

## MARK 15:42-47    **A JOB WELL DONE**

<sup>42</sup> *It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. <sup>44</sup> Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid.*

One of the hideous elements of the public spectacle of crucifixion was that criminals usually suffered and writhed on the cross for days before being overtaken by complete exhaustion and suffocation. Here, in a matter of hours, Jesus was dead. Joseph, the women and the centurion all saw it. Pilate confirmed it through the witness of the soldier. Jesus was dead on the cross. The normal procedure would have been to take down the body whenever the Romans got around to it; probably the longer it remained the better the warning to others. Once it was removed, the body would be disposed of in a common grave like so much refuse. Of course the cross beam would have been saved for the next fool to come to cross purposes with mighty Rome.

But this was no common criminal. Jesus was dead because his job was done. In his own words from Luke, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." John, who was present, has Jesus simply call out, "It is finished." Jesus was not killed by men, he gave his life for their salvation. As our sovereign Lord, Jesus was in control even on the cross.

Jesus' death was no common death. It converted the heart of a hardened officer of the killing squad. It emboldened the heart of a member of the very Council that delivered Jesus to death. It even softened the heart of a historically not very gracious governor. As time would tell, it was a new beginning and not the final word. After all, the tomb was only borrowed.

**As you willingly gave up your life on the cross in obedience to God and for the sake of all who believe, Lord Jesus, inspire me to live as if my utmost purpose is to obey and witness to you. May this day be a new beginning for me. Amen.**