

SEVEN SAYINGS FROM THE CROSS

5 – I THIRST

John 19:28-29

INTRODUCTION

- Thirst has played a role in many battles throughout history.
- Those who have witnessed the horrors of the battlefield report that there is a common cry to be heard from the wounded and dying, and that is, “Water!”
- As Christ hung on the cross, He was engaged in the greatest battle that has ever been waged.
- All the forces of hell were arrayed against Him, thinking they had finally destroyed Him, not realising that it was through the cross that Christ “spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:15); it was here that the “seed of the woman” was bruising the serpent’s head (Genesis 3:15); that the prince of this world was “judged” (John 16:11) and “cast out” (John 12:31); and “destroyed” (Hebrews 2:14).
- This was the greatest battle that was ever fought, and our Lord Jesus Christ won the victory!
- We’ve come to the fifth of Christ’s seven sayings from the cross.
- The final four sayings took place in fairly quick succession, just before His death.
- This is the shortest of the sayings, and is only one word in the Greek – *dipsao*
- The fourth cry was one of darkest desolation as Christ, bearing the sins of humanity, was forsaken by the Father.
- But with this cry, the darkness begins to lift, as Jesus knows “all things were now accomplished” (v.28); leading to the following cry which is a shout of victory – “It is finished!”

I. THE SAVIOUR’S THIRST AS A HUMAN

- A. This demonstrates that Christ was both fully God and fully Man
 1. The eternal God, self-existing, all-powerful, cannot thirst

2. Yet God the Son thirsts, because He is the God-Man, and in His humanity He thirsts
- B. This is an insight into the intense physical suffering He experienced
1. His last previous drink was probably at the Last Supper, some twenty hours prior (Matthew 26:29)
 2. He had lost fluids through sweat (Luke 22:44)
 3. Blood loss intensified His thirst
 4. The inflammations of His wounds further dehydrated Him
 5. “My tongue cleaveth to my jaws” (Psalm 22:14-15)
 6. His divine nature did not in any way shield or diminish the physical suffering He felt
- C. It is a cause for us to adore Him
1. As a Man, He understands our griefs and pains we experience (Hebrews 4:15)
 2. We can cast all our care on Him who cares for us (1 Peter 5:7)
 3. When we thirst, we should contemplate with awe that our Saviour on the cross thirsted also

II. THE SAVIOUR’S THIRST IN HIS HEART

- A. The Holy Spirit informs us of the reason He said this
1. It was not simply because He felt thirsty
 2. It was because He knew that “all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled”
 3. Note that He “knew” – His mind was not overcome with shock or delirium
 4. “Accomplished” is the same Greek word as “finished” (v.30)
- B. He thirsted to fulfil Scripture
1. There were over 300 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Christ’s life, and over 30 of them in the day of His crucifixion

2. This primarily fulfils Psalm 69:21 and 22:15, but some also cite Judges 15:18
 3. In His life and His death, He bowed to the authority of the Scriptures
- C. He thirsted to deliver us from the torments of hell
1. Hell is a place of eternal, insatiable thirst (Luke 16:24)
 2. Hell itself thirsts and is never filled (Proverbs 27:20; cf. Isaiah 5:14)
 3. The due punishment for our sins is eternal misery, with unquenchable thirst in the flames of hell
 4. Yet Christ took our punishment to deliver us (1 Peter 3:18)
- D. He thirsted for the souls of men
1. His food was to do the Father's will and finish His work (John 4:34)
 2. When Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Give me to drink," (John 4:7) He was not concerned with His own thirst, but with the woman's soul
 3. He still thirsts for sinners to be reconciled to God through His blood (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)
 4. He thirsts for His people to walk in communion with Him (Revelation 3:20)

III. THE SHARED THIRST OF ALL HUMANITY

- A. The heart of man thirsts for reconciliation with God
1. Christ's thirst His desire to be reunited with the Father after enduring three hours of separation while He bore our sin
 2. The wrath and condemnation of God was upon the Son
 3. Man is born into this world under God's wrath and condemnation (John 3:18,36)
 4. Man seeks to satisfy this aching void through wealth, pleasures, relationships, education, honours, power, religion, etc, but finds no relief
 5. This world offers only "broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13; cf. John 4:13)

6. "Lust is the craving for salt by a man who is dying of thirst."
 7. Solomon sought satisfaction in pleasure, laughter, wine, possessions and sensual lusts yet realised it was all vanity and vexation of spirit (Ecclesiastes 2)
 8. But he finally concluded that true peace and satisfaction is found only in submission to God (Ecclesiastes 12:13)
- B. Man's great need is recognise his thirst, and come to Christ for satisfaction
1. Jesus cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7:37; cf. John 4:14)
 2. The prophet gave the invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1)
 3. The only qualification God demands of those who come is that they thirst – recognise their sinful state and inability to save themselves
 4. All those who humbly come to Christ in repentance and faith "shall never thirst" (John 4:14; 6:35)
 5. Those who do not come to Christ will suffer eternal thirst in hell

CONCLUSION

1. Christ suffered the thirst of God's wrath for us so that we might never suffer it
2. Have you come to Him as a poor needy sinner to receive the cleansing and filling that only He can give?
3. Do you thirst for God as David did? (Psalm 42:1-2)
4. Or are you imbibing from the broken cisterns of this corrupt world?
5. Make this your prayer: "Lord give me a hunger and thirst after righteousness!" (Matthew 5:6)
6. While Christ suffered on our behalf, His people are called to suffer for His sake also
7. Just as Christ had a cross, so too every believer has a cross to take up (Luke 9:23)
8. Are you willing to suffer according to the will of God, as our Saviour did upon the cross? (1 Peter 4:19)