

THE CROWD AT THE CROSS

Luke 23:33-37

Introduction: There have been many world disasters, tragedies, such as wars, disease, floods, winds, earthquakes killing hundreds of people and rendering countless homeless. One would be hard pressed to say which has been the greatest tragedy, disaster that has struck mankind. However there is one tragedy which outweighs all of the other world tragedies put together and that happened over 2,000 years ago when the Son of God hung on the cross on the hill called Calvary. The sun hid it's face, the earth shook, the mountains trembled, the dead rose from their graves and the great veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom. THIS was the greatest tragedy ever to occur. Often the question has been asked, "Who crucified God's Son, Jesus?" Was it the Romans? They were the ones who actually executed Jesus, and Pilate was guilty of a great miscarriage of justice.

What about the Jews? Did the Jews crucify Jesus? The disciples were Jews. The apostles were Jews. John, the beloved, was a Jew. John the Baptist was a Jew. Peter, who preached the great Pentecost sermon was a Jew. the nearest and dearest to the heart of Jesus were all Jews.

Therefore the center of the question is not who, but what crucified Jesus. Whatever drove Jesus to Calvary is still active and busy today for Jesus is still being crucified afresh every day. There were crowds of people around the three crosses, made up of different kinds of people. Try to locate yourself now for each of us belong to one of these different groups of people that were at the cross.

I. THE CROWD HAD CURIOUS PEOPLE IN IT

1. *"...and the people stood beholding..."* It was a holiday for them. Perhaps they mourned and felt sorry a bit and perhaps they shook their heads, commenting on the awful pain the three were undergoing. They had no feeling of guilt because they were not the ones who had driven the nails into these men.
2. Those same kind of people are still here today. There is a great number of indifferent, back-slidden church members whose names are on church rolls. Years ago they made a profession of faith and read the bible and prayed for a while, they dropped out, fell away. Some call themselves christians who were taken into some church while infants, sprinkled, instructed in church matters, received a certificate, then they drifted away from the church.
3. There are countless numbers of these type of church members and they are barriers to the lost and stumbling blocks to true Christians. They drag their church down and only clutter up the church rolls. Church members, galore, but active Christians? Satan is using that same crowd to crucify Jesus anew every day.

II. THE CROWD HAD UNCARING PEOPLE IN IT

1. There were those who gathered around the crosses who had no feeling for anybody on the crosses, especially the one called Jesus.

2. Every church, denomination, creed, town, community has these kind of people. These are those church members who have moved away, taking everything with them EXCEPT their church membership.
3. These are those who don't really care about the work of Jesus. Their children grow up in a home where the name of Jesus is very seldom heard except in words of profanity. There is not much prayer, if any and never witnessed to any of their friends. They give very little if anything financially to the church. They call themselves "christians" when asked by someone, but would God call them one of His Christians?

III. THE CROWD HAD PEOPLE WHO OPPOSED JESUS IN IT

1. *"...and the rulers also with them derided Him...and the soldiers also mocked him..."*
- There were some in the crowd who openly opposed Jesus and made fun of him.
2. There were some who actually hated Jesus (scribes, sadducees, pharisees, priests, rulers) because of His sinlessness, His unselfishness. Because He had exposed their sins, torn down their dreams and had shown them up for what they really were - blind, guilty, misleading, dishonest hypocrites. Jesus had thrown the light of God on their cheating, lying, hypocritical lives.
3. The soldiers hated him because they didn't know any better. They were making fun of their superiors for they were the lowest butchers and had no feelings as they had been stripped from them long ago in battles. So what was this Jew to them?
4. That group in the crowd is duplicated today. Every dishonest business person, every crooked politician, every publisher, promoter of sexual filthy literature, movies and television programs. Everyone who makes a mockery of our laws and morals. These people dislike preachers, churches, true Christians and they are quick to find some Church scandal, some church member's faults.
5. Sadly, every unsaved man, woman, child is in this horrible group for Jesus said, *"...he that is not with me is against me..."* It is totally unthinkable that anyone can find it in their heart to be against such a man like Jesus, nevertheless, there they are.
- There are only two sides in the eyes of God: the side of Jesus and the side of Satan.
- If one has not believed in Jesus, then that person is in the crowd of Satan.

IV. THE CROWD HAD PEOPLE WHO HAD SYMPATHY IN IT

1. *"...now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene..."* Some of the Lord's close friends were there. Not very many, not very strong, but they loved Jesus enough to share the shame, jeers and hate of the crowd. They shared Jesus' heartache and ultimately His heartbreak. They remained there until Jesus sent them away.

2. That group is still small today. There are so few among the millions on church rolls who would go with Jesus all the way to Calvary. Thankfully though, there are some who will go all the way.
3. In church memberships there are groups here and there who may be counted true to Jesus and His Gospel. What would become of the Church if not for these few?

CONCLUSION:

1. Now find yourself. Honestly now, which group do you really fit in? Which group are you living your life with? The curious? The uncaring? The opposing? The sympathetic?
2. Every person is in one or the other of these same groups that were around the cross of Jesus.
3. By your lifestyle and behavior, which group would those around you think you belonged to?
4. In all honesty, which group do you think God has you in?
5. Remember what Jesus said, "*He/she that is not with Me is against Me...*"