

## Are We Secret Disciples?

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Arimathea was a city which was located in the Judean hills northwest of Jerusalem. Its most famous citizen was a man named Joseph. The Scriptures describe him as “a rich man” (Matthew 27:57), “a prominent council member” (Mark 15:43), and “a good and just man” (Luke 23:50-51). He had “become a disciple of Jesus” (Matthew 27:57) and was “waiting for the kingdom of God” (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51).

Even though Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin council, he “had not consented to their decision and deed” (Luke 23:50-51), i.e., sending Jesus to Pontius Pilate to be executed as an evildoer (Luke 22:66-23:25). After Jesus died on the cross, Joseph went to Pilate and “asked for the body of Jesus” (Matthew 27:57-58; Luke 23:50-52). In fact, the dead body of Jesus was placed in a “new tomb” which belonged to Joseph (Matthew 27:59-60).

The Bible’s otherwise favorable depiction of Joseph of Arimathea does include one less-than-commendable trait... John 19:38 states that he was “a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews”. Was Joseph’s secret discipleship right or wrong? Are we like him? **Are you and I also secret disciples?**

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### ARE WE KEEPING THE GOSPEL A SECRET?

The early disciples of Jesus Christ taught the gospel in a variety of ways. For example...

- ★ Individual teaching efforts (Acts 8:1-4).
- ★ Collective teaching efforts (1 Thessalonians 1:1,8).
- ★ Individuals were taught (Acts 8:26-39).
- ★ Small groups were taught (Acts 16:25-34).
- ★ Large groups were taught (Acts 2:36-41).

Are you and I doing what the 1<sup>st</sup>-century Christians did? Are we doing our absolute best [individually and collectively] to spread the gospel message to everyone?

[Read: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; 1 Corinthians 9:16] The great commission enjoins Christians to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ – not to keep it a secret!

Have we told the good news about Jesus Christ and salvation to our spiritually-lost friends, neighbors, coworkers, relatives, classmates, etc.? If not, then why not? **WHY are you and I keeping the gospel a secret?**

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### ARE WE KEEPING THIS CHURCH A SECRET?

What is the Airport church of Christ? According to the Bible, we are...

- ★ A congregation composed of “saints” – holy/sanctified persons (1 Corinthians 1:1-2).
- ★ A spiritual family in which all members are “brethren” – brothers and sisters – “in Christ” (Colossians 1:1-2).
- ★ A religious organization which really does believe, obey, and teach the word/truth of God

(2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- ★ A group of spiritually-saved people who have a real hope of spending eternity in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Have we told our unsaved neighbors, friends, coworkers, relatives, classmates, etc., about this church and cordially invited them to visit our assemblies? If not, then why not? **WHY are you and I keeping this church a secret?**

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Are we like Joseph of Arimathea? Joseph kept his discipleship a secret because he was afraid of his fellow religious leaders. If we are secret disciples like him, then of what or whom are we afraid? **Brothers and sisters, you and I must stop being secret disciples!**

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