

# Find the Words

A Sermon for the Burial Service of Our Lord 04/02/21

Jesus was born a king and died a king, but like none the world has seen. At his birth the angles sang forth in the Bethlehem night sky, Φωνῆ ἡ πῶνδὸν Λυουνηλῶν "Glory to God in the highest," and Magi came to pay tribute to he born King of the Jews. At his death, Pilate ironically hangs a sign over Jesus broken body on the cross, Jesus (the) Nazarene, King of the Jews. Jesus is hailed as a king: at his birth and at his death like bookends on his life, but like none the world has seen.

His funeral, which we commemorate today was also not like that of any other king. We read in our scriptures that on Friday night into early Saturday-under the cover of night-Christ's broken body is purchased (bribed perhaps) from the Roman authorities by a good man named Joseph of Arimethea, It was then wrapped for burial by Mary Magdalene and another Mary and placed in a new tomb. All this was done under the cover of silence and in secrecy, and for good reason.

It seems that all of Jesus' disciples and friends, for the time being, were too scared to even associate themselves with Jesus for fear of persecution. So at Jesus the king's funeral, there was almost no one there, and from what we know, no one said so much as a single word in memorial...not a single word.

This is hardly like the funeral of a king. Heads of state and religious leaders and crowds of people would honor any real king at his passing. Important people would eulogize him. Yet at the funeral of the most influential human who ever lived, no one said anything. Not Peter, not James nor John, whom he lived and worked with for years, said a word in testimony of this great man. Not even one of the dozens of blind, deaf and lame healed by Jesus, publically shared how he changed their lives. And surely it had to be that way, because Jesus himself predicted that it would be.

So why didn't our heavenly Father empower anyone to speak out at his beloved son's funeral? We have the answer here today. We are the answer here today. It was not God's will that any single person sum up the life of Christ at His funeral, because every single person is called to make such a response; from that first Good Friday, till today, and forever forward. There are just a few questions in life that cannot be answered by one person for another, but that each person must answer for his or her self. Jesus' life and death is the foremost of these questions. What do you, and me, and he and she have to say about the life and death of this Jesus Christ, this King who conquered the world with the power of love alone?

Now is the time for our response, as we stand here before the tomb of Christ. How does the life and death of this man impact my life? How did this man patiently bear the apathy, misunderstanding and betrayal of all those around him and react with forgiveness? How would life be different if I tried that? What did Jesus mean that you have to lose your life to gain it? Would I dare to subscribe to that? How did this Messiah rescue the Armenian people and culture from extinction, time and again, and what can we do to pay that forward, or pay it back?

As we gather around Jesus' tomb, and bring a flower home from his grave, let us think what we want to say and do in remembrance of our Lord in the course of our lives. And when we find those heart-felt words, and heart-filled actions, let us share them with our friends and neighbors and with the whole world. For somehow, the loss of this exceptional king, is the way that we find our true selves, and the fall of this unique king, has always been the occasion of our rising, now and always and unto the ages of ages, amen.