

At The Cross...

Matthew 27:11-26

Joseph of Arimathea

At the cross, Joseph represented the person who has been more concerned about what man thinks of them than God thinks of them.

"...a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one..." (John 19:38)

Joseph of Arimathea

- Who was Joseph of Arimathea?
 - A prominent member of the Council. Mark 15:43
 - "Waiting for the kingdom of God".
 - A problem with courage?
 - A rich man. Matt. 27:57
 - A good and righteous man. Luke 23:50
 - "For fear of the Jews" – John 19:38
 - Mentioned along side Nicodemus – John 19:39

Joseph of Arimathea

- Are we ashamed of who we claim to be? Luke 9:26
- Secret disciples because we're more concerned about our standing in society? John 12:42-43
 - There is a cost to being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Luke 14:25ff
- Will we confess our faith before the world? Luke 12:8-9
- Do we have the boldness and confidence that is necessary? Phil. 1:19-20

Judas

At the cross, Judas represents all whose focus in life is on the material things.

*"...they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. And from then on he **began** looking for a good opportunity..."* (Matt. 26:15)

Judas

- Judas had a love of money, John 12:4-6
- Was Jesus simply an opportunity to make more money? Matt. 26:14-16
- It's not that Judas didn't have a conscience... Matt. 27:3-4
 - He knew Jesus was an innocent man.

Judas

- Did things not turn out the way he had planned?
 - Love of money will cost us more than we think!
 - What happened to that silver that was so important to him?
 - It's the same lesson Solomon figured out in Ecclesiastes – you can't buy, acquire or obtain enough to make yourself satisfied. Eccles. 2:10-11
- We are warned about a love of money or a love of this world's goods – have we heeded? 1 John 2:15; 1 Tim. 6:6-10

Thief #1

At the cross, he represents all those whose sole focus in life is on God's kingdom.

“...Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!”

Thief #1

- What was his knowledge of “the kingdom”?
- Perhaps he knew about the OT prophecies about it's coming (Daniel 2:44) and perhaps he knew that Jesus was the one who Daniel said would receive “*dominion, glory and a kingdom*” that is “*everlasting*” and “*which will not be destroyed*” (Daniel 7:13-14).
- He was seeking the kingdom - Will we “*seek first*” the kingdom – Matt. 6:33

Thief #1

- Are we as concerned as he was about entering the kingdom of heaven?
 - That it takes more than being religious? Matt. 7:21; cf., Matt. 5:20
 - Will it continue to be our focus? 2 Pet. 1:10-11
- Will we be devoted to the kingdom/church as the pillar and support of the truth? 1 Tim. 3:15
- Will we be vigilant against efforts to burden our Lord's church with tasks other than what we have authority for in the scriptures? 1 Tim. 5:16 “...*let not the church be burdened...*”

Thief #2

At the cross, this thief represented a soul with a hardened heart that would not see the truth.

“...one of the criminals who were hanged *there* was hurling abuse at Him, saying, ‘Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!’”

Luke 23:39

Thief #2

- Just as Pharaoh hardened his heart. 1 Sam. 6:6
- Hardened by the deceitfulness of sin? Acts 19:9; Heb. 3:13
 - Similar to the term “stiff necked” – Jer. 7:25-26; 19:15
- Represented by the hard soil along the road that never receives the seed, God's word. Matt. 13:19

Thief #2

- A case of fallow ground. Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12
 - Fallow – uncultivated, inactive, overgrown and hardened by neglect - left unseeded.
 - “Land allowed to lie fallow...soon became overgrown with thorns and weeds. The cultivator of the soil was careful to ‘break up’ his fallow ground, i.e., to clear the field of weeds, before sowing seed in it... Hosea 10:12”
- One day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Phil. 2:9-11

The 3 Mary's

Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary the wife of Clopas (His mother's sister) and Mary Magdalene.

At the cross, they represented loyalty and dedication to the Messiah.

“...standing by the cross of Jesus ...”

John 19:25-27; Matt. 27:55-56

The 3 Mary's

- What God wants is our loyalty. Hosea 6:6
- Prov 20:6, “*Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find a trustworthy man?*”
- Recognized the new relationships that Jesus brought them into (“*from that hour the disciple brought her into his own household*”, John 19:25-27).
- A trustworthy witness. John 20:11-18
- Be thou faithful until death. Rev. 2:10.

Pilate

At the cross, Pilate represented the man who knows what's right but doesn't have the courage to follow through with his convictions...

•“...that you may know that I find no guilt in Him...Pilate made efforts to release Him...so he then delivered Him to them to be crucified...”

John 19:4, 12, 16

Pilate

•Pilate was scared (John 19:8) but not convicted enough to do the right thing. Just like Felix in Acts 24:25

•We have to overcome the spirit of timidity and pray for a heart of power, love and discipline. 2 Tim. 1:7

Peter

At the cross, Peter represents the man who desires to follow courageously but whose faith fails him at a key moment – ashamed but then emboldened to preach the gospel for the rest of his life.

Luke 22:60-61, “... ‘I do not know what you are talking about.’...a cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.”

Peter

Challenged by Satan (Luke 22:31-33)
 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded *permission* to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your ***faith may not fail***; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

- His fail did fail,
- But he also did “turn again” -

3000 Souls

Undoubtedly were some of those who shouted, “crucify Him! Crucify Him!”.

50 Days later, Peter convicts them of their sin. Acts. 2:22ff.

Convicted, they simply ask, “what shall we do?” – about?

Who represents you at the cross?

- A heart hardened by sin?
- A loyal and faithful servant?
- A secret disciple?
- Someone in love with the things of the world?
- Someone who knows what’s right but lacks the courage to do it?
- A humble heart seeking God’s kingdom?
- A heart convicted of sin?
- A failed faith that turns again?