

Simple actions matter \* John 19:38-42  
2020 04 14 \* Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

Today I want to share with you something that really jumped out to me about the Easter story this year. It comes from John 19, verse 38. This is Good Friday so Jesus has just been crucified. John 19:38 says -

38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.

40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid.

42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Now that on its own is really interesting. It means that Nicodemus took his talk with Jesus to heart, he put his trust in Him and he was born again. Nicodemus became a follower of Jesus. Same with Joseph of Arimathea. They both turned their backs on the lives as Jewish ruling elite to identify with the crucified Saviour, Jesus.

Now, I've recognized that before, and you probably have too, but the part that really stood out to me this year is the fact that if not for Nicodemus and Joseph, Jesus' body would not have gone into the tomb. He probably would have been thrown in an anonymous mass grave somewhere.

But because of what Nicodemus and Joseph did, everyone knew exactly where Jesus' body was supposed to be. And it was cause for rejoicing when they realized the body was not there anymore.

Because Nicodemus and Joseph put Jesus in the tomb, the resurrection was clear to everyone when they saw that the tomb was now empty. That's significant.

And I think this teaches us a couple important lessons. Simple actions matter and faithful actions matter.

I mean, sure, on one hand, you could say that what Nic and Joe did was more than simple – it was quite extravagant considering the risk they took to go to Pilate and the money they poured into spices to bury Jesus.

But on the other hand, what they did was quite mundane. It's not like they built Him a mausoleum or organized a funerary parade for Him – all they wanted to do was to give Him a decent burial. They did the usual Jewish burial customs and that was that. Nothing fancy. Nothing out of the ordinary really, just a simple effort to do for Jesus what they would have done for anyone else.

And in the sovereignty of God, their actions played a crucial role in the overall story of Jesus' death and resurrection. If they had done nothing, Jesus would have been lost. But because they did something, everyone knew that Jesus was alive. Simple acts matter.

Simple acts matter and faithful acts matter too. Nicodemus and Joseph had both become followers of Jesus and they valued him deeply so they wanted to do something. They wanted to honour the man who meant so much to them. And since He had served them in life, they served Him in death. And what they did out of love for Him was way more significant than they could have ever imagined. They weren't planning to do anything impressive; they were just following their affection for their crucified Lord. And in turn, demonstrated that He was in fact the risen Lord. Faithful actions matter.

Simple actions matter. Faithful actions matter. And I know that you know that!

Simple actions matter, don't they? Kathy S made us some raisin bread and brought it over and I'll tell you, the joy I felt in my heart b/c of that simple action was way bigger than just the joy over a loaf of bread. (The raisin bread was really good too 😊). Simple action – tremendously meaningful, because someone reached out with kindness.

And we can all do that. I know that you're all doing that - taking meals to each other, taking flowers to each other, making calls to one another, helping out where you can. Keep it up! Safely, carefully doing simple acts of kindness for one another b/c simple actions matter.

And second, faithful actions matter. When the going gets tough, sometimes the instinct is to cut and run, but that's not how it goes for us as believers, is it. We're not just 'being nice;' we are simply following the example that Jesus set for us. We love because He first loved us. Actions that flow out of our affection for Jesus and for other people are important. Because they communicate just how important the other person is in God's eyes, and above all they are honouring to God who is the source of all goodness.

Simple actions matter. Faithful actions matter.

God takes our loaves and fishes and makes them exponentially more valuable than we can ever imagine. Nicodemus and Joseph had no idea they were setting up the greatest news story in the history of the world; God will work through your simple, faithful actions to others.