

TEXT SERMONS – SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOR

SAYING #5

“I THIRST!”

John 19:28,29

“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.”

A lady had just seen a movie that depicted the crucifixion of Jesus. She said, “It was too real; in fact, it was just like being there.” Most of us would not have wanted to be at Calvary that day to see the nails driven through His holy hands; the steel spear piercing His skin and being imbedded into His side; the blood – blood running down drenching His body and the wooden cross, to pool upon the ground. It was a gruesome scene.

There is no similarity between the beautiful and often jeweled and ornate crosses we see today and the terribleness of the real cross of Calvary. Let us again ponder its meaning and give thanks for the Savior Who was impaled there for us.

We have been watching Jesus die as we have reflected upon His cries from the cross. Seven times He spoke in His dying hours:

- He prayed for His persecutors;
- He promised Paradise to a repentant thief;
- He made provision for His mother;
- He cried out in the darkness of loneliness.

Then the cry, “I thirst!” This is the most brief of all the statements that the Lord Jesus made from the cross. It is the only statement in which He referred to His body and His physical sufferings. “I Thirst!” What great truths are in that statement! What irony that the Maker of oceans, lakes and rivers should have parched lips; that He Who said, “*I am the water of life*” should Himself be thirsty!

What is the meaning for us of such a statement? What can we learn from this short statement from the lips of our Savior that will help us? Several truths come to mind, the first of which is:

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Although in intense pain, the Lord Jesus was aware of the work He was doing on the cross for mankind in obedience to His heavenly Father. It was in that spirit that He remembered the pre-recorded details of the crucifixion. The psalmist’s prophecy was, “*They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*” (Psalm 69:21)

Every important detail of the crucifixion had been foretold. The list is detailed as follows:

- The betrayal by a familiar friend. (Psalm 41:9)
- The disciples forsaking Him. (Psalm 31::11)
- The false accusations. (Psalm 35:11)
- His silence before the judges. (Isaiah 53:7)
- His guiltlessness. (Isaiah 53:9)

- Numbering Him with the criminals. (Isaiah 53:12)
- The actual crucifixion. (Psalm 22:16)
- The mockery of the spectators. (Psalm 109:25)
- The gambling for His garments. (Psalm 22:18)
- The prayer for His enemies. (Isaiah 53:12)
- His cry of forsakenness. (Psalm 22:1)
- The yielding up of His spirit. (Psalm 31:5)
- His bones were not broken. (Psalm 34:20)
- The burial in a rich man's tomb. (Isaiah 53:9)
- His thirst. (Psalm 69:12)

All this was plainly foretold centuries before Christ was born. What convincing evidence of the divine inspiration of the scriptures! As the hymn we sing says, "How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!"

Now back to Jesus cry, "I thirst!" recorded in John 19:28 – *"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"* How completely in control of His mental faculties Jesus was. He had hung upon the cross for six hours and had endured unparalleled sufferings, and yet, His mind was clear and His memory keen.

Many times in the Gospels we read the words, "And this He said that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." For example, why was He born in Bethlehem? It fulfilled prophecy! Why did Mary and Joseph take Him down to Egypt? It fulfilled prophecy! Why did they live in Nazareth? It fulfilled prophecy! Why did He do what He did throughout His life? He was obeying the will of His father determined before He ever came into the world. Acts 4:28 makes that abundantly clear: *"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done."*

Consequently, *"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."* (Phil. 2:8) We, as believers, learn from this that the most important thing in life is to know the will of God and delight in obediently doing it. God's will in His Word is to be the final authority in our lives as it was in the life of our Lord and Savior.

The cry of our Lord, "I thirst!" reveals not only the inspiration of the scriptures, but it also reveals the intensity of His sufferings.

THE INTENSITY OF HIS SUFFERINGS.

After the Last Supper in the Upper Room, the events unfolded rapidly. There are three scenes that demanded great physical exertion and resulting agony.

The Gethsemane Experience.

After the supper Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane where He wrestled in soul agonizing prayer. *"And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground."* (Luke 22:44)

His intense prayer time in the garden was followed by the appearance of Judas with a band of soldiers who, after Judas' betrayal, arrested Him and brought Him before Caiaphas, the

High Priest, in the middle of the night. He examined Jesus and condemned Him. Jesus was then held until the early morning when, after weary hours of waiting, He was brought before Pilate.

The Gabbatha Experience.

“Pilate brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.” (John 19:13) Following a lengthy trial, orders were given for Him to be beaten.

Next He was taken across the city to Herod’s judgment hall and after a brief appearance before him, He was placed again into the hands of brutal soldiers who mocked and whipped Him and then took Him back to Pilate for sentencing.

The Golgotha Experience.

“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.” (John 19:17) With bleeding back and carrying His cross under the heat of the sun, He began the journey up to the hill to Golgotha. There they crucified Him. Crucifixion is known to be a punishment that quickly dehydrated the sufferer. Burning now with fever from the infection of His wounds, He calls out, *“I thirst!”*

Probably the last liquid Jesus had He received at the Passover meal in the Upper Room some eighteen to twenty-four hours previously. The torture which He had undergone as He was beaten, the strenuous walk up Calvary’s hill bearing the cross, the three hours He had been hanging upon the cross, the loss of blood from wounds in His head, hands and feet, had dehydrated His body. In addition to the pain He was experiencing were the pangs of thirst. Understandably, He called out, *“I thirst!”*

The extremity of His thirst is described by the psalmist, *“My tongue clings to my jaws.”* (Psalm 22:15) And again, *“My throat is dry.”* (Psalm 69:3) This is further proof that Jesus’ body was a human body, subject to the weaknesses and frailties that all of us experience. *“He was tested in all points as we are yet without sin.”* (Heb. 4:15)

What does His suffering thirst mean to us today? Many things, among them this: The Lord Jesus is able to sympathize completely with us because He identifies with our pain, suffering, hurt and needs. *“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”* (Heb. 2:18) And, *“We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”* (Heb.4:15) He knows what suffering is and He is *“touched with the feelings of our infirmities.”* Therefore, *“Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”* (I Peter 5:7)

“I thirst!” reveals the inspiration of scriptures and this short cry also reveals the intensity of the sufferings of our Savior. Furthermore, one last thought that we must emphasize, and that is: the intent upon which all the sufferings of Christ is predicated. Let us consider this in conclusion.

THE INTENT OF HIS SUFFERINGS.

Why was Jesus enduring such atrocities as were being committed against His person? He could have called legions of angels to deliver Him. Why did He not do that? Hymn writers have asked the same question. John Moore, in his hymn, "Why?", wrote:

*"Why did they nail Him to Calvary's tree?
Why? Tell me why He was there;
Jesus, the Helper, the Healer, the Friend –
Why? Tell me why He was there."*

Robert Harkness, in his hymn, "Why Should He Love Me So?" wrote:

*"Love sent my Savior to die in my stead,
Why should He love me so?
Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led,
Why should He love me so?"*

"I thirst!" Let those words linger in your mind, for behind them is the reason, the intent of His thirst. He endured a burning, raging thirst in order to provide access to the Water of Life for thirsty souls! He Who thirsted on the cross arose from the grave and offers to all who receive Him the Water of Life freely. (Rev.21:6)

CONCLUSION

Think also about this: Hell is a place of thirst! In Luke chapter sixteen, Jesus told about a man who went there and in that place he was thirsty. People who populate Hell are eternally thirsty. That is a truth that should awaken the conscience of the most skeptical person. The next time you are thirsty and reach for a glass of water, think about the truth that Jesus thirsted physically that we might have our spiritual thirst quenched for all eternity!

In John chapter four, Jesus said to the woman at the well of Samaria, *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."* (John 4:13,14)

And, blessed thought, there is no thirst in heaven! *"They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore."* (Rev.7:16) The last invitation in the Bible is: *"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."* (Rev.22:17)

If you have not drunk deeply of the Water of Life, how long will you continue to neglect the thirst of your soul?

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