

Our Thirst — Satisfied
John 19:28-30

We come to the death of Jesus in this passage of Scripture. And one of the things that is often emphasized by believers and also attacked by skeptics is none other than the deity of our Lord. They many times argue he was just man and the myth of his miracles, wonders, resurrection, and even the bold statements made by him grew over time. But he was just a mere man whose legend grew. But it is incredible to look at how many of these prophetic texts in the Old Testament came to pass, and how Jesus controlled the whole scene in his crucifixion. The text itself speaks not only with power but with credibility that Jesus is none other than the eternal Lord — the Lord of glory. He is none other than God and very God! And all God's people would say Amen!

We also realize that at the virgin conception of Christ — we have the second person of the Trinity, still being very God, taking on a full human nature. He became like his brethren in every respect except for sin. This is a necessary truth of the gospel, and if Jesus is not fully man than he cannot be our redeemer and substitute. There was an ancient heresy docetism which basically said all matter was evil but everything immaterial or spirit is good. Therefore they could not imagine Jesus taking on flesh and having a human nature. So they said that he just appeared to be human, but he was pure spirit and always will be pure spirit. There is a great problem with that theory in our text before us tonight. One is that a spirit does not thirst. This is part and parcel of those who are physical beings. The other is that spirits do not die, which we see in this text that there is a physical death.

So we see throughout this text not only Jesus authority and deity stressed, but also his full and complete humanity. Jesus has the divine authority to lay his body down, and because he is human he truly can suffer and die. And we realize the importance of his death for us as believers. His death was a loving and sacrificial death. He comes and lays down his life as that perfect sacrifice for sin, and it is a awful death. It really is. So often we try to soften the edges of the crucifixion, by doing that we do not realize both the significance and the enormity of his suffering, but also in the midst of that suffering everything around the cross has been planned by God, and has a message of what Jesus is truly doing for us as believers. So as we look at the Lord thirsting tonight, and the soldiers giving him sour wine, we realize that all of this has significance in the glory of what Christ has and is doing in our lives.

And I find this scene so challenging. We are repulsed by and at the same time drawn to the cross. And one of the reasons it captures our attention is we all know what it is like to thirst. Certainly with the abundance of water around us we cannot really understand how necessary water was in the ancient world, or in that dry arid land what it was to be really parched. They knew. But we still know what it is like to thirst physically. But we also know what it is like to thirst spiritual. All of us here today are thirsting for something. The only question that remains is what are we thirsting for? Every person is looking for satisfaction, joy and meaning. And our sinful hearts are deceptive hearts look for that satisfaction by drinking at the waters of this world — the waters of sin that can never satisfy. People try to find it through purchases. Our closets are bursting with far too many clothes but we still complain we have nothing to wear. Why? Because materialism can never satisfy. It never was meant to, but the more we

go down that road the more we have to feed that thirst, and the more thirsty you become. It is the same with sex. Billions and billions are spent every month and every year on pornography on the internet. It is still the greatest generator of revenue on the web. Why? Because you can never quench your thirst and find satisfaction. It shackles a person that they have to keep coming back. Couples argue about sex and the frequency or the absence. Why? They are looking to feed their ever growing thirst. I can't be happy or satisfied unless I have . . .

Let me ask you — are you seeking to find your satisfaction from a fountain that will never satisfy? Because as we look at this passage of Scripture we see the true fountain who can satisfy. And I want to look at this passage. We will walk through these few verses, seek to gain an understanding of the text, and then make some observations about our thirst. And my hope is that we will see where truly life is, where true satisfaction is found. That we will turn from the deceptive calling of sin because our Lord and the promises of our Lord are truly so much more satisfying.

1. We need to see the meaning of the text. Vv. 28-30

This is just an amazing text. And again you see both the deity of our Lord and also the humanity of Christ. He is so cognizant of all that he needed to suffer and when that point came to pass he expires. He will not suffer more than he needs, but also he will not suffer less than drinking that full cup of God's wrath. And again, when you look at a section like this, we have to realize once again that Jesus is accomplishing all of this for you and me. It is love that drew him to Calvary. The Father will be magnified, his wrath will be satisfied, and those who trust in him will be forever redeemed.

So let's work through these three verses. Look at verse 28, **"After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), 'I thirst.'"** Jesus knows that his end had come. He knows that the full wrath of God had been satisfied and all that remained was one element then his death. And many expositors think that Jesus is calmly and serenely hanging on the cross until he expires, and they think of him hopping through all of the Old Testament until he comes to this last prophecy that needs to be fulfilled. He calls out, and the soldiers unknowingly seek to give him the sour wine. And certainly he is aware of what needs to be fulfilled, but he calls out for relief because he is thirsty. Crucifixion exhausted the body. It caused the loss of so much fluid, and it parched the body more than we could ever imagine.

And this is the idea behind these prophecies. This is a fulfillment of Psalm 69:20-21. And as you listen to it, the whole emphasis is on suffering, physical suffering and anguish. Jesus certainly fulfilled scripture, but the main emphasis is suffering, **"Reproaches have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."** Listen to also Psalm 22:14-15 describe his physical condition and we can understand why he wants a little relief, **"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death."** Remember, Jesus is going through this turmoil for me and you. He is suffering that we might have life and that we would never suffer God's just wrath against sin.

Now look at the next verse, **“A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.”** Now this would have been cheap wine that the soldiers drank in order to stay hydrated. This is not the wine he was offered over in Matthew 27:34. That had gall in it, and it was used to deaden the senses. But Jesus was fully in control of all of his faculties. This wine was often given to give some relief but it was not given in mercy but the exact opposite — to prolong death and prolong suffering.

It is interesting that a hyssop branch was used because this branch had a spongy blossom on top. This is the branch that was used by the priests as the sprinkled the atoning sacrifices in the temple. It was also used to apply the blood on the doorposts of houses of the Israelites in Exodus during that first Passover. But here the hyssop branch is not providing atonement for Christ, but his precious blood that no doubt the hyssop branch soaks, and his blood that drips from that cross is what provides atonement for sinners like you and me.

Now look at the last verse because it is so glorious, because we have seen the humanity of Christ in this section, but now we see his authority that has been a main theme that has run through the last couple of chapters with his arrest and trial and now crucifixion. Man is not ultimately in control. But the One who is in control is none other than our Author and Finisher of our faith. **“When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”** When he received the sour wine, when all that the Father intended him to go through was accomplished. He didn’t just say it, but Matthew says he cried out — **“It is Finished!”** What was finished? And what was finished is everything that needed to be done to provide full free redemption, forgiveness for sinners like us. It is the accomplishment of Isaiah 53:5-6, **“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned— every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”**

And it is an incredible verse because Jesus said no one takes his life but he lays it down on his own accord, and here you see him doing exactly that. He bowed his head. He gave up his spirit. He is in control. And again, these are triumphant words — “It is finished.” And if you ever look at your sin, and even your ongoing struggle with sin, and wonder if the sacrifice of Christ was enough, listen to these words — “It is finished!” They are incredible words that indicate all that he came to do he did. He provided that sacrifice and it is accomplished, and it is accomplished forever more!

And think of it because although in many ways this section of the narrative is so hard to read, at the same time we are drawn to it, and why? It is not that we enjoy gore or the suffering of someone else, but we are drawn to such amazing love. The height and the breadth of this love is so stunning because he doesn’t die for his friends but his enemies that he will make his friends. We love him because he first loved us. And so often we try to overcome the idols of the heart through sheer willpower. But the way we overcome the siren songs of sin is looking and beholding of Christ, all that he is for us, and all that he accomplished for people like us.

People often have such a high view of themselves, and therefore this idea of wrath and this gory scene makes no sense. But when you are growing to see that you

are not a very good person, and seeing the enormity of your sin toward God and even toward other image bearers, we are amazed at such unmerited love. Christ intentionally goes to the cross, and after all is done intentionally gives up his spirit. Such love draws us to our Saviour. The more we meditate on him, the more sin loses its appeal but look at the glory of the One who died and now lives — the one who loves me. Are you struggling with sin? Come to the cross. Are you struggling with apathy? Come to the cross. Are you struggling with lust, anger or frustration with life in general? Come to the cross. The immensity of this love truly does change us.

2. We need to make some observations of this passage.

We need to make this section a little more personal. And one is to realize what Jesus went through in his perfect humanity on that cross. One is to hear the cry from the cross of the desire for relief, “I thirst!” Why is that cry such a necessity that John makes note of it? And we often say, and rightly so, it is to fulfill prophecy. But is there any other reason? And the answer is yes, because this is part of the punishment for sin. What is built into each one of us is a thirst, not just physical but spiritual. Our problem is we long or thirst for something in creation above the Creator. We reject him for some other idol that we have fashioned in our hearts. We were meant to find our thirst quenched and forever satisfied in Christ. And one of the glories in this life is we can taste and see that the Lord is good. There is a joy and satisfaction in realizing all that Jesus is for us. But what we try to find is comfort in the things in the here and now. Isn't it true, look at what you fought for and argued about and strived for, and even when we get or fulfill those desires our thirst at best is only momentarily quenched.

And think of what hell is — it is the withdrawal of God, and with the withdrawal of God, it is the loss or the deprivation of any comfort whatsoever. Think of the description of hell that we have in the Scriptures. We have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man spent his life trying to fill and quench every desire and fulfill every earthly comfort, but suppressed any thought of God or any thought of self-denial in this life. And he wakes up in this place of torment. Remember what he cries out to Abraham? Listen to Luke 16:24, “**And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’**” But what is the problem? The problem is that there is an impassible chasm, and that chasm represent the comfort and the security between those in Christ and those outside of Christ. He is in torment and robbed of the presence of the Lord and any comfort that could ever come. People refuse to come and find forgiveness in God, so God in his justice will refuse them.

So think of it the significance of Jesus thirsting. Again, let's ask the question — why did Jesus thirst? And the answer is so that we would not thirst. He thirsted that we would have life and life so abundant and free. Richard Phillips quotes Charles Spurgeon, “**If Jesus had not thirsted, every one of us would have thirsted for ever afar off from God, with an impassable gulf between us and heaven. Our sinful tongues, blistered by the fever of passion, must have burned for ever had not his tongue been tormented with thirst in our stead.**” The cry of Jesus from the cross gives an apt illustration and demonstration of what we all deserve from God for all eternity. And I believe one of the reasons we struggle in life, suffering, and with others

is we think we are better than we are. We think we are more deserving than we are. We think we are more noble than we are. Folks, this is what we deserve for all of eternity. But here is the good news — One has come to thirst so that we never have to thirst. One has tasted not only death but hell so that you and I do not have to. We not only see who Christ is by looking at his suffering, but we see who we are and what we deserve for all of eternity. We deserve the absence of any comfort from our God. But the gift we get is not only the absence of torment but everlasting glory and comfort in being in the presence of the One we love and cherish. He tasted hell and drank that cup fully for you and me. What a Saviour, what a Lord.

And think of it, because another thing we see in this passage is the irony. Because think of the cry of Christ here — “I thirst.” But one of the main themes running through this gospel is that Jesus is living water. He is the well that can never run dry. Remember what he said to woman at the well when he asked her for water? John 4:13-14 records his words, **“Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water 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.’”** And think of what Jesus said on the during the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7:37-38, **“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘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.’”** Here is the living water. Here is the fountain — Jesus Christ who promises that if we drink of him we will never thirst again. It almost seems like a contradiction here for Jesus to say, “I thirst.” It is almost like his water has run dry. But here it is — through his sacrifice he becomes our living and eternal spring. And for anyone and every one who ever comes to him can be clean. Can be satisfied.

That is the message! To the woman at the well, you have tried the sinful pleasures of sin, even the man that you are living with now is not your husband. But there is rest for your weary soul. There is forgiveness which is everlasting. If you drink of the sinful pleasure of this world you will be always thirsty. It can never satisfy. But to drink of Christ. To trust in him, to have his life filled in us through the Holy Spirit well that is thirst satisfied forevermore! The one who thirsted on the cross now beckons all who are thirsty to come to him to have everlasting life. Listen to glorious invitation that comes at the end of the Bible in Revelation 22:17, **“The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.”** There is no price for this water because one has already paid the price. The call is to simply come. There really is rest for your weary soul. There really is forgiveness of your debt.

But there is another thirst that is created through this with our thirst being satisfied. And that is we want to drink more of our Christ. We want to learn for more of him. We want to not only taste and see that the Lord is good, but keep tasting keep drinking of his goodness and seeing his goodness. It is a thirst that those of the world have never experience because they have never drank of that cup that never runs dry. They have never known Christ. And what is created by believing and drinking of Christ is a new desire, a new longing that we never had before. We run toward him and yearn for him, and that is to know Christ more intimately and gloriously. It is more than just

knowing about Christ but knowing him. And don't you feel that yearning in you? Think of it, that yearning is described so wonderfully and accurately in Psalm 42:1-2, "**As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?**" Have you had that experience? We come into church and we are parched with the trials and tribulations of life. Our thoughts and our hearts are overwhelmed. But then our thirsty souls drink. We see Christ. We see who we are. We see and oh we are satisfied.

But what that desire is meant to create in us is a greater desire to know Christ. And here is the incredible thing because he went to the cross, because he thirsted, he really is the Well that will never run dry, and he always satisfies. The question for us is — are we coming to the fountain? Are we feeding and drinking of Christ? Oh Christian, with so many things calling on us to find satisfaction in them, look to where satisfaction is, and know as we grow there is so much greater satisfaction in all that Jesus has done and all that he truly is for us.