



EASTER PEOPLE

ORDINARY PEOPLE | EXTRAORDINARY STORY

SIF

Suzhou International Fellowship

Leadership Crisis

- The importance of leadership is often the focus of corporations/businesses, but is often neglected for society (https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/why-leadership-crucial-our-society-we-should-afraid-do-lafleur-jr/?trk=portfolio_article-card_title)
- Leadership during a time of crisis - “...being prepared to lead with extreme transparency and fearless honesty will actually reduce panic, not increase it.” (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/leaders-time-step-up-right-now-kirstin-ferguson/>)
- Young people these days often grow up without a solid Christian worldview (<https://www.biblicalleadership.com/blogs/the-christian-leaders-worldview-crisis/>)
- “We all need to accept we are leaders in our families, communities and businesses regardless of our formal job title.” (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/leaders-time-step-up-right-now-kirstin-ferguson/>)

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Proverbs 11:14

- “For lack of guidance a nation falls...” (*NIV*)
- “Without good direction, people lose their way...” (*MSG*)

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Time of Crisis in Israel

- 400 Years of Silence between Old Testament & New Testament
- Romans defeated Jerusalem in 63 B.C.
- There were many false “messiahs” active at this time
- Israel divided into various regions (i.e. **Galilee** - many foreigners; **Samaria** - many who were a mix of Israelites and foreigners; **Idumea**; **Perea**; **Decapolis**)
- Four different sects resulted from division over how to practice their religion: **Pharisees** (rabbis who taught in synagogues and strictly followed the Mosaic Law), **Sadducees** (came from rich families and were mostly priests who supported the Temple), **Essences** (lived in the desert and tried to live a ritually pure life), and **Zealots** (nationalists who hated the Romans and would use violence against the Romans).
- The Temple was used for money changing and selling animals, often at a profit and against the true purpose of the temple.



Joseph of Arimathea

12 Characteristics of a Godly Leader

Ordinary People | Extraordinary Story



Arimathea Ἀριμαθαίας (Harimathaias)

- Arimathea = “heights”
 - St. Jerome says that this city was called Ramathaim-Zophim (the lofty place), where dwelt Elkanah and Hannah of old, and where Samuel was born.
- Arimathea = “a lion dead to the Lord”
- Arimathea = “best disciple”
 - Richard Carrier speculates, “Is the word a pun on ‘best disciple,’ ari[stos] mathe[tes]? Matheia means ‘disciple town’ in Greek; Ari- is a common prefix for superiority.”

* 8 miles from Jerusalem & 3 miles from Bethel



12 Characteristics

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Good & Righteous

- (Luke 23:50-51) - “There was a ***good and righteous*** man named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin...”
 - *He was equitable, by implication, innocent & holy*

Resolute

- (Luke 23:51) - “...*who had not agreed with their plan and action.* He was from Arimathea, a Judean town, and was looking forward to the kingdom of God.”
- *He stood up for the truth even if he was the only one*

Hopeful/Expectant

- (Luke 23:51/Mark 15:43) - “...who had not agreed with their plan and action. He was from Arimathea, a Judean town, and was *looking forward to the kingdom of God.*”
- *He was actively looking for the kingdom of God.*

Prominent/Outstanding

- (Mark 15:43) - “Joseph of Arimathea, a ***prominent*** member of the Sanhedrin.”
 - *He was well-informed, i.e. decorous (restrained/polite), noble*

Bold/Courageous

- (Mark 15:43) - “ Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to the kingdom of God, came and ***boldly*** went to Pilate and asked for Jesus’s body.”
- *Boldly - to dare, endure, have courage, make up the mind.*

Disciple

- (Matthew 27:57) - “When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who himself had also become a *disciple* of Jesus.”
 - *There were 12 Disciples (“Apostles”)*
 - *Jesus sent out 72 (Luke 10)*
 - *Many disciples turned away from following Jesus (John 6)*

Discreet/Cautious

- (Matthew 27:57/John 19:38a) - “When it was ***evening***...” / “After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus—but ***secretly*** because of his fear of the Jews—asked Pilate that he might remove Jesus’s body.”
- *John 9:22 - “His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed him as the Messiah, he would be banned from the synagogue.”*

Inclusive/Engaging

- (John 19:39/Matthew 27:61/Mark 15:47) - “*Nicodemus (who had previously come to him at night) also came*, bringing a mixture of about seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes.” / *Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated there*, facing the tomb. / “*Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching* where he was laid.”
 - *How did the women know which tomb to go to Sunday morning?*

Ceremonious/Faithful in Adhering to Custom

- (John 19:40) - “They took Jesus’s body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the fragrant spices, *according to the burial custom of the Jews.*”
- *Followed the Jewish customs faithfully (as opposed to Roman cremation and Egyptian embalming)*

Generous/Altruistic

- (John 19:41/Luke 23:53/Matthew 27:60) - “There was a garden in the place where he was crucified. ***A new tomb*** was in the garden; no one had yet been placed in it.” / “Taking it down, he wrapped it in fine linen and ***placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever been placed.***” / “and ***placed it in his new tomb***, which he had cut into the rock”
- *He gave up this tomb thinking he wouldn't get it back, not realizing it was just a loan for the weekend!*

Rich/Steward

- (Matthew 27:57) - “When it was evening, a *rich* man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.”
 - *He was rich, but his possessions didn't own him.*

Sacrificial

- (Luke 23:53/Mark 15:46/Matthew 27:59/John 19:40) - “*Taking it down, he wrapped it in fine linen and placed it* in a tomb cut into the rock...” / “After he bought some linen cloth, *Joseph took him down and wrapped him* in the linen.” / “So *Joseph took the body, wrapped it* in clean, fine linen...” / “*They took Jesus’s body and wrapped it.*”
- Numbers 19:11-13 - *“The person who touches any human corpse will be unclean for seven days. He is to purify himself with the water on the third day and the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean. Anyone who touches a body of a person who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord. That person will be cut off from Israel. He remains unclean because the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, and his uncleanness is still on him.”*

Fulfilling Prophecy

- Isaiah 53:9 - “He was *assigned a grave with the wicked*, but he was *with a rich man at his death*...” / Psalms 16:10 - “You will not allow your faithful one to see *decay*.”
- Traditionally, it was the families responsibility to take care of the body. If they didn't, the body would have been thrown into a pit with all the criminals.
- “Had the body been left to the Romans (slaves of the empire, rather) to dispose, it would have been left to the elements and animals to clean up the remains. It then would have been tossed into the valley of Hinnom along with those bodies the people of the day considered rabble. A dusting of lime was thrown over the piles to keep the smell at bay. This, the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, was used in Old Testament times as a place of defilement, where people did detestable things (2 Chronicles 33:6, Jeremiah 7:31). During the time of Jesus, it was called Gehenna, which is likened—but not in the literal sense—to the word, ‘hell.’” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/why-is-joseph-of-arimathea-included-in-the-easter-story.html>)

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Recap

- ***Good & Righteous***
- ***Resolute***
- ***Hopeful/Expectant***
- ***Prominent/Outstanding***
- ***Bold/Courageous***
- ***Disciple***
- ***Discreet/Cautious***
- ***Inclusive/Engaging***
- ***Ceremonious/Faithful in Adhering to Custom***
- ***Generous/Altruistic***
- ***Rich/Steward***
- ***Sacrificial***



Conclusion

How will you use your influence to advance the Gospel this Easter and beyond?