

4 Jan 2015: Preached by Elder John Leong

Topic: **New year Message – A Transformed Life**

Scripture Text: John 19:38-42

1. Men are creatures of habits and old habits die hard, so a new year will not bring about much changes in reality. This includes spiritual changes in which often we are too complacent to do anything about. Often we are more concerned about physical changes in losing weight, going for work-out etc.

2. The Bible speaks of 2 men: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in John 19:38-42. These men started as secret disciples of Jesus Christ. They loved their status in society and riches and popularity with men that they would not dare to identify with Jesus publicly. At the death of Jesus on the cross, many left Him including the disciples. Only a few poor devoted woman cling on to Jesus.

3. When Jesus hang on the cross from 9am to 3pm on Friday and then gave up the Ghost, who would be devoted and bold to want the dead body of Jesus and give Him a proper burial? In usual circumstances, all criminals who died on the cross would be thrown in the criminal burial place to be eaten by wild animals.

4. God transformed the lives of both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to be willing to stand up for Jesus Christ at this most difficult moment to beg for the body of Jesus from the cross. When Jesus was alive performing miracles and healing the sick, these 2 men would be so fearful to identify with Jesus. At the cross when Jesus was dead, and not yet risen, only these 2 men have the faith and courage to want to have Jesus.

5. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus counted the cost and knew it was worth it to lose everything in order to identify with Jesus. What an amazing spiritual transformation for these 2 men. In their act of love and devotion for Jesus, they actually did what the pre-determined and eternal counsel of God's will for Jesus to be buried and He would rise again on the 3rd day. In Jesus' burial prophesied in Isa 53:9 that He would be with the rich in His death, Joseph of Arimathea gave up his own tomb that he purchased for Jesus to be buried.

6. We can trust the transforming power of God to save lives and to change lives unto Himself. We must be willing to desire for this spiritual transformation that God will use us to make our lives count for Him to do His will.