

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

September 2, 2018

Gather Up Courage

by Frank Himmel

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council which condemned Jesus to death. He was a good, honest man (Luke 23:50). In fact, he was a disciple of Jesus, albeit a secret one (John 19:38). He did not consent to the Council's actions regarding Jesus (Luke 23:51).

When Jesus' crucifixion was completed, Joseph "gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:43).

You can understand why Joseph had to "gather up courage" to make that request. Pilate was plainly perturbed by the day's events, having been pressured by Jewish officials to order the crucifixion of one he had pronounced innocent. He likely had seen enough of Council members this day and may well have wished to be left alone. More to the point, Joseph was a secret disciple for fear of the Jews (John 19:38). Securing Jesus' body and burying it in his own tomb would surely expose Joseph to the same scorn that had been so intensely directed toward Jesus.

Joseph's "gathered up courage" was rewarded with Pilate's permission to take Jesus' body. Joseph was

joined in the burial effort by Nicodemus, another Council member, one who had earlier come to Jesus by night (John 19:39-42; cf. 3:1ff). Perhaps Joseph's courage was contagious!

There are times in our service to Jesus that we must "gather up courage."

It takes courage to become Jesus' disciple. First, we need the courage to admit we have been wrong. Then, we must have courage to confess our faith in Him

(Romans 10:9-10). That can be especially difficult with family or friends who do not agree with our choice (Matthew 10:34-39). Discipleship may also require some courageous changes in our conduct.



*Ships are
safe in
harbor, but
that is not
what ships
are for!*

It takes courage to live as Jesus' disciple: courage to say no to the devil; courage to speak to others about becoming a disciple; courage to stand up to those who advocate error; courage to admonish other disciples who are out of line; courage to keep on going when times are tough or when we have failed; and so on.

In some cases it takes courage to die as Jesus' disciple. The Lord cautioned, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matthew 16:26).

Be a Joseph. "Gather up courage" and follow Jesus. ■

Two Funerals That Said a Lot

by Frank Himmel

When Asa, king of Judah, died, “they buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers’ art; and they made a very great fire for him” (2 Chronicles 16:14).

When Asa’s grandson King Jehoram died, they buried him in the city of David but not in the tombs of the kings. The Bible says “he departed with no one’s regret” (2 Chronicles 21:20). What was the difference?

Asa was a good man, a reformer. He cut down the altars and pillars associated with idolatry. He removed Maacah, his own mother, from her “queen mother” position because of her idolatry. He fortified the cities of Judah. His reign was mostly a peaceful one, though he did make some significant blunders near the end.

Jehoram was a reformer, too, but in the opposite direction. His first act as king was to kill all his brothers! He led Judah back into idolatry (Ahab and Jezebel were his in-laws). Edom, the Philistines, and the Arabs fought against Judah during his reign. You can understand why he was not particularly missed!

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Russ Bowman

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September 16-19

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When you depart this life, or for that matter even when you move to another town, what will the reaction be? Will people mourn? Will they hardly notice? Will they perhaps even breathe a sigh of relief? It depends: are you helping or hindering the cause? ■

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Greg Winget	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Clifton Lefort	Ian Brown
OPENING PRAYER	Mike Zachry	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Mark Clifton	
CUP	Bruce Williams	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	John Baucom	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Gary Hagler
CLOSING PRAYER	Adam Gibson	Daven Daniel