

(1). "They Offered Him Vinegar..."

Introd:- (1). What are you doing here this Sunday morning?
Serious ques. Anyone here reply "Wake up, preacher..this is
Resurrection Sunday. I always attend that day..plus Xmas Sun
unless falls on Xmas day, when buried in wrappings of present
...I sincerely pray that is NOT your answer. Israel told
in Isa 58:13 that they should "call the Sabbath a DELIGHT,
the holy of the Lord, honourable." And the Sabbath Psalm..
92 Begins: "it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord
and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to shew forth
thy lovingkindness in the morning and thy faithfulness
every night." That means you and I ought to be here again
this evening! And vs 13-14 "Those that be planted in the
house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth fruit in old age (comforting!)
they shall be fat and flourishing." (Not quite so comfort).

(2) Well...here we are. But again ask "WHY?" To sit back
and view a performance on platform? Audience listening ^{show?}
to performers..preacher..musicians? Decide good or poor?
I PROPOSE WE TAKE NEW AND DIFFERENT VIEW OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE.
Not original..but it searched my very soul. Kirkegaard,
prominent Danish theolog, even though liberal in much of
theology..said this: "Ordinarily a congregation regards it-
self as the AUDIENCE before which the minister and the choir
give their presentation or performance..with God identified
in the process as a kind of unseen Playwright or Producer."
..But he reminds us that "the congregation actually is the
CAST OF ACTORS, with the minister and the choir serving as
directors and prompters, offering cues from the wings. The
AUDIENCE IS GOD and the entire presentation is offered
for His good pleasure, approval, and everlasting glory."
(3). Can we make this the WHY of this Sun morn., service?
Leave bldg. ~~with~~ not with ques..How preacher preach..choir
sing..BUT HOW DID I GET..inside soul..in sight of God?

I. Now may what I say ^{what} we read, direct, prompt our thoughts
that they may govern..change if necess..actions as leave.

(a). Glorious, rejoicing, RESURRECTION DAY..Sunday. Not
Saturday Jewish Sabbath. The Rabbis hold that weekly Sabbath
was not intended for the Gentiles. They are right. When
X'n church began to include Gentiles..it began to worship
first day of week..begin of NEW CREATION in X Jesus..Resurr
Day.

(b). Why is this day? Bec. of what happend during precedin
week..Crucifixion Day comes before Resurrection Day. NOTE
Read it with me from Mark 15:33-38..

Doesn't your heart almost falter as try understand that awful scene? As nowhere else this is portrayal of the WRATH of Almighty God falling on SIN..borne by His own Son. ...with representatives of all humanity watching...

Scornful religionists.. "That ends this new sect that oppose all our religious principles of doing good to earn heaven."

Deluded crowd there..easily persuaded mob..yelling for bloc Peter was there..afar off..but able to see..witness. I P5:1

Faithful John..and the 3 Marys. Mother, Aunt, Magdalene..

Where would you have stood..I..? Close ^{if then calling distance - pronounced} in crowd, ^{where's Christ?} afar?

(c). Now look at others..Roman soldiers. Mixture. Some in Scrip called "devout". Others hard, calloused, cruel.

Finished their gruesome task..nailing 3 men to crosses.. hanging them up to die. Gambling for clothes..prob. with crude jokes..mockery..cursing people who crowded too close

Three hours passed by..soldiers growing impatient to end their shift.. soon going break legs to hasten death.

THEN SUDDENLY..AN INTERRUPTION..A CRY FROM CENTER CROSS..

"I THIRST." Cry dire-cted to ^{down} (them). So He thirsts! Well, why not? Any crucified man thirsted as blood ebbed away.

True..any MAN. BUT GOD THE SON? The One who created oceans..rivers..crystal springs..yet now THIRSTY.

A THIRSTY GOD! Unsatisfied..waiting for response from mankind. Some have never yet lifted soul to Him..to take His gift of LIFE with thankful heart. Some Christians truly saved..but that's all..and God is thirsty for their fellowship..dependant on them for His work on earth.

II. Now look again at soldiers..and their response to cry.

(a). There is a fearful, sadistic record in Lk. 23:36.. "The soldiers also MOCKED HIM, coming to Him, and offering him VINEGAR." Und. this. Not GIVING it to him. but OFFERING it to a crucified man,,hands nailed fast..

nearly crazed with thirst. They came to very foot of cross and set it before his eyes. "O.K. fellow. We offered this to you with gall that would have dulled your pain..stupified you..and you refused it. Now let's see you come down and get it." What devilish wickedness! BUT HAVE I EVER MOCKED GOD..BY KEEPING JUST OUT OF HIS REACH THAT FOR WHICH HE THIRSTS..my love, devotion, worship, service? God search

(b). Now look again at this authentic record. ONE OF THE SOLDIERS MADE A MOVE. (Per. one or two others helped).

Matt. 27:48-49. "And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave him to drink. The REST said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him."

...ONE MAN..an unknown soldier indeed..heroic..whose memory will never fade from sacred record..the Word of God..MOVED

in response to the CRY OF GOD.. "I THIRST."

See what he did. 1. HE RAN. Saw the urgency. If going to help..must do it at once. No time to waste. Acted PROMPTLY
 2. Acted PERSONALLY. One against the rest..crowd. Dared stand out for right. 3. Acted PERSISTENTLY. Others tried stop..discourage..as cried "Let be, let's see if Elias will come" He said "Let me alone..then we'll see about Elias" Persisted..gave Jesus the VINEGAR. 4. Acted PRACTICALLY.. Took what available. Vinegar already there, used to mingle with gall..Plucked a reed of hyssop..3-4 ft. long..Took a sponge..per. from John, woman..ready to wipe face, cleanse body. This man contrived a way to get vinegar to lips of God the Son..instead of offering it in mockery. 5. He supplied PLENTIFULLY.."Filled sponge FULL"..dripping.. easily accessible to Master's lips. 6. Acted PROVIDENTIALLY Just in time. Last opportunity to do something for the dying, thirsty Saviour. Jesus Rec'd the vinegar..and "gave up the ghost". Last tribute..last act of compassion. The last friend Jesus had on earth!

Conclus:- 1. Three days..three nights later..the CRUCIFIED MAN was alive again! How you think that soldier felt when he heard the news? How others who had mocked him feel? Are they thirsting in hell today? Did this compassionate, unknown soldier meet the resurrected Lord? Or did Saviour find him..thank him? Where is he now? How you like to be known in heaven as the one who slaked the Saviour's thirst, and helped him over last moments of rugged road to death on Calvary? Worth while?

2. Now may Spirit of God search us all. GOD IS STILL THIRSTY! Even though it was vinegar.."Oxos" not "Oinos".. acid..sour wine..that soldier gave Jesus all that was available Have I something sweeter to offer Him..better than a sour disposition? God thirsts for our love, our adoration, trust. Thirsty for missionaries to carry His Word of Life..Thirsty for Pastors..SS teachers..Thirsty for good stewards of his goods to be used for him. Thirsty for prayer warriors..
AND YOU AND I CAN SLAKE HIS THIRST!

3. What shall I offer him? Vinegar? The sour dregs of life? It's time to be PROMPT, PERSONAL, PERSISTENT, PRACTICAL, PLENTIFUL AND PROVIDENTIAL as time runs out. Some day soon He will again cry "IT IS FINISHED"..close books of this age..come for His church. My desire..is to be, in some measure, known as one who "did what he could" for God. Don't you? OUR THIRSTY GOD! He lives again and still thirsts. What will you bring Him? First, yourself

in simple trusting faith....And then..

..like those women who met the risen Lord..and "worshipped him" How did they worship? Per. like this:-

"Our Saviour, who art out of the tomb..hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in me, as it is in heaven."

4. Are we willing to take the Crucifixion in order to reach the Resurrection? Accept death to the self-life so that Jesus can live the resurrection life through us..and satisfy His thirst? Remember story of Aaron's rod that was laid up in Tab? A DEAD STICK..But it became symbol of our Lord's ressur..budded, bloomed, bore almonds in one night. May such a resurrec. life ~~be~~ manifest in us..~~xxx~~ us dead sticks..with His new life..bearing fruit for God.

Postscript. Now, Almighty God. I have finished my prompting for this resurrection Sunday morning. YOU ARE THE AUDIENCE Now, God of all mankind..look down into the hearts of all of us, the actors on this church stage. What do you see? Did this sermon make any change? Dear God, if not, it has been in vain. Yet we ask, in the Saviour's name..that even now..e'er we go our ways..there may be such a response that will PLEASE THEE..and satisfy Thy thirst. AMEN.