

## **“Now We Wait: A Story of Nicodemus and Joseph”**

by  
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- What** As Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus prepare Jesus' body for burial, they discuss their disappointment after losing the man they believed to be the Messiah.
- Themes:** Good Friday, Crucifixion, Jesus' death, Disappointment, Loss, Grief
- Who** Nicodemus  
Joseph
- When** After Jesus' crucifixion
- Wear (Props)** Bible-times costumes for both actors.
- Why** Philippians 2:8
- How** Joseph is frustrated and often bitter. This character displays a wide range of emotions, and he does get sentimental at times. He is mobile on stage, walking around and pacing. Nicodemus is calmer and more hopeful. He is mostly stationary, but he can move during the more poignant parts at the director's discretion. The pace should be a little slower as each man thinks about and expresses the impact Jesus had on them. Both men are still processing what has happened, so broken speech and thoughts are helpful.
- Time** Approximately 5 minutes

*As scene opens, Nicodemus and Joseph are sitting and reflecting together.*

**Joseph:** Thank you for your help Nicodemus. I wasn't sure how I was going to get this done before the Sabbath began. At least we were able to restore some of his dignity with a proper tomb.

**Nicodemus:** It's the least I could do. I brought the finest scents I could find. Even you, great Joseph of Arimathea, should be envious.

**Joseph:** They were adequate *(smiles at Nicodemus as he jokes)*.

**Nicodemus:** This man...He was something special. He was different than all the rest that have come.

**Joseph:** I had hoped that was true.

**Nicodemus:** *(shocked)* Joseph...you *had* hoped? You heard what He said! More than that, you saw what He DID!

**Joseph:** *(disgusted)* And now he's lying in a tomb just like all the others! *(calms slightly)* What you say is right. He baffled even the most learned men. He did amazing things, just like the Prophets before. He taught with the same authority they did. And now? He's gone like they are.

**Nicodemus:** *(wanting to believe)* Surely there is more than that. He did not come just to leave us as hopeless as before.

**Joseph:** Why DID He come, then?

**Nicodemus:** *(pauses, taking a moment reflect)* I'm not sure. I remember some time ago...I heard what He was saying and doing so I went to talk to Him privately. No one knew I had gone. I was amazed by what He did before I met Him, but He was more astounding in person. *(chuckles sincerely)* Can you believe I asked Him how a man would enter into his mother's womb again?

**Joseph:** *(pauses and stares intently at Nicodemus)* There are some conversations that are best left without repeating.

**Nicodemus:** *(sheepishly)* Of course. *(regaining confidence)* But you said yourself, the things He spoke about...totally unique. He had a new, deeper, more enlightened perspective. He taught the true meaning of the Law. I can't understand why the Council hated Him so much.

**Joseph:** He was right, calling them vipers. I remember when He would talk to the teachers. *(laughs)* Do you remember the look on their faces? They would turn so red. Either from humiliation or rage. *(becoming tender)* I've never heard anyone speak with such wisdom. *(long)*

*pause as if reflecting*) I've studied the law my whole life. We know the scriptures. But when He spoke... it was like everything was new. He said things none of us understood. *(scoffs in frustration)* But what good is it now?

**Nicodemus:** Surely you don't mean that. You witnessed how He healed people. Like the prophets used to do. There's no other way to explain it! God was with this man. Jesus spent His whole life helping those that no one else wanted to. That counts for much!

**Joseph:** Of course I saw Him! I didn't believe it at first. I watched as He seemed to heal people of diseases they had all their life. The same people we prayed for, he just touched them, and they were healed... better than ever. But why? If He was destined for such great things, why would God allow Him to be taken from us?

**Nicodemus:** That is a question I cannot answer. God's ways are above our understanding. But to be honest, I hoped He might be...

**Joseph:** We've been waiting so long for Messiah. The one to come and establish a new reign and a new covenant. *(speaks dramatically)* I was half expecting Jesus of Nazareth to take a stand, assemble an army, and establish Israel again! *(with passion)* "At last," I thought, "Yahweh may have sent the Messiah!" I dreamed He might overthrow the Romans and...

**Nicodemus:** *(finishing the sentence)* Save us.

**Joseph:** *(shrugs)* He can't save us now. What a shame. I was hoping for more.

**Joseph:** And now?

**Nicodemus:** *(pausing, then calmly)* I suppose we are doing the best we can. You were... good... to offer Him your tomb.

**Joseph:** It was the right thing to do; helping a good man. At the very least, he was a devout teacher, possibly a prophet. We talked about Messiah... But now He is dead and defeated. And we are burying Him, as if we are burying our hopes, again.

**Nicodemus:** *(fervently)* But we have promises! We have the prophecies! We know God will redeem us!

**Joseph:** *(emotional)* And where has knowledge gotten us? Where did it get Jesus? God works in ways we can't fathom. Who says we were right to put so much hope into this man?

**Nicodemus:** *(becoming riled)* Because the power of God was in Him! You felt it! You knew God was preparing something incredible! Why shouldn't we believe in something so profoundly unique?

**Joseph:** *(with passion and conviction)* You cannot debate or resist the finality of death! What power does He have now? What wisdom saved Him from crucifixion? *(pauses to calm down)* How embarrassing to hope for so much only to see our hopes tacked to a cross.

**Nicodemus:** *(disappointed)* Perhaps you're right. Perhaps we hoped for too much. Perhaps this man was only that...a man.

**Joseph:** Come on. There's no more to do here. People will begin to talk soon. It's time to get back to our normal lives.

**Nicodemus:** What will we do now?

**Joseph:** We wait in the dark and pray for the light.

*Lights fade.*

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