

ALL FINISHED, HE SAID I THIRST

John 19: 28-30 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

How could it be that the Creator of both physical and spiritual water could ever be dry and thirsty? We read in Genesis 1: 1-2, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Jesus is the fountain of physical and living water. How could the journey of Jesus, God the Son, from heaven to earth, how could this One, the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ, about whom we read in Hebrew 1:1-3, how could He be thirsty on the cross for you and me? We read in Hebrews, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” In 1990, Dennis J Jernigan wrote words to a song I love to sing, “You Are My All in All.” “You are my strength when I am weak, You are the Treasure that I seek. You are my all in all, Seeking You as a precious jewel, Lord, to give up, I’d be a fool. You are my all in all. Taking my sin, my cross, my shame, rising again, I bless Your name. You are my all in all. When I fall down, You pick me up; When I am dry, You fill my cup. You are my all in all! Jesus, Lamb of God, Worthy is Your Name. Jesus, precious Lamb of God. Worthy is Your Name!” Our Lord Jesus was thirsty on Calvary’s cross for you and me.

How can the God-Man, Christ Jesus be thirsty? For over 2 thousand years, people have been wrestling with the question, “Who is Jesus?” In the first few centuries after Jesus came to earth, born of a virgin, went to the cross, died in our place, was buried, and rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven—people have put their pens to who Jesus was and is. There were groups of people, like the Arians and the Ebionites who decided Jesus wasn’t divine, but was just a remarkable person. Others like the Docetists and the Apollinarians insisted Jesus was divine, but not truly human, at least not in the way we are human. Still others, like the Nestorians denied the union of Jesus’ two natures in one person. Others like the Eutychians put Jesus’ human and divine natures into a kind of theological blender and mixed them together. But those of us that believe the Gospel record that Jesus said, “I thirst,” at Calvary, we believe that Jesus was and is fully God and fully man, one person with two distinct natures. This truth stretches us, but we hold to it, or we miss the truth about Jesus. Jesus by His virgin birth became a human, a male with flesh and blood, living, breathing, walking, talking, Jewish son, circumcised the 8th day. The Bible calls Him God and man. His enemies called him man only. Paul told Timothy that Jesus humanity qualifies Him to stand between us and God and serve as the only mediator between God and man. Charles Spurgeon said it well, “Jesus was a real Man. Believe in Jesus as Man. You would be indignant at anyone who would diminish the Glory of His Godhead, of being God the Son, and most justly so, but oh, do not, yourself, take away from Him the truth of His humanity. It isn’t either or, but both and. The God-Man Jesus cried out on the cross, “I thirst.”

Today is known in history as Palm Sunday, just five days before Jesus was crucified. Long before Jesus came incarnate to earth, Isaiah spoke prophetically about Jesus in Isaiah 55: 1-3, saying, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to Me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, My steadfast, sure love/mercies for David."

Palm Sunday was the beginning of what Jesus meant when He said His hour had come. In 3 and a half years of ministry, as we read John 4, Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it was that is saying to you, "Give me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." Jesus went on to tell her, "Everyone who drinks of this water (from Jacob's well) will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him, will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." She said to Jesus, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty. I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ. When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." It was this same Jesus who was thirsty on the cross.

This same Jesus, a year before this final Palm Sunday, on the last day of the great feast, Jesus stood up and cried out, in John 7: 37-39, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The One who gives us rivers of living water within us, was dry and thirsty on the cross. The sons of Korah knew this spiritual thirst for God, and wrote about it in Psalm 42: 1, saying, "As the deer pants for the water, for flowing streams, so pants my soul for You, O God." Jesus is the One who said in Matthew 5: 6, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Jesus said in John 6: 35, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst." Today, I want to explain to us, in some measure, no one can explain it fully, that this cry of Jesus on the cross, "I thirst" was not the cry of a victim, but the cry of The Victor. Let me bring us four explanations of the words, "I thirst." What does God want us to see here today in Jesus calling and crying out, "I thirst?"

JESUS' THIRST WAS TIED TO HIS LAST TWO WORDS AT CALVARY.

(I.) We read in John 19: 28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." I would so hope that many of you would have the opportunity to go to Golgotha, the place of the Skull. Jinny and I sat there in 2002, long years after Jesus' body was taken down from the cross. Yet, as we sat there, a British narrator and guide retold the anguished account of Christ's crucifixion. Something happened to me that's never happened before. My eyes

sprayed out tears that made it impossible for me to see through my glasses. I wept until I felt dry inside. We all know of Jesus seven last words at Calvary. They were: (1) "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Luke 23:34 (2) "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43 (3) "Woman, behold your son. Son Behold your mother." John 19:26–27 (4) "My God, My God, have you forsaken me?" Psalm 22: 1, Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 (5) "I thirst." John 19:28 (6) "It is finished." John 19:29-30 (7) "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Luke 23:46 We need to know that the last 3 sayings of Jesus, #'s 5,6, and 7 are tied together and were spoken only a few breaths apart. Jesus had suffered hell for us for six hours, from 9 AM to 3 PM. There is a reason why Jesus cried, "I thirst!" that totally connects His thirst to His last two words.

Come in your mind's eye with me to the outskirts of Jerusalem, overlooking the garbage dumps. No death could be more inhumane than the suffering of Jesus up to this moment. He should already have died, just under the scourging. The strips of leather in the scourge, the whip, called a flagellum had pieces of iron chains, nails, fishhook like claws, and glass sewed into the whip. Jesus' back and the sides of his chest were laid open until His back and sides were a bloody pulp. His face was buffeted until it was more marred than any man. His beard was pulled out. He was almost unrecognizable. He was stripped of His clothes as the soldiers ripped them off and gambled for His seamless robe. His head was bleeding from the bloody thorns pressed into his scalp and brow. His hands and feet were fastened tightly to the rough-cut timbers with iron spikes. At Calvary, Jesus was offered two drinks. The first He refused just before He was nailed to the cross around 9 AM.

Matthew 27:34 tells us that the Roman soldiers gave to Jesus, wine to drink, mingled with gall, but after tasting it, Jesus was unwilling to drink it. Then, in Mt. 27: 35, they crucified Him. Mark records the same in Mark 15: 23, but adds that the wine was not only mixed with gall but with myrrh. This was to somehow prepare Jesus for nails being driven into His trembling hands and feet. Myrrh was given to Jesus by the wise men at His birth, a foreshadowing of His cross to come. This sweet wine mixed with poisonous gall or liver bile was supposed to partially deaden the pain of being crucified. Jesus refused this, as He would not go through His sufferings without a clear mind, He was unwilling to dull the pain with narcotics or poison. Then, on the cross, Luke records in Luke 23: 35 that the soldiers offered sour wine with vinegar to Jesus as they mocked Him. This watered down, sour wine was probably what the soldiers were drinking themselves as they passed the six hours at the feet of Jesus and the two thieves crucified on either side.

Because of the outstretched position of Jesus' arms, His chest cavity was in a perpetually expanded state, so it was nearly impossible to breathe. With all the loss of blood the night before in Gethsemane when Jesus sweat great drops of blood, and with all the blood loss from the scourging, buffeting, beating, whipping, and thorns pressing into Jesus' scalp and bleeding from His hands and feet, Jesus had to be severely dehydrated, His body without water and the needed blood to carry oxygen. His breaking heart for you and me that would finally burst when He died, so that the piercing of His side brought out blood and water, Jesus' heart was

racing now, beating faster. The Romans crossed the legs of their victims they crucified, down at the feet, often with only one long spike going through both feet. They purposely had the legs partially bent for a reason. To breathe, Jesus had to press down on the nails/nail in his feet to allow his chest to rise, and flexibility to inhale. This excruciating pain meant Jesus' raw back, beaten to a pulp, was being rubbed up and down against that wooden cross, adding to His pain. His blood loss beginning asphyxiation resulted in extreme thirst as His body craved water to restore His blood loss. This death Jesus died for me and you is difficult to imagine.

Yet, the physical suffering was only the beginning of Jesus' agony. Jesus, the water of Life, had drained Himself dry of both blood and water in the fires of a living hell. Physicians say the burning inside of a crucified man is the feeling of a man burning up from the inside out—a living hell. Jesus' fight for your soul and mine was so bitter, the fire of the cross and its substitution for our eternity in hell, was so hot, the contest was so severe that Jesus, after six hours of bearing all our sins in His body on the cross, Jesus had given us His all. The One who drank our deserved bitter cup of woe forever, was now exhausted and ready to die. The wrath of God upon our sin had exhausted itself upon Jesus. The spiritual suffering for our sins to satisfy the righteousness of God was satisfied, complete, finished, done. The battle now was over, the victory for our eternal future in glory, redeemed, was won. This cry, "I thirst," or "I am thirsty," was not the cry of a victim or a loser. This was the cry of our Victor. Jesus yet had to declare His triumph, "It is finished!" and then release His broken body to His Father, saying, "Father, into Your hands, I commit My Spirit." His mouth was unable to speak, as the scripture was fulfilled in Psalm 22: 15, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to My jaws; You lay me in the dust of death." In this simple request of our Victor for a drink, Jesus found the moisture needed to declare His victory triumphantly, over sin, death, the grave, and hell. Look at John 19: 29-30. Quickly now, let me share the last three explanations of Jesus' words, "I thirst." Secondly,

JESUS' THIRST SHOWS HIS DESIRE TO BRING US LIVING WATER.

(II.) How many of you remember in the days of king David when he was fighting the Philistines and they had captured Bethlehem and were holding the city. David longed out loud for a cool drink from the well where he grew up. You can read of it in II Samuel 23: 15-16. All David did was say his longing out loud, "Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" David's top three men, Josheb-basshebeth, a Tachmonite, chief of the three, and Eleazar, the son of Dodo, son of Ahohi, and Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite—what did they do? They burst through the enemy camp to the amazement of the Philistines and drew a gourd full of water from the Bethlehem well, and then headed back to David in the cave of Adullam, in the valley of Rephaim. David was so moved by their love at the risk of their lives, that he couldn't drink the water. Rather he poured it out as a sacrifice to the Lord. That was huge, but it was so small compared to what Jesus did as He poured out His soul and body unto death to bring us the Living Water He gave to the Samaritan woman. Have you come to Jesus to drink from His Living Water? I join hymn writer William Cowper, whom God saved from suicide. "There is a Fountain filled

with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see that Fountain in his day, and there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away." Thirdly,

JESUS' THIRST WAS GOD'S HEARTBREAK FOR LOST SINNERS. (III.)

The Word of God in II Peter 3: 9 tells us of the inner spiritual longing of God as Jesus died. Sometimes I shudder as I hear preachers and laymen and women alike speak of God choosing some folk to go to heaven and others to go to hell. Any such thought misses the heart of God in the New Testament. Peter who once denied his Lord and was forgiven, wrote, "The Lord is patient toward you, not wishing/willing that any should perish, but that all should come to or reach repentance." Is that the same longing of Jesus before the New Testament was written? How can we know the heart of God in the Old Testament? The prophet Ezekiel reveals Jesus' heart on the cross as He cried, "I thirst." In Ezekiel 18: 31,32, we read, "Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so, turn, and live." This last two weeks, I have felt in my spirit the heart of Jesus and His thirst for souls as He died. I have cried over lost sinners on the phone, in my office, up at Sage View. May God give us His inner heartbreak for lost sinners—so that we weep as Jeremiah over our lost country. Fourthly, lastly,

JESUS' THIRST IS GOD'S ANSWER FOR EVERY THIRSTY SOUL. (IV.)

Our answer from the cross is Jesus' words, "I thirst." Jesus was, and still is thirsty for you and you and you and all of us. Oh, how He thirsts for you. This is the cry of the great I AM, who said "I am the Living Water." Hear His credentials. Who is this Son of God, this Son of Man who was dying of thirst at Calvary? He is the same Lord who by His Spirit is right now speaking with us, pleading with us, calling for every thirsty soul to drink from Him, the living water of life. When the Roman soldiers offered Jesus that sour wine and water, He took one drink of that sour wine and water drink to undo His tongue from clinging to the roof of His mouth. Then Jesus shouted His cry of victory—"It is finished!" Today, Jesus is still crying, "I thirst." He is thirsty to save you, if you are lost, and He is thirsty to bring His spiritual healing to each of us as born-again believers. He calls us today to drink from His Fountain opened up for sin and for uncleanness, and for healing.

God's Spirit is calling us to hear His longing today, "I thirst." I close with the old 19th century hymn by Lucy J. Rider, "Come everyone who is thirsty in spirit; Come, everyone who is weary and sad. Come to the Fountain, there's fullness in Jesus - All that you're longing for; Come and be glad! "I will pour water on him that is thirsty; I will pour floods upon the dry ground. Open your heart for the gifts I am bringing; While you are seeking Me, I will be found." (2) Child of the world, are you tired of your bondage? Weary of earth-joys, so false, so untrue? Thirsting for God and His fullness of blessing? Listen to the promise, a message for you. (3) Child of the Kingdom, be filled with My Spirit! Nothing but fullness your longing can meet.' It's the enduement for life and for service. Yours is the promise, so certain, so sweet!" Come to the One who cried, "I thirst! Tetelestai! Father..."