

43-19-02-Last Word #5-Suffering

Lent, Christ's humanity, suffering, hell, salvation, evangelism

John 19:28

Christ's thirst on the Cross was a fountain to quench human thirsting.

INTRODUCTION:

–[A small boy, just put to bed, called a few minutes later to his father, “**Da-ad...**” “*What?*” “**I’m thirsty. Can you bring me a glass of water?**” “*No. You had your chance. Lights out.*” . . . “**Da-ad...**” “**WHAT?**” “**I’m thirsty... Can I have a drink of water?**” “*I told you NO! If you ask again, I’ll spank you!*” . . . “**Da-ad...**” “**WHAT?**” “**When you come in to spank me, can you bring me a glass of water?**”]

–[A personal memory: When about 4 y/o, I remember a *long night*, half-awake and half-dreaming, but thirsty with a high fever. I couldn’t call for my mom or get to the glass of water she’d left on the dresser; it was a terrible kind of suffering, being *unable to quench my thirst*.]– **John 19:28**, *Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”*

–*Thirst* was the last part of His suffering, because “*everything had now been finished.*” He spoke of His thirst “*so that Scripture would be fulfilled*”– **Psa 22:15**, *My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. / Psa 69:20-21*, *Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none. They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.*

–This shortest of His last words on Calvary reminds us of the Bible’s shortest verse: “*Jesus wept.*” Both showed His full identification with our human condition of suffering. But also this, **HOM.idea**. His was...

I. The Thirst of a True Human (Jesus had true *biological* thirst)

A. Water has a dynamic role in sustaining human life: it’s essential...

1. for transporting dissolved substances [allowing nutrition & excretion],
2. for regulating temperature [heat of evaporation & specific heat]
3. for chlorophyll photosynthesis [making sugar from light, CO₂, and H₂O]

B. Thank God for thirst! (built-in mechanism to ensure internal *homeostasis*):

1. *Thirst* is the brain’s sense of water loss [a God-given survival reflex: that can be ignored through *preoccupation*, just as *spiritual thirst* often is.]
2. *Thirst* is dynamically connected with *perspiration & blood loss* [Jesus’ last drink had been from a *cup* that symbolized the thirst He would *suffer* from a *sweating body* that was *losing blood*.]
3. *Thirst* has a psychological component [Think of “**Got milk?**” ads.]
4. *Thirst* can also be deceived [dysfunctional thirst from *diseases* like hypokalemia or *addictions* like alcoholism] – [song: *Fill My Cup, Lord*–

“Like the woman at the well I was seeking / For things that could not satisfy; / And then I heard my Savior speaking: “Draw from My well that never shall run dry.”]. **Christ’s dying thirst can quench human thirsting.**

TRANS: Jesus had felt real human thirst even before the Cross. He’d asked the woman at the well for a drink. But on the Cross He came to experience the sinner’s thirst, in whose place He was dying. *This was...*

II. The Thirst of a True Savior– Heb 2:9 [says Jesus came that “*he might taste death for everyone*” – **He knew the feeling of a sinner’s death:**

A. Jesus experienced both sides of the human spiritual coin:

1. **Before the Cross**, Jesus knew *sweet communion* and *unbroken fellowship with His Father*, Who had sent Him to quench the sinner’s spiritual thirst– **John 7:37-39**. On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.
2. But **on the Cross**, our Savior felt the thirst that sinners feel in their separation from God:
 - a. **He felt His Father’s presence removed (before the Cross– John 8:38a**, “I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence...” / **on the Cross**, it was: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”)
 - b. **God seemed silent now (before**, it was **John 14:31a**, ...I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. / **now**, it’s **Amos 8:11b**, [where He experiences “a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.”])
 - c. **Jesus**, being in *the sinner’s place*, now *thirsts for God’s voice*, but can’t hear it! (Sinful choices dull our spiritual ears from hearing God’s voice—Jesus was now experiencing this plight!)

B. Christ’s *thirst* shows how far His substitutionary death went:

1. *Thirst* was used in pagan writings to describe hell. [**Tantalus** was a mythological king whose punishment for offending the gods was to be tied to a fruit tree up to his chin in water, both always out of reach. His torture of eternal thirst and hunger is where we get the word “*tantalizing*.”]
2. *Thirst* is also a biblical image of hell– [Remember the **parable of the rich man and Lazarus– Luke 16:23-24**. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’]

TRANS: The sinner in hell cries, “*I am thirsty*.” But, on the Cross, the suffering *Savior, dying in the place of sinners*, cried, “*I am thirsty*.” This made **Christ’s thirst on the Cross a fountain to quench human thirsting**. God loved sinners so much that *His Son became human to pay for our sins* and to rescue us from *spiritual thirst*. *This is...*

III. The Thirst of the True God

- A. **God promised in the OT– Isa 55:1**, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. (Salvation is a free gift!)
- B. Remember the woman at the well... Jesus asked her for a drink, but His real thirst was to bring her lost soul to salvation– [In **John 4:32-35** [when his disciples returned with food], he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.] (*God’s thirst is to give lost souls new life in Christ*.)
- C. “*I am thirsty*” can be seen as Christ’s cry for a world that is perishing from spiritual thirst. **His thirst** for lost souls is the **fountain to quench human thirsting**.
 1. *His blood*, streaming down from the Cross, caused Jesus to thirst, but that holy stream became the fountain of living water for all who come to the Cross.
 2. In **Rev 22:17**, The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. (The Church is Christ’s “bride.” The call to “come” is to be our call to a spiritually thirsty world.)

CONCLUSION:

–[**Parable of the Cracked Water Pot**: A pot with a crack leaked on its trip from the river to its owner’s home. It lamented its inadequacy. So on the next trip its owner pointed out a beautiful row of flowers along the trail where the water had leaked, while the other side of the trail was dry and lifeless where the pot had no leak.] –The spiritually dehydrated world needs the living water in Jesus that quenches spiritual thirst. Once we drink of these *waters of salvation*, that message of living water must leak out of our lives to those around us who are still dry and thirsty. This was *Christ’s thirst*. Let it be ours!