

**INTRO**

- Share a time when you had to make a difficult decision that required courage. What factors influenced your choice?

**The Cross** is our Lenten series about encounters with Jesus and the cross.

**READ**

Mark 15:42-46

**REFLECT**

The struggle between private and public faith can create a tension that we all experience. Joseph was a secret disciple because he feared the opinions of his contemporaries, which could lead to the loss of his position and status.

*Q: What are some common reasons people hesitate to be open about their faith today? What might hold you back from a more public expression of faith?*

**The Cross Confronts and Reveals**

Jesus' death on the cross triggered Joseph's decision to step out, risking all by asking Pilate for Jesus' body to offer him an honourable burial.

*Q: Have you experienced a moment that confronted and challenged you to be bolder in your faith?*

**Costly vs. Cheap Grace**

*“Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves... grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ... Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again.... Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace*

*because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son, and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

*Q: How do you see Bonhoeffer's cheap vs. Costly grace playing out in modern Western Christianity?*

*Q: Reflect on areas where "cheap grace" might be present in your life. How can you embrace "costly grace" in those areas?*

**Courageous Discipleship Today**

The cross calls us to step out from private, passive faith to courageous discipleship. It's not always a grand gesture like Bonhoeffer's resistance to the Nazis or Joseph's burial of Jesus. Oftentimes, it's the small, courageous steps in everyday life that are meaningful expressions of discipleship.

*Q: What might a courageous step of expressing your faith look like this week—whether at work, school, with family, or online?*

*Q: How can this group support each other in living out courageous faith?*

**PRAY**

- Have group members pray for each other for courage to take their identified step of bold faith this week.