

Calvary From 9.00am - Noon.

Mark 15:21-32.

Sunday morning, March 22, 2009.

I. Simon of Cyrene. Vs. 21,22.

A. The Lord had been awake for more than 24 hours now. He is exhausted.

Over the last 15 hours He had:

1. Been through the tense atmosphere of the upper room.
2. Agonized in the Garden of Gethsemane.
3. Betrayed by Judas.
4. Deserted by His disciples and denied by Peter.
5. Tried and abused before the Sanhedrin.
6. Tried before Pilate and Herod.
7. Underwent the terrible ordeal of being scourged.
8. Went through the abuse of the soldiers at the praetorium.

B. Who was this Simon who carried the Lord's cross?

1. He was from Cyrene, a city in today's Lybia; 10 mi. from the Mediterranean.
2. Many pilgrims from all over the Roman empire were in Jerusalem for Passover.
3. Simon, although originally from Cyrene, may have been more recently from Rome, for Mark wrote his gospel to the Romans, and he identifies Simon to the Romans as the father of Rufus and Alexander as though the Romans would know who he was talking about.
4. Paul, in his letter to the Romans says, "Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." This might be a reference to the same Rufus and his mother would then be Simon's wife.

Application:

1. What a privilege for Simon to render this service to the Lord even though he was compelled to do so and had no choice. It is still a privilege to serve Him!
2. What humanity we see here in the Lord Jesus; His exhaustion. Let us never forget that our Lord was made true man!
3. If the above biographical information is correct, then how richly was Simon repaid both in this life and in the life to come for the humble service he willingly may have rendered to the Lord. Was it the events at Calvary that changed this man's life forever? How does that inspire you toward humble service?

II. The Lord's faithfulness. Vs. 23.

"They gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it."

A. Had the sympathetic women of Jerusalem prepared this? Luke 23:27.

This was an anesthetic; it is unlikely to have come from the soldiers.

B. He did not take it because He wanted to be clearheaded when He spoke from the cross. Also He wished to be clearheaded as He drank the cup that was given to Him, as he endured our judgment for sin. There are no anesthetics in hell, and this He endured for us. He wanted to be our perfect substitute.

Application:

How does the Lord's willingness to embrace the judgment of the cross help us to embrace dark hours and difficult times? Is it not by realizing that the cross is also at

work in our lives? Not punitively, but rather restoratively. It destroys our fleshly natures and makes room for newness of life. Good things follow the cross!

III. The Lord's shame. Vs. 24.

“When they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots over them...”

- A. We should forever be mindful that the shame the Lord endured was ours.
- B. Here the themes of guilt, shame and nakedness reach their climax in Scripture.
 - 1. Shame and nakedness are closely related in Scripture.
 - 2. It was the guilt and shame of their disobedience that caused our first parents to know that they were naked, and to know shame. Gen. 3:7,10,11.
 - What was once a blessing - knowing and being known - now was a curse.
 - What was once a loving meeting of the eyes, now is impolite and intrusive.
 - The feeling of being exposed; being seen, was now shameful, because their souls, once admirable in innocence and beauty, were now grotesque and in need of being covered.
 - 3. The Scriptural connection between guilt-shame-nakedness is illustrated in Rev. 3:18 “I counsel you to buy from Me... white garments, that you may

be

clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.”

- C. This guilt-shame-nakedness combination the Lord Jesus takes willingly upon Himself as He is stripped of all His clothing and crucified in our place.

Applications:

- 1. Here we come on one of the difficulties of accurately depicting the crucifixion. Most artists do not do justice to this aspect of Christ's suffering, nor can they really or should they. Yet it is a huge aspect that may not be covered up by ignoring it.
- 2. Another difficulty is to depict what the holy and harmless and undefiled soul of the Lamb of God endured. How can a fallen sinner ever put himself in the place of the Son of God and pretend that he knows what it was like? Is this not at best misguided presumption? On both these issues the Word of God is worth a thousand pictures!

IV. Surrounded by enemies. Vs. 29-32.

The by-passers; the chief priests and scribes; the thieves on either side, and even the soldiers (says Luke) joined in mocking the Lord.

- A. They say Aha! It expresses a mingling of glee, scorn, and a sense of victory.
- B. Rightfully they should have said, “Woe to us!” because right then the crucified one was winning the victory over His enemies by His passive grace of endurance, and humble obedience as He fulfilled the law in our behalf.

Application:

Things are not always what they appear. This should fill us with caution on the one hand, and with a sense of hope on the other. In the end God will always have the victory.

V. What will you take home from Calvary?

The soldiers took home some clothing; No new hearts, renewed visions, changed lives or a Savior. How little do some people take home from the sermon; the hymns; the prayers and the fellowship of the saints. Remember the parable of the sower here.