

Seven Last Words From The Cross:

I Thirst!

John 19:28

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today we hear and meditate upon the words of Jesus from the cross, "I thirst."

Dying on a cross is thirsty business. Jesus had been beaten, whipped and crowned with thorns. In the process, He'd lost a lot of blood. All this even before having His hands and feet pierced by the nails which held Him to the cross on which He was now dying. Enduring the mental pain and spiritual anguish of carrying the burden of the world's sins, He was overcome with thirst.

We are also told that this is a fulfillment of what Scripture foretold.

But, who is this, who is expressing the physical sensation of thirst on the cross? We respond that it is Jesus. But, who is Jesus? Well, He is the rabbi who went around preaching, healing, and casting out demons. Some said He was a prophet of God. Dear friends in Christ, He is more – He is much more. As you already know, He is true God. But, for our purposes today, we need to remember that He is also true man.

These simple words, "I thirst," remind us that Jesus is truly a man. He needed to be true man. He needed to share our flesh! Why? He had to have our human nature to endure temptation as a man. To fulfill the law for us, Christ needed to live under God's divine law – *as a man*. He needed to actively do, what you and I – in fact, what no man has done or ever will do – perfectly keep the law **AS** a man. This is His active obedience. He willfully placed Himself under the strict demands of the Law and kept it perfectly in our behalf.

He also had to be obedient even to the point of death – **IN HUMAN FLESH**. He had to suffer and die by taking our guilt upon Himself, because we failed to keep the Law. *Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death - that is, the devil.* (Hebrews 2:14)

While all that took place from the time of His arrest, till the time that He died, was done to Him, He could have, at any time, called down legions of angels to fight for Him. He could have used His Divine might and power to free Himself from the hands of the evil men who had brought Him to this point. He could have stopped the whole bloody mess and walked away. He did not do so. Instead, *He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before the shearers, so He did not open His mouth...* (Isaiah 53:7) *He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our peace fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.* (Is. 53:5)

This is called His passive obedience. He could have stopped the ugly proceedings at any time, but He willfully allowed Himself to endure all this done to Him; mocking, spitting, reviling, hitting, crowned with thorns, beating, whipping, and even being nailed to the cross to die. He endured our guilt, unto death, because we fail to keep the law.

"I thirst," Christ says. Why? *Knowing that all was now finished, to fulfill the Scripture, says, "I thirst."* What was finished? What was it He knew? As we see His humanity in the words He speaks, we are also given a glimpse of His divine love. With His knowledge of all the work of salvation about to be fulfilled with His death, His love is shown for you in these words. Christ thirsts after your salvation. In His work, delivering His own flesh unto death upon the cross, is completed the work necessary to bring about your salvation. His death conquers death, for His life is taken from Him without cause, and in His death He gives His life up freely – for you.

He thirsts to bring to you to a holy, spiritual, and heavenly thirst. How many of you thirst? Do you thirst after

righteousness? Do you understand what it means to thirst after righteousness? It is understanding your life and disobedience, in sorrow over sin, and seeing in the cross your salvation being purchased? Do you have an aching desire to be freed from your bondage to sin and made to live a new life? In other words, do you thirst for righteousness?

Do you thirst for the meal that is set before you?

There, on the table before us, resides the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. There is the meal Christ prepared of His own flesh and blood on the cross. As He thirsted, He was filling the cup of salvation with His own precious blood for all eternity. On the cross, the sacrifice was completed. Now, today, it is delivered to you.

There (point to cross), Christ thirsted.

Here (point to the elements on the altar), in this precious meal, your thirst for righteousness is quenched and Christ's thirst for your salvation is delivered to you.

Because Jesus was true man and suffered as you suffer, He is able to understand your suffering, your temptations. It is for this reason that He promises to be with you, to the very end of the age. This isn't some, "God's-out-there-somewhere-watching-over-us" promise. Christ is here.

As He thirsted, He knows your thirst. He knew what it was like to be forsaken by the Father. In this life, we do not yet see God as He desires us to see Him. We thirst after perfect righteousness that we might see God. Jesus quenches your thirst. He who poured Himself out as a "drink offering" for you, pours Himself into you in the precious meal of His Supper. In this meal, He gives you His strength to overcome adversity and temptation through the forgiveness of your sins.

Jesus gives you Himself.

Come to this table. Proclaim, "I thirst." Eat, and drink and be filled with Christ's righteousness. Amen.