

What Changed

April 5, 2026 / [John 19:38](#)

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Easter Sunday

What Changed?

Pastor Brent Snook · April 5, 2026 · AM Service

Text: [John 19:38-42](#)

“Calvary made the difference.”

Why do millions gather in churches every Easter? For some it's family, tradition, or habit. But for others, it's because we worship a Jewish carpenter who died on a cruel cross — and rose again. In just three days, frightened and confused followers became fearless and courageous. So what changed?

[John 19:38-42](#) introduces us to two key men: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Both were members of the Sanhedrin. Both were wealthy. Both were secret seekers of Truth. Until Calvary changed everything.

I. THE CONSTRAINT OF THESE TWO MEN

[John 19:38](#) — Two of Jerusalem's most influential men had kept their relationship with Jesus entirely in the shadows. They sat in on Jesus' trial, heard every lie spoken against Him — and said not a word in His defense.

Why were they so timid?

- 1. Perhaps because of His Nature** — Jesus was not the conquering King they expected.
- 2. Perhaps because of Their Wealth** — “The Fishermen left their boats and nets — Joseph was slow to leave all for Christ's sake.”
- 3. Perhaps because of Their Public Office** — These were men everyone knew. The cost of going public was high.

Fear is contagious — but so is courage. These two men were about to make a comeback.

II. THE CHANGE OF THESE TWO MEN

[John 19:38b](#) — “...besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.” Something tore away the veil of timidity

within them.

A. The Cause of Their Change

1. Possibly the Crookedness of Jesus' Trial — The entire proceeding was illegal under Jewish Law — tried at night, in private, no defense permitted, executed the same day as sentencing.

2. Possibly the Crisis of Jesus' Treatment — They witnessed the scourging — a brutal Roman ordeal. Pilate had handed Jesus over after pronouncing Him innocent. Not one word of complaint passed Jesus' lips.

3. Possibly the Conditions Surrounding Jesus' Triumph

- Darkness — for three hours at midday, silence fell across Jerusalem ([Matthew 27:45](#))
- Earthquake — the earth shook ([Matthew 27:51-52](#))
- The Rent Veil — God declaring total access into His holy presence ([Matthew 27:51](#))
- His sentence — *"It is Finished"* — heard by all

4. Probably the Cross of Jesus' Testimony — Nicodemus remembered Jesus' own words: *"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up..."* ([John 3](#)). The shameful death of the cross had a greater power over them than all the beauty of Christ's life.

B. The Courage of Their Change

Up until now, both men had been secret disciples — but no longer. They bravely walked into Pilate's chambers and requested to remove Jesus' body for a proper burial. They no longer cared about their position, wealth, or influence in Jerusalem.

"Viewing Christ on the Cross kindles a love for Christ that cannot be concealed."

Christian friend — **go public.**

III. THE CONFESSION OF THESE TWO MEN

[John 19:40](#) — *"Then took they the body of Jesus."* Coming to the Cross, they were stunned by what they saw.

A. The Suffering of the Savior Is Revealed

At the now-lonely cross, a wave of emotion crashes over them. They see the wounds — the thorn-punctured head, the swollen face, the gaping wounds in hands and feet, flesh exposed from the scourging. They fall to their knees and weep — for Jesus, for the world that did this, and for themselves, for all they didn't say.

B. The Sin of Self Is Revealed

As they tenderly cleaned His blood-stained body, they looked at their own blood-covered hands and realized — it was their sin, and ours, that nailed Jesus to the Cross.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities... and with his stripes we are healed." —

[Isaiah 53:5](#)

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”— [1 Peter 3:18](#)

Joseph gave his own new tomb. Nicodemus brought 100 pounds of expensive spices. Together they wrapped and laid that precious body to rest — a final act of love from men no longer hiding in the shadows.

IV. THE CELEBRATION OF THESE TWO MEN

Three days later — the disciples in hiding, the Sanhedrin standing guard — something miraculous happened.

† JESUS IS RISEN! †

*“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”— [Matthew 28:6](#), **The Angel to Mary Magdalene***

These are the events that changed two lives. These are the events that have changed countless lives since. And these are the events that can change your life today.

Jesus is the Changer.

He died on a cross — and rose again victoriously — in order to change you.