

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

Pastor: Steve Bishop

April 5, 2015 ~ Glory to God ~ HE IS RISEN !

Pouring liquid sunshine at Ridin' High this beautiful morning...but it failed to dampen spirits of all the faithful that were here. Wonderful music, an inspiring message from our beloved Pastor Steve – incredible breakfast – more wonderful music and another inspiring and thought provoking message from our Pastor, and then the kids still had their Easter Egg Hunt – albeit, inside rather than out, but I think all had a great time!

We all tend to resist God, like all the characters in the background of the cross – we end up verifying who God is in the middle of it.

Luke 23: 32-43 ³²***Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with Him to be executed.***

Both men were most likely insurrectionists. Everyone had disappointed them. There were mad at the religious leaders for bowing to Rome. And they were mad at God for not doing something about it. Even at their death, they were cheated out of the spotlight, and their last chance to be heard, because Jesus stole the stage.

³³***When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him, along with the criminals – one on his right, the other on his left.***

It seemed strange that with only minutes/hours to live, God introduces us to these characters who are so deeply hurt by people and God that they are mad at God. There must be a purpose in including these men in the story.

Maybe it's because some of us have been or are now mad at God and think we can't trust Him.

³⁴***Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*** ³⁵***The people stood watching and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if He is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."*** ³⁶***The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar*** ³⁷***and said, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself."*** ³⁸***There was a written notice above Him, which read, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*** ³⁹***One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us."***

Translated, "You can't save yourself and you can't save us. God is not real, you're a coward and a fake.

This is a very strange scene – a conversation between three dying men. What would make a man about to die blaspheme? This guy had confused God with life and life with God. (Every dream that didn't come true, every bad thing that had happened to him must be a result of God being mad at him – so he was mad at God.)

What if he had said, “God, where are you?” The answer – twelve feet away from you and enduring the same thing you are. All that has happened to you in life is to bring you to this point of seeing God.

Do you know where God's been during all your suffering? *Right beside you!*

⁴⁰But the other criminal rebuked him – “Don't you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?” ⁴¹We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

He was saying that this is not God's fault, he is suffering for you for doing nothing wrong! Then he does something amazing, he asks Jesus for a favor. I usually ask God for favors and I try and bargain with God. He had nothing to offer Jesus at this point, nothing to bargain with, he is about to die.

⁴²The he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³Jesus answered him, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Why did Jesus do this for him. BECAUSE HE ASKED. He opened his clenched fist and pride, forgot his reputation and got from God what life had never given him.

Why would God add these characters at the last minute of the most important event in history, maybe because of all the angry people, disappointed people who say there must be something wrong with me or something wrong with God.

God can survive your anger, YOU CAN'T. God can handle years of you being angry at him, but you CAN'T. Our lives get more and more complicated the longer we stay angry at God.

God is willing to give you everything life didn't...if we will just ask ~ that's grace, that's mercy ... that is why we call Him the SAVIOR.

But in all this, the one thing that Jesus chose to mention to the repentant thief on the cross (if you can only say one thing, what to you say?) **“You will be with me today.”**

You have to love and admire Jesus a lot for that – to be solace when you leave this life behind. It reminds me of that great spiritual, “When I come to die, give me Jesus ... You can have all this world, give me Jesus.”