

## 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 homosexuals be allowed to marry or adopt children? Or should a real family only consist of a married man and woman who have and raise children? Then there is the question of whether homosexuals should be allowed to get married or not?

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 not too long ago. Most of the questions I mentioned above wouldn't have even of 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 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, *"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. 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. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 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. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."*

And as you can see in [verse 38](#), Joseph was a "*secret disciple.*" He was a secret disciple "*because he feared 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 "*in the 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, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, "Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out 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 a possibility 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 Jesus who they charged with blasphemy. However, once the trial of Jesus happened and the two secret disciples did not consent to Jesus being put to death, Jesus 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. The only man to ever walk the face of the earth who NEVER did anything to deserve death and they put Him to death in the most horrible way man has ever conjured up with his evil brain. 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 boldness and courage.

But something happened to these two men when Jesus was put to death. We aren’t left with all the details, but we know that Joseph went “boldly” 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. It is said of Jesus, that he died a criminal’s death and was buried in a rich man’s tomb. And that is the truth. Jesus died a criminal’s death and was then buried in the tomb of a rich Sanhedrin member. Isn’t that ironic? 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 (Saturday for the Jews).

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 equally 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 yet as we Christians claim to have. Yet their service on that day seems a lot more courageous and sacrificial than our service 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 us Hypocrites! We do very little to impact the world around us, if anything at all, and are very satisfied with the little that we do. May we live sacrificially for our Lord and Savior who sacrificed it all!

In conclusion, let's return to that group of people that I talked about at the beginning of this short article. I was talking about 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. Yet they seem to have more boldness and courage than the modern day church 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 but yet 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 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 ALL?! Isn't that what we are here for anyway? When will the church take the example of not only homosexuals, but 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? 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,"* (Romans 1:15) and *"Woe to me if I don't preach the Gospel!"* (1 Cor. 9:16). Jesus said in Luke 9:26, *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels."*

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? Could they say that you have talked to them about your precious Lord and Savior? Can they say that you have told them how they can have eternal life? 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! 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 ears to hear, let him hear and obey.