The Longest Day

Mark Series

Super Saturday (Easter Weekend)

Message

Mark 15:42–47 (CSB)

**THE BURIAL OF JESUS**

**42**When it was already evening, because it was the **day of preparation** (that is, the day before the Sabbath), **43**Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to (NIV: Waiting for) the kingdom of God, came and boldly went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’s body. **44**Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had already died. **45**When he found out from the centurion, he gave the corpse to Joseph. **46**After he **bought** some linen cloth, Joseph took him down and wrapped him in the linen. Then he laid him in a tomb cut out of the rock and rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. **47**Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were **watching** where he was laid.

# Intro. Tonight is the night we reflect upon the time of waiting between the crucifixion and the resurrection.

A. For the women and disciples of Jesus, it was a time of fear and sadness.

1. They didn’t know what was going to happen.

2. They were resigned to the knowledge that the Jesus they had followed and had hoped in was dead.

3. They had not realized that Jesus was only borrowing the tomb!

B. **Tonight, we turn our attention to the waiting, anticipation, and preparation that was a key part of the lives of these disciples and is a large part of our lives as well.**

1. Tonight, I want to speak to those of you who are waiting and preparing for tomorrow.

a. You’ve been praying in anticipation of a resurrection.

b. You are anticipating the restoration of a marriage, a relationship, a dream, a calling, or a future.

*2. Last’s nights message reminded us of the gravity of the cross (The Darkest Day)*

*3. Tonight’s message will remind us of the hope of the Empty Tomb and how to thrive in the waiting! (The Longest Day)*

4. Is anybody here waiting and praying for a resurrection?

Let’s talk a few minutes about waiting on God for a resurrection and a miracle.

# 1. Jesus’ death happened on preparation day.

A. The Jewish day started at 6pm.

1. In other words, if we were Jewish, this would technically be Sunday.

2. It is believed that Jesus died around 3pm on Friday and Saturday was the Sabbath, so for Joseph and the women to prepare Jesus’ body for burial, they didn’t have much time to spare.

B. On the Sabbath, no work could be done.

1. It was a day when even ordinary household tasks were not permitted.

2. No meal preparation, no house cleaning, no farm work.

3. The Sabbath was a day when people ceased from their labor.

4. So it is very appropriate that the day before the Sabbath was a time of intense preparation for the day ahead.

5. It literally was a day preparing for a Sabbath.

a. Can I say that one of the greatest spiritual problems we face as a church is that we are too busy?

b. We don’t have regular rhythms of preparation and Sabbath.

1. I’m always amazed at how much I can get done right before I go on vacation.

2. Things that I have procrastinated on will suddenly get done.

3. That’s because in order for me to enjoy vacation, I have to prepare ahead of time.

c. Encounters with God deepen the more we prepare for them.

# 2. Jesus’ resurrection was preceded by 3 steps of preparation.

**A. First, Joseph asked for Jesus’ body.**

1. The importance of this is often lost on us.

2. But this was a big deal.

3. First, because Jesus was executed as a traitor to Rome, the custom was that traitors were not to be buried but left to hang or thrown out to rot.

a. “it has been suggested that Golgotha may have been called the place of a skull because it was littered with skulls from previous crucifixions.[[1]](#footnote-1)

b. By asking for Jesus’ body, Joseph identified himself with Jesus.

1. This is incredibly significant.

2. Can you imagine being identified with a traitor?

3. Can you imagine attaching your name to someone who was just executed?

4. There was no plausible deniability here.

5. Joseph boldly asked for Jesus’ body and was miraculously granted the right to bury Him.

4. When we identify with Jesus, we open our lives up to the same resurrection power that gave Jesus life.

a. **Romans 8:11 (NLT)**

11The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

b. Joseph didn’t know it yet, but his preparation was going to lead to a resurrection miracle.

c. The miracle is all God:

1. But Joseph had to be obedient and bold to ask for the body of Jesus.

2. Some of you are preparing, but you don’t know what you are preparing for.

3. Maybe, you are preparing for a resurrection and a miracle.

**B. Second, Joseph washed Jesus’ body.**

1. William Lane wrote: While none of the Gospels speaks of the washing of the body, this was considered so important in Jewish practice that it was a permitted action on the Sabbath (M. *Shabbath* XXIII. 5; cf. Acts 9:37; TB *Moed Qaṭan* 28b). It is unlikely that Joseph took time to secure the linen cloth and yet left the corpse bloody. The statement that Jesus was buried according to the Jewish tradition (Jn. 19:40) furnishes presumptive evidence that the body was washed before it was wrapped tightly with linen.[[2]](#footnote-2)

2. Until this week, I had never thought of the need for someone to wash Jesus’ body.

a. But someone did.

b. Someone wiped off the blood, the sweat, and other bodily fluids.

c. Someone prepared Jesus’ body for burial.

d. Someone did the nasty work.

3. Maybe you are engaged in a work that is less than pleasant.

a. Maybe what you are doing is not fun right now.

b. Maybe you are engaged in the fiercest battle of your life.

c. And you are wondering if it is worth it.

d. My thought for you tonight is, “Have you ever considered that you are preparing for a resurrection?”

e. This may seem like the longest night, longest week, the longest season of your life.

f. But Prayers prayed in pain are not wasted with Jesus.

**C. Third, Joseph prepared Jesus’ body by wrapping it in linen cloth.**

1. The purpose of the wrapping is somewhat morbid.

a. In Israel, bodies were placed in a tomb, wrapped with linen and surrounded by spices so it could completely rot.

b. When only the bone was left, the bones would be moved to an ossuary and the tomb would be reused for someone else.

2. Jesus was not laid in the tomb fully exposed, but carefully wrapped in the best linen money could buy.

3. Joseph, and those with him, prepared Jesus for burial because Jesus was dead.

4. He wasn’t merely unconscious but dead.

# 3. But there was one important step that wasn’t completed in time.

A. The women were not able to anoint Jesus’ body with spices.

Mark 16:1 (CSB) When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they could go and anoint him.

1. This was a step necessary to the honorable burial of a Jew.

2. But due to the late hour, the women could not complete it.

3. The final rite of burial wasn’t finished, and had to wait till Sunday, the first day of the week.

B. In other words, last rites were not yet completed.

1. I can’t imagine that this was mere coincidence!

2. Could it be, that God knew that this last step would have to be delayed.

3. Could it be that God had orchestrated this waiting so that the women would be the first witnesses to the Resurrection?

4. Last rites were delayed because Jesus’ death was not final!

C. Some of you here today are caught between the death of a dream and its miraculous resurrection.

1. In many ways, you have buried that dream.

2. You have prepared yourself to walk away.

3. It is my hope and prayer that soon you will hear the voice of the Spirit say, “Arise!”

a. Arise and be healed.

b. Arise and be saved.

c. Arise and be reconciled.

d. Arise and be changed.

# 4. In the meantime, you are waiting.

A. The Sabbath day, the Saturday in-between the death of Jesus and the resurrection, was a day of waiting and anticipation.

1. Because of the holiness of the day, they had to stop.

2. They couldn’t go and do.

3. They couldn’t make it happen.

4. They were on God’s time.

B. Some of us here today are in a time of waiting.

1. You are on God’s time, wondering when your day will come.

2. You have been praying for a miracle, but you are in the middle waiting on God to do what you can’t.

3. If I can, can I encourage you by saying that just because you are waiting on God and having to be still, that doesn’t mean that God is not up to something great!

C. When the women got up on that morning, they didn’t yet know it was Resurrection morning.

1. It was a sad morning.

2. They were going to perform last rites over a friend, a mentor, and a loved one.

a. They expected stench.

b. They expected the start of decay.

c. They expected one last action of devotion to Jesus.

3. Thankfully, God had no problem exceeding the expectations of Joseph and the Women.

D. I am praying that, even though you are in a season where you are waiting, that God will intervene and exceed your greatest expectations.

1. In-between death and resurrection is a time of waiting.

2. But the longest day of waiting is not wasted when God is involved.

a. Moses waited 40 years in a wilderness before God used him as the deliverer of Israel.

b. Jonah waited 3 days in the belly of a whale before He was used to bring revival to the ancient city of Ninevah.

c. Jesus waited 3 days in the grave before He brought salvation to the Nations.

3. God uses the waiting to bring about His divine plan.

a. So don’t give up and don’t despair.

b. For God is up to something great!

# Close. When times are difficult and you are waiting for your miracle, the enemy wants you to live in fear while the Holy Spirit wants you living in anticipation.

A. What’s the difference?

1. Fear places the emphasis on the unknown.

2. Faith places the emphasis on God.

a. Fear thinks upon the worse that can happen.

b. Faith thinks upon that which is possible with God.

c. When fear leads, there is no God.

d. When faith leads, there is no fear.

B. Tonight, I want to call us to a time of anticipation and faith.

1. First, I want us to enjoy a time of faith building.

a. Let us ask God to do the impossible in our lives.

b. Let us bask in the waiting, where we can’t yet see the victory but we know that God is in control.

c. So if you are sick, we want to pray for healing.

d. If you are far from God, we want to pray for salvation.

e. If you need a miracle of wisdom, provision, or anything else, we want to pray with you.

2. Then, as the Lord builds our faith, we want to pray for others.

a. Specifically, those we are praying to see not only at church tomorrow, but those we are praying will be forever changed tomorrow.

b. I want us to pray and anticipate resurrection happening in the lives of people tomorrow.

C. Would everyone who can, and is willing, come to the front, and invest time in prayer tonight?

1. Let us faithfully pray and anticipate the resurrection we know is possible with God.

2. Let’s pray.

1. William Barclay, [*The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/ndsb62mk?ref=Bible.Mk15.42-47&off=1323&ctx=+deal+with.+In+fact+~it+has+been+suggeste), The New Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2001), 426–427. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. William L. Lane, [*The Gospel of Mark*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicnt62mk?ref=Bible.Mk15.46&off=1074&ctx=n+honorable+burial.+~While+none+of+the+Go), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 580. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)