

Linen and Spice

a poetic meditation

And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. And they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore, on account of the Jewish day of preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

John 19:38-42

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, his friend,
Were secret disciples of Jesus who conquered their fears in the end.¹
They both were admirable leaders, respected, religious, and good,
But neither confessed that they knew Him, or spoke up for Him when they should.²

Nicodemus had come in the darkness and learned he was dead in his sin;
But simply by trusting in Jesus, he found he would be born again.³
He asked that the Pharisees listen before they condemned what Christ said,
But didn't have the courage to tell them they ought to endorse Him instead.⁴

How the words of the Lord must have moved him as he gazed on the cross where He died,
"As the serpent was raised up by Moses, the Savior must be crucified."⁵
And the cross of the Lord made the difference that got them to say where they stood--
To remain with the crowd that condemned Him, or choose the Lord's side if they would.⁶

So Joseph came boldly requesting the body of Christ on the cross,
And tenderly took down the Savior, Who's death seemed to be such a loss.⁷
He carried the Lord's battered body, with all of its shame and disgrace,
To the tomb where he planned to be buried, for Jesus had died in his place.⁸

He purchased a bolt of fine linen to give to his crucified Lord;
And Nicodemus brought spices that cost more than most could afford.⁹
Together they wrapped up His body in linen well mingled with spice,
And buried the corpse of the Savior with scarcely a thought of the price.¹⁰

The linen was surely a symbol of righteousness wrought in the life,
As seen in the wedding dress granted to honor the Lamb of God's wife.¹¹
And Nicodemus's spices would symbolize worship to God,
Like Mary's anointing of Jesus that wafted His fragrance abroad.¹²

Our Savior is seated in heaven, the door of His tomb's opened wide,
But Jesus is just as rejected as back when He suffered and died.¹³
And we can still bring Him the linen--The righteousness heaven requires,
And offer Him limitless spices--The worship He always desires.¹⁴

So, Timid Disciples of Jesus, take courage to stand for His name,
And shoulder your cross like a soldier who isn't afraid of its shame,¹⁵
And earnestly strive to be righteous, in everything kind and discreet,
While lavishing Him with the worship you feel as you bow at his feet.¹⁶

Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

Hebrews 13:15,16

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1) John 19:38
2) Luke 23:50
3) John 3:1-16
4) John 7:50-53

5) John 3:14
6) Galatians 6:14
7) Mark 15:46
8) Matthew 28:60

9) Mark 16:46
10) John 20:40
11) Revelation 19:7,8
12) John 12:1-8

13) Colossians 1:24
14) John 4:23
15) II Timothy 2:3,4
16) Hebrews 13:15,16