

## Coming Out of the Closet



By Kerrigan Skelly

I don't know if you keep up with the news or not, but there has been a lot of activity in the media regarding homosexuals. They are very active in promoting their agenda and there is a good amount of controversy surrounding what they are trying to promote. This movement has brought many questions regarding homosexuality to the surface. They are tough and legitimate questions that people ask themselves. One of those is: Can people be born gay? Or is it just a choice they make? Can people go from a homosexual lifestyle to a heterosexual lifestyle? Should homosexual "couples" be allowed to adopt children? Should homosexuals be allowed to get married?

The times sure are changing aren't they? I just turned 28 years old in May ('06), but times have changed drastically even during my lifetime. Surely some of you can think back and know that the United States was much different only a few decades ago. Most of the questions I mentioned above wouldn't have even come up back then because people knew the answers to these questions and were sure of what they believed concerning these issues. But then homosexuals began to "come out of the closet" as it was called. They no longer felt a need to feel ashamed of their lifestyle. That itself tells you something about the morality and standards of our country. That itself tells you how low America has gone as a whole morally and spiritually.

With these things in mind, I would like to take a look at the burial of Jesus. You may ask yourself, "What does homosexuality and coming out of the closet have to do with the burial of Jesus?" Well, read on and you shall see. Let's read about the burial of Jesus. [John 19:38-42](#) says, *"After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 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. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby."*

And as you can see in [verse 38](#), Joseph was a "*secret disciple.*" He was a secret disciple "*for fear of the Jews.*" You see, Joseph was a rich man according to [Matthew 27:57](#). He was also a member of the council of the Sanhedrin according to [Luke 23:50](#). In fact, Mark's account of this story in [Mark 15:43](#) says that Joseph was a "*prominent*" member of the council. Then there is Mr. Nicodemus, who accompanied Joseph to take care of the now lifeless body of our Lord and Savior. Nicodemus was also a sort of "secret disciple." You can see this in the well known passage of scripture in [John 3](#), where Nicodemus goes to Jesus "*by night.*" He went in the night so he would not be seen. He probably did this because he feared the Jews as Joseph did. He was also a Jewish Leader, a member of the Sanhedrin. There were seventy members of the Sanhedrin during Jesus' day. What that means is that these two were sorely outnumbered if they were the only converts of Jesus from the Sanhedrin. The only time that the Bible mentions either one of them standing up for Jesus is [John 7:51](#) and [Luke 23:51](#). [John 7:50, 51](#) says, *"Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"*

Nicodemus stood up for Jesus. He stood up rather timidly and without mentioning that he had gone to talk to Jesus or that he was a disciple of Jesus, but at least he said something. Then there is [Luke 23:51](#), which simply says that Joseph did not “consent” to their decision. The implication there seems to be that he didn’t necessarily “disagree”, he just didn’t “consent.” Both of these secret disciples were not willing to stand up for Jesus like they should. They were not willing to be out in the open about their following of Jesus. Yes, they were outnumbered as I have mentioned, but **one person with God on their side is a majority**. It is possible that if they **did** stand up for Jesus that they would have been the first Christian martyrs instead of Stephen. They probably would have been stoned like Stephen later was. Or the Jewish Council of the Sanhedrin might have even crucified them alongside of Jesus. However, as we all know, even though the two secret disciples did not consent to Jesus being put to death, He was put to death anyway.

The crucifixion of Jesus was the culmination of all human evil. Human evil reached its limit on that day, on the day that it crucified the Son of God. He was the only man to ever walk the face of the earth who NEVER did anything deserving of death or torture and they tortured Him and put Him to death anyway. That is what it took for these two disciples to “come out of the closet.” It took the death of a truly INNOCENT man for them to make their “secret” known to all. It’s a tragedy that it took them so long. Not that them standing up would have stopped Jesus from being crucified, but they lacked the boldness and courage they should have had.

Something happened to these two men when Jesus was put to death though. We aren’t left with all the details, but we know that Joseph “[taking courage](#)” went to Pilate to ask for Jesus’ body as [Mark 15:43](#) says. We also know that Nicodemus now had the courage to be seen with Jesus out in the open where everyone could see him. Yes, Jesus was now dead, but this was a big step for both of them. This Jesus was the man that was nailed to the cross just a little earlier that day. This Jesus is the one that the Sanhedrin and the Jewish people had shouted out to Pilate “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” He was the one that the fellow leaders of Nicodemus and Joseph had condemned to die the most excruciating death a person could die in those days. The ironic thing is that Jesus died a criminal’s death and then was buried in the tomb of a rich Sanhedrin member. Nevertheless, Nicodemus and Joseph gave the condemned Jesus a proper burial. They did it according to Jewish rituals and they did it on Good Friday in order that he would be buried before the Sabbath.

Joseph and Nicodemus’ act of love and respect for the body of Jesus was for them dangerous, costly, and without any personal gain. The service of Christians for their living Lord should be **even more** courageous and sacrificial. **THEY HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO GAIN** from what they did! In fact they had a lot to lose, but they did it anyway. How courageous and sacrificial is your service for our living Lord and Savior? The Lord hadn’t even risen from the dead yet, when Joseph and Nicodemus did this. Nicodemus and Joseph didn’t have the Holy Spirit living inside of them yet, as we Christians claim to have. Yet their service on that day seemed to be a lot more courageous and sacrificial than the service of most professing “christians” does these days! They risked it all! They risked respect, friendships, dignity, and what people would think of them. They risked their positions of authority, their wealth and status in the community, and ultimately their own lives. But isn’t that what Jesus calls the Church to do? It’s no wonder that so many lost sinners call the “church” hypocrites! The American “church” does very little to impact the world around it, if anything at all, and is very satisfied with the little that it does. May we live sacrificially for our Lord and Savior who sacrificed it all! May the Lamb who was slain receive the reward of His suffering!

In conclusion, let's return to that group of people that I talked about at the beginning of this short article: the Homosexuals. They are a group of people who really have nothing to gain from the stance they take. They don't have the Holy Spirit, don't know the Living God as we claim to, and they live in a perverted lifestyle. Their lifestyle is against their "nature" and their conscience condemns them (if it isn't seared, corrupted or defiled). They will end up in Hell in the end, if they don't repent of their abominable lifestyle. Yet they seem to have more boldness and courage than the modern day American "church" does in spreading their message. They even have what they call "Pride" festivals where they turn out unashamed to show the world what they believe and why. They endure persecution and even get beat up **now and then**, yet they continue on in promoting their perverted lifestyle no matter what the cost to them. They put all their money and effort into furthering their cause and spreading the news that it is "ok and normal" to be a homosexual.

When will the church follow suit? When will the Church put all their money, time and efforts into spreading the most Glorious Message of God to ALL (or at least MUCH MORE)?! Isn't that what we are here for anyway? When will the church take the example of not only the homosexuals, but also of Nicodemus and Joseph? Is our dignity and respect worth more to us than paying honor to our Lord and Savior who died on the cross for us? Are our friendships and "positions in the community" more important to us than the eternal destination of the lost? Do we care more about what people will think of us than what God will think of us? It may cost us a little bit, it may even cost us everything, but that is what the Lord calls us to, isn't it? We may even get persecuted at times, but if the homosexuals who know not the living God can persevere through "persecution" then surely we can my friends! Surely we should put all our money and efforts into spreading the cause of Christ, snatching people from the flames of Hell in the process. Let us declare with Paul, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*" (Romans 1:16) and "*woe is me if I do not preach the Gospel!*" (1 Cor. 9:16).

In Mark 8:34-38, Jesus said, "*When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.'*" I think that those words of Jesus say it all, regarding this issue.

Are you ashamed of the Gospel? Are you a "closet christian"? Do people who know you and see you everyday know that you are a Christian? Could they say that you have acted like a Christian and live a holy life in front of them? Could they say that you have talked to them about your precious Lord and Savior? Could they say that you have told them how they can have eternal life? Could they say that they know where they would go if they died right now and stepped into eternity? If you have answered any of these questions in an unpleasing way, than humble yourself before God, repent from being a "closet christian" and ask Him for the strength to be Bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1)! Ask Him to help you open your mouth, loose your tongue and speak forth the ONLY message that saves a lost soul. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear and obey.