- 3. How does what I've been entrusted with reflect my current level of intimacy with God?**
- 4. Do I long to be entrusted with more concrete, meaningful things to do "*with* and *for* Jesus Christ"?**

.PPT 20 ... NEXT SUNDAY ... JOHN 20:1-10 ...

EASTER AGAIN IN MAY! COME PRAYING AND EXPECTING!

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