

JESUS: THE SERVANT AT WORK

VOLUME THREE

STUDY NINETEEN

... And He Was Buried

Mark 15:42–47; 1 Corinthians 15:3–5

We would have nothing to celebrate on Easter Sunday morning if Jesus had not truly died and been buried. Our announcement would be incomplete. In fact, honestly, it would not be good news at all. If Jesus had not really died, then there's no miracle to announce.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

SOMETIMES, we prefer not to talk about certain subjects in casual conversations. Burial clothes, funeral processions, tombstones—we feel awkward if someone mentions these words in a chat, unless they sprinkle them with humor. We'd rather joke about death than face it. Yet, the customs we observe when someone dies are part of our physical and spiritual reality.

We've all taken that slow, solemn walk to a gravesite to say our final goodbye to a deceased family member or a close friend. With tears in our eyes, we've watched the casket lowered into the ground. In that moment, like few others, our grieving hearts crave hope, courage, and faith.

That's the reason we love Easter. The resurrection of Jesus is the central tenet of the Christian faith and our greatest joy. But Jesus could not have been raised if He had not died. That seems obvious, but sometimes we'd rather not think about His death and burial. Who doesn't dread cemeteries? And yet, before basking in the warm light of the resurrection, we must first linger in the chilly darkness of the graveside.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll reverently watch what happened after Jesus "breathed his last" (Mark 15:37). We'll see Jesus being taken off the cross and His body prepared for burial. We'll stand silently in the shadows by His tomb as the sun slowly sets. We'll let the Holy Spirit teach us important biblical principles as we quietly observe the courage of two secret disciples of Jesus. And, as we see them prepare His body and lay Him in the tomb, we'll reflect on one of the most powerful truths of Scripture: our union with Jesus in His death and burial.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



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The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll
Study 19 • Page 1

SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

... And He Was Buried

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

*O LORD, you have examined my heart
and know everything about me.
You know when I sit down or stand up.
You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. (Psalm 139:1–2)*

Reflect on God's intimate knowledge of you—your actions, your words, and even your secret thoughts. Then, come to God as you are. Lay your fears bare before Him and feel His deep love wrap around you. *You are fully known and fully loved by God.* Invite the Lord who knows you to guide your time with Him.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all recorded the facts of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in their gospels. Paul, however, helps us understand their spiritual significance and their implications for our future resurrection:

*I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me.
Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised
from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)*

Paul chose his words carefully. Why did he say that what he passed on was “most important”? Why did he emphasize Jesus' death *and* burial?

Now turn to Mark as we dig into the details of Jesus' death and burial.

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Observation: Jesus Was Buried According to the Scriptures

Thoughtfully read [Mark 15:42–47](#) and use your skills of observation to notice key words and essential aspects of what happened after Jesus' death.¹ Mark was quite specific because he didn't want his readers to miss a single point.

Initial Facts Worth Knowing—Mark 15:42–45

Pull out your toolbox of questions to see what Mark wrote. What time was Jesus' death according to [Mark 15:34–37](#)? What day was Jesus' burial according to 15:42?

The day before Shabbat is the day you prepare food in the home before the sun set and work stopped. There was no time to wait. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

What details did Mark give regarding Joseph's request to Pilate and Pilate's response in 15:43–45?

Who besides Joseph did John mention in his account in [John 19:38–39](#)? What information do you find about Joseph in this passage and in Mark 15:43 that should be noted?

I think what happened earlier in the council of the Sanhedrin came to Peter's ears through Joseph of Arimathea, who was there. Joseph was in the meetings. He did not agree with the decision, but he was there with Nicodemus. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Preparation of the Body and Burial—Mark 15:46–47

What did Mark write about the materials for Jesus' burial in Mark 15:46? Who witnessed Jesus' burial in 15:47? What information does [John 19:40](#) provide? What unique details does [Matthew 27:59–61](#) give about the burial site and its entrance?

Joseph was a wealthy member of the Sanhedrin who already had his burial plot and gave his grave to the body of Jesus. He had it all planned.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Here is a scene that's easily overlooked. Observe [Matthew 27:62–66](#) carefully. What information did Matthew give about the grave, the guards, and the seal?

Pilate couldn't care less about the Jews and their concern over this so-called King of the Jews. Pilate's a Roman. He's already washed his hands of it all.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Courageous Hearts, Loving Hands

Joseph of Arimathea had been a “secret disciple of Jesus”—staying under cover “because he feared the Jewish leaders” (John 19:38). Yet, when Jesus died, he and a fellow Sanhedrin member, Nicodemus, decided they couldn't conceal their devotion to Jesus any longer. They *had to* give their Master a proper burial.

Mark said that Joseph “took a risk” to ask Pilate for Jesus' body (Mark 15:43). What do you think prompted Joseph and Nicodemus to step out of the shadows? What was at stake? What message would their actions have communicated to Mark's Roman readers?

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What was it that caused them to have the courage to go to Pilate? I suggest they saw Him die. There must have been something about witnessing a martyr die that did something to their courage. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Explore the burial process in the “*Care for the Dead*” section of the article “Burial” in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible* at biblegateway.com. How does this information deepen your understanding of Jesus’ burial? What was the significance of these loving hands washing and then wrapping Jesus’ body with spices?

And even though it reads simply with black print on white pages, you need to feel what Joseph and Nicodemus must have felt. This is the body of their Master. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Matthew and Mark both record that the tomb was closed in a conventional manner with “a stone in front of the entrance” (Mark 15:46). The seal and posted guards described in [Matthew 27:62–66](#) made stealing Jesus’ body impossible. What do these images convey about Jesus’ burial and the certainty of the resurrection?

A large, circular stone would sit on an incline, held in place by a cleat until the body was in the tomb. Then when it was time to seal the tomb, the cleat was kicked aside, and several men would hold the stone as it would slump into place to close off the mouth of the tomb. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: Death, Courage, and Hope

According to Paul, believers are spiritually joined with Christ by faith. In what ways is baptism a physical expression of our spiritual union with Christ ([Romans 6:2–4](#))? What is the significance of our being “buried with Christ” (6:4)?

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Compare the somber scene of Jesus' burial in our passage with Jesus' predictions that He would rise again in [Mark 8:31; 9:31; and 10:33–34](#). What promise do we have concerning our hope beyond the grave, according to [1 Thessalonians 4:14–17](#)?

Christ's appearing is a great promise. It could happen at any moment.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Why Do I Care? What Difference Does This Make?

Pastor Chuck shares three principles, based on our reflections on Jesus' death and burial, and shows how they can make a difference in our lives.

First, *a death renews the courage of those of us who live on*. Joseph and Nicodemus found the courage to do the right thing *after* Jesus' death. How has the death of a loved one encouraged you to live more boldly, more courageously, more authentically? How has the death of Christ encouraged you in the same ways?

Many of you have buried a loved one. You're stronger today than you were when he or she was buried. Why? Because you remember that death. You want to live in such a way that you would never dishonor the one you have laid to rest.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Second, *a memory revives our hope that God keeps His promises*. Think of the great promise that Christ could come back anytime, that the dead in Christ will be raised, and that the living will be "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). In what way does this promise strengthen your faith?

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Knowing that does something to our faith. It says, “I can stare death down. I can bury my loved one and never think this life is over for me. I go on because it was God’s plan for her to go before me, or for him to be taken before I’m taken.”

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Third, a grave reminds the living that we, too, will die. We feel uncomfortable talking about death and dying. What wisdom have you gained from your solemn vigil at Jesus’ tomb? What insights has the Holy Spirit given to you through this Bible passage? How might these insights change what you think and feel the next time you visit a cemetery?

We live in a death-denying culture. People try everything to appear younger, perhaps thinking that postponing the aging process postpones death. But those who have Jesus need not fear death. With Jesus, spiritually, we have already died and been buried. We’ve been raised with Him too—so our best life is yet to come. His resurrection guarantees our future resurrection, which is the glorious subject of our next study!



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for hope beyond the grave. Invigorate my faith. In Jesus’ powerful name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page “*How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?*” at insight.org.

For the 2027 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2011, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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Insight for Living
Study 19 • Page 7

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