

(14). "The Thirst of God, and the story of a sponge of

Introd:- (1). It has happened again! The Jewish people are ahead of us! That's right! Here we are dallying along until Friday, but the people of Israel have already celebrated their Passover Day, on Wednesday of this week, the 14th day of Nisan on their calendar. Was their day the right one? Are we two days late? Why didn't we meet on Wednesday? Simple answer is that Wed. wasn't a legal holiday...but Jews took a holiday and beat us to it!

(2). One thing evident..14th day of Nisan can fall on any day of the week, and is ALWAYS followed by a Sabbath, a special one, called a "holy convocation"..or, as John wrote it "that sabbath day (immed. foll. crucifixion) was an high day..."15th day of Nisan..a special sabbath..not the weekly one. Per. Jewish people are exactly right this year

..and if we had joined them..be so easy to count 3 days and 3 nights our Lord talked about, until resurrec. Sun. morn.

(3). Well..we shall be right as remember our Lord's triumph res. frdm dead Sun. morn..for God's Word clear..He rose on first day of week..And His death and resurrec are great inseparable truths. He died for our sins, and rose for our justification. Praise God! Today His blood is on the Mercy Seat in heaven..completely blotting out..covering..sins of all who trust Him..believe on Him..love Him.

I. Today we turn our thoughts..hearts to hill called Calvary

(a). And always to inseparable truth of His resurrec. Like per. number of you people..it has been my thankful priv. to stand on ground of Calvary. Four of us, Orvis Kennedy of this city..with former Pastor of this church..Dave Anderson..wife Joy..climbed hill of Calvary..to the top..stood under great tree..and thanked God..prayed with tears. Then went down just below the cliff..into garden of Joseph of Arimathea..and, with full hearts entered rock-hewn tomb...Enough! I cannot describe what that was like..Full heart stirred to depths. He died for ME..He rose for ME..Praise

(b). And for you? Yes, He did. On night before Calvary our Lord Jesus took bread..and the cup of wine..said: "This is my body, broken for you..this is my blood, shed for you...This do in remembrance of me." That wounded body..that sinless blood poured out..Paid the price of the sin of the whole human race..the death penalty of sin. Listen to the mighty Isaiah..as he wrote..Isa. 53:5-6... Go into that text at the first "ALL" (All we like sheep have gone astray)..and then you can come out at the 2nd "ALL"..(The Lord hath laid on him..iniqu. of us ALL)

GOD THE SON..He was and is eternal God..died for man, the creatures sin..He so loved the world....John 3:16....
How many of you people here..love and trust Him as personal Saviour? Glad you do? God grant true of all of us..We need.

II. What say further will concern most of all..you X'n people

(a). Want read with you startling, almost unbelievable texts..This:- Ps.69:21 "In my THIRST they gave me vinegar to drink"..A proph. of Messiah..Now John 19:28, the fulfillment "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I THIRST..Well, why not? Any crucified, dying man thirsted as blood ebbed away. EXACTLY! Any MAN would..But this man? Man He was..but so much more..HE WAS AND ~~SS~~ GOD! A thirsty GOD?

Creator..The Person who built the Universe? Who created all the oxygen and hydrogen..made them capable of uniting into water? Who made oceans, rivers, clouds, raindrops, snow, lakes, clear sparkling streams and mountain springs? Yet A THIRSTY GOD! God UNLIMITED became God the limited!

(b). This is the mystery of the incarnation. Bethlehem is essential to Calvary. He who became man is still God..and yet on the cross He thirsted..and ~~was~~ came under the power of the man He had created..dependant upon his reactions.

(c). Why this cry from His parched throat? Why voice it? He had no cry from his pain..the lash of Rome..the piercing thorns..the tearing, cruel spikes in hands, feet..BUT THIS..Why? There was a searching reason..TO TEST THE RESPONSE OF MAN TO HIS NEED...A thirsty God waiting to see what man would do.

III The rest is the intriguing story..mostly about one man.

(a). There was great crowd come to watch God the Son die... Pharisees, relig. people..hard core responsible for crucifixion Pilate was there..the vacillating Gov..who had found Christ innocent..three times declared it..yet yielded to blackmail Peter was there. He said so in I Pet. 5:1..Denied his Lord..skulking somewhere in background..edge of the mob.

Joseph of Arim. there..the secret disciple...

John and few women...within call..yet unable to help.

(b). Look closer. Around cross..the GUARD OF SOLDIERS No one else able pass that iron ring..centurion and men. Some of them calloused, hard, able crucify helpless man with no compunction..beat him..kill him..gamble for clothes..Irreligious..CRUEL..

(c). Now see what GROUP of those men did..and then what ONE MAN did..(or poss. two or three of them together). See the GROUP first. Gospel of Luke only mentions thirst of Christ by implication. No record of cry "I thirst"..But

what a fearful implication! This: Luke 23:36 "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and OFFERING him vinegar." Und. this? These men saw his raging thirst.. heard his agonized cry..the came to him..and OFFERED him vinegar..MOCKING Him with it! Not GIVING it to him..but offering it to that crucified man whose hands nailed to a cross..nearly crazed with thirst..Set it before eyes.. "Come and get it!" "Come down from cross..get a drink". What desperate wickedness!...BUT...HAVE I EVER MOCKED SON of God..by keeping just out of His reach that for which He so longs..My love..worship..adoration.. service, dedic(d). But look again. Something happened among that band of coarse soldiery..ONE MAN MOVED..per one or two others helped him (Gosp. of John says "they".) Matt.27:48-49.. And straightway one of them RAN, and took a sponge, and filled ~~with~~ it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The REST said, Let be, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Here is an unknown, unnamed soldier..heroic in deed..whose memory will never fade, for its is inscribed by God on sacred page...NOW..see what he did:

1. HE RAN. In a hurry. Saw the need of GOD..RAN. Saw the urgency..that time was short. If to help. must do it promptly..at once. No time to waste.
2. HE ACTED PERSONALLY. He was one against the rest. Dared to stand for right..publicly. Not going with crowd
3. HE ACTED PERSISTENTLY. Others tried to stop him.."Let be"..He called back, "Let alone: let us see whether Elias will come."..meaning "Let me alone. This man needs drink ..then we'll see about Elias." Persisted..gave the vineg
4. HE ACTED PRACTICALLY. Took what was available ..not stopping to bemoan lack of skill, goods..The vinegar was there already. c/f Women of Jerusalem compassionate prep'd vingar and gall for crucified victims to allay their suffering. X refused that mixture..for He had much to do and say before died..But extra jar of vinegar was there.."sour wine" often used as thirst quencher. This man saw a reed growing.."hyssop"..3 or 4 ft. long.. plucked it. Then "took a sponge." From where? Per. from John or woman..not allowed to go near cross..but ready to wipe blood-stained face..cleanse body for burial This man CONTRIVED a way to get vinegar to lips..instead of offering in mockery.
5. HE SUPPLIED PLENTIFULLY. He "filled the sponge FULL".. dripping..easily accessible to our Lord's swollen lips.. ..ready for Master's use.
6. HE ACTED PROVIDENTIALLY. Just in time..Last opportunity to do something for dying Saviour..Jesus rec'd and "gave

ACTED
PROMPTLY

up the ghost"...Last tribute...last act of compassion...That soldier was our Lord's last friend on earth!

Conclus:- 1. Three days later, three nights gone by...~~that~~ sometime after sundown Sat night, when 1st day of week began THE CRUCIFIED MAN WAS ALIVE AGAIN! There is ONE...only ONE mirac. emptied tomb on earth! What a joy to see it! How think that soldier felt when heard the news...spread like wildfire all over Jerusalem? How others feel after mocking Him? Are they today THIRSTING IN HELL? "Drop of water!" Did this compassionate soldier find the risen Lord? Or did Saviour find him..thank him? Where is he now? How you like to be known in heaven as this one who slaked Saviour's thirst, helped Him over last moments of that rugged road on Calvary? worth while?

2. Is personal applic. of this great story necessary? Didn't you apply it as went along? GOD IS STILL THIRSTY! Thirsty for our love, adoration, trust...And it may be that some of you have never yet lifted soul to God..thanked Him for life..food..water..for CALVARY..and what He did there for you. God thirsty for you..and only YOU can satisfy Him. Some of you X'ns..just saved..no more..God waiting. He has made Himself dependant on us for His work on earth... THIRSTY for missionaries to carry His Word to ends of earth..THIRSTY for Pastors, SS teachers. THIRSTY for good stewards of His goods..to be used for Him..THIRSTY for prayer warriors..our THIRSTY GOD!

3. Today you and I can slake His thirst..It is time to be PROMPT, PERSONAL, PERSISTENT, PRACTICAL in using what we have for Him..PLENTIFUL in giving Him all we have..and PROVIDENTIAL ..in time.....I am sure it will not be long before He will cry again, "It is finished"..close the books, and come for His church. I WANT TO BE KNOWN IN HEAVEN AS ONE WHO "DID WHAT HE COULD" for God. DON'T YOU?

4. Out Thirsty God! He lives again..and still He thirsts. What will YOU bring Him? First, your love and trust as your own Saviour..the One who loved you, bought you, ready to cleanse away every sin-stain in His own blood..Then..as a X'n..give Him your life..all..yourself as His loving love-slave It will be worth while in eternity. WILL YOU DO IT..AFRESH? Illus:- "You're not home yet."

Three Hills - Evans Lk. - Nov 21/76 - Y.P.
Lebanonville - Apr. 18/76 - Evans Lk.

Berwick + CMA Edmonston Churches - Good Friday - Mar. 28/75

Nov 4/76

Here's a question to THINK about:- Would you offer the Lord Jesus a cup of vinegar to drink?

One man did. Matt. 27:34...c/f 48

Mk. 15:36

Lk. 23:36. John 19:28-30.

Vivid story that leaves us awe-struck with its solemnity. Striking elements. Vinegar was there..in a vessel..full. Full bec. Jesus had refused it when mingled with Gall... provided by pitiful women of Jerusalem to ease pain of those being executed. He had to suffer full penalty of our sin. And much to do..say..scriptures to be fulfilled..mother to be cared for..thief to be saved..executioners to be prayed for that they might be forgiven their crime..And the final declaration to be made..to give us all assurance.."FINISHED". Stalk of hyssop there..growing naturally. A sponge was there ..prob. also brought by women to cleanse body of victim after death. An understanding man was there. Heard "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"..Most misunderstood..almost seems as though this man perceived meaning..not call for Elijah..but awful cry of one God-forsaken. Heard following cry "I thirst".. and he moved..amid jeers of companions. He acted... He acted 1. promptly..ran...2. personally..one against rest 3. Persistently..as others tried interfere 4. Practically.. used what he could..5. Supplied plentifully.."filled..full" 6. Providentially..just in time.. Jesus "Gave up ghost". His last friend on earth..THAT MAN. After resurrected..did He find him..thank him? Where is he now? Jesus is still thirsty for what we can give Him.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS SYMBOL OF VINEGAR.

True, it quenched thirst, physically. Ruth was invited by Boaz to dip her morsel in the vinegar..soften bread thereby. But usually vinegar pictured as sour, bitter, acid substance. How many times in Bible? 12. Number of God's people. SOUR? Prov. 10:26..An irritant..25:20 an opposite, incompatible. And part of our Lord's sorrow and suff..Psalm 69:20-21 A hero quenched His thirst on cross..but sweet wine would have been so much better..Symbol of what world has to offer to God.

What do we offer our Lord? What to our fellow-men. What see on face? Sour..Vinegar? Or sweetness of X'n love?

see on face! Sour...vinegar.

The word "vinegar" comes to us via the French, from two Latin words, *vinum* (meaning "wine,") and *acer* (meaning "sour"). Vinegar is therefore sour wine. People can turn wine into vinegar—but I have never heard of anyone changing vinegar back into wine.

Vinegar is a parable of man. Man, as we know him, is like good wine that has gone sour. He got that way in and through a mishap in life's lab. Man is also like vinegar in that it is impossible to change him back. It seems to require a miracle to achieve it. That is why no one less than God himself (for whom miracles come easy) had to take over.

Every Christian is a miracle. He comes into being by a secret formula, one that we have not been able to figure out. He is sour wine made sweet again, fit as never before for the royal table.

Isn't it strange that people who would stampede to get the formula for making wine out of vinegar so frequently look the other way when the gospel is advertised, the gospel in which the promise of returning man to his former estate is given? Before you lambast such foolish people, ask yourself whether part of the reason is that we who name his name so often taste more like vinegar than like wine.

—Leonard Verduin, in THE BANNER