

We come this morning to our Savior's second word from the cross, as recorded by John. Already our Savior has spoken words of forgiveness, salvation, and as we saw last week, words of affection. We now come to words of suffering.

Now, let me simply say, the Holy Spirit obviously had specific reasons for recording these sayings of our Savior from the cross. This particular saying is likely the fifth of seven sayings recorded, and along with what we considered last week, is only recorded by John.

A.W. Pink—"The fact that this is recorded as one of the seven Cross-utterances of our Lord intimates that it is a word of precious meaning, a word to be treasured up in our hearts, a word deserving of prolonged meditation."

And thus, I want to consider three things about our Savior's thirst—The Meaning of His Thirst, Reasons for His Thirst, and The Lessons from His Thirst.

- I. The Meaning of His Thirst
- II. The Reasons for His Thirst
- III. The Lessons from His Thirst

I. The Meaning of His Thirst

1. I reminded you last week that our Savior was and is fully human and divine—He is the GodMan—the Word made flesh.
2. And with regards to His human nature, it was just as our nature, sin excepted—He had a human body and soul.
3. Here I fear some Christians remain confused—Christ didn't merely have a human body as if it were only a shell.
4. For Christ to have a human nature of necessity meant, He had a human body and soul—this is what human nature consists of.
5. It's for this reason, commentators have usually described our Savior's thirst as both a physical and spiritual thirst.
6. (1) Physical thirst—that is, His thirst was a literal thirst of body. For various reasons crucifixion caused dehydration.
7. D.A. Carson—"A man scourged, bleeding, and hanging on a cross under the Near-Easter sun would be so desperately dehydrated that thirst would be part of the torture."
8. Furthermore, we are told that the activities associated with crucifixion, would often create a terrorizing fever in a person.
9. CHS—"That thirst was caused, in part, by the loss of blood, and by the fever created by the irritation caused by His four grievous wounds. The nails were fastened in the most sensitive parts of the body, and the wounds were widened as the weight of His body dragged the nails through His blessed flesh and tore His tender nerves. The extreme tension produced a burning feverishness (fever)."
10. Thus, our Savior's body was parched, His lips and mouth dry, and as the result, cried out under the agony—I thirst.
11. I think most of us brethren, have experienced thirst in some sense, but few, if any of us, have known it like this.
12. To be so parched that your body cries out in pain and agony—this was a part of our Savior's bodily or physical suffering (CHS—"It was pain that dried His mouth and made it like an oven').
13. (2) Spiritual thirst—by this is meant, a thirst of soul, which was illustrated or made known in a thirst of body.
14. Now, admittedly, it may seem far-fetched to understand this thirst as anything other than a literal physical thirst.
15. But, as I will attempt to show you, the sufferings of Savior on the cross, as well as sinners in hell, are elsewhere describes as a spiritual thirst.

16. Ps.22:14-15—"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death."
17. That these words are those of our Savior on the cross is evident—it's possible that our Savior repeated the whole Psalm while on the cross.
18. Verses 14-15, actually provide six related imageries that underscore the nature of our Savior's suffering on the cross.
19. Now, it's important to keep in mind that our Savior is being treated similar to the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.
20. In fact, if one of those animals could speak, they would have said the exact things our Savior says in verses 14-15.
21. "I am poured out like water"—this likely has reference to the blood, that was first poured out before the altar.
22. "All My bones are out of joint"—this likely has reference to the fact, that the OC sacrifices were cut into pieces.
23. "My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me"—this refers to the flames that would then consume the sacrifice.
24. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws"—this refers to the pain and suffering our Savior endured.
25. "You have brought Me to the dust of death"—this refers to our Savior's death and the burial of His body in the grave.
26. But there's one phrase that I want to expand upon—"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws."
27. A potsherd refers to a piece of a broken clay pot—it was dry and brittle—this is how our Savior's human soul felt.
28. "My tongue clings to My jaws"—that is, His mouth was dry—which was the expression of His soul being dried up.
29. Why did our Savior feel as if His soul was dried up, but because His heart was melting in the flames of divine wrath!
30. Remember, after they cut the sacrifice in pieces, they burned various portions on the altar—it was roasted in the flames.
31. And thus, here in Psalm 22, our Savior is describing intense physical pain and agony, in terms of profound thirst.
32. Lk.16:23-24—"And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."
33. Historically, this account has been understood as a parable—I personally believe there's every reason to maintain this (otherwise it simply doesn't make sense in many ways).
34. There were two men—the rich man (who was wicked), and poor Lazarus (who was righteous)—they both die.
35. The rich man is in Hades (hell), while Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, which is another way to describe paradise.
36. (a) What he wanted—"Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue."
37. Now, again this is figurative language to underscore one essential point—hell is a place of unbearable torment.
38. The rich man desired relief—when a person dies their body returns to the ground and their souls go a place of torment or bliss.
39. Thus, the rich man didn't have a literal tongue, because he was spirit, but the agony he felt was described as an intense heat and thirst.
40. (b) Why he wanted it—"for I am tormented in this flame"—again, the flame doesn't have to be a literal flame.

41. The point being—the torments of hell are similar to fire—the pains of hell are similar to that of a spiritual fire.
42. Dear brethren, there is a sense in which the rich man was being spiritually roasted within the flames of God's wrath.
43. This is why he wanted just a drop of water to cool his tongue—he wanted just a drop of water to quench his thirst.
44. And thus, we learn, that our Savior's thirst was both physical and spiritual—a thirst of the body and a thirst of the soul.

II. The Reasons for His Thirst

1. Here I want to suggest three related reasons WHY the Holy Spirit has inspired John to record this saying of our Savior.
2. (1) To fulfill prophecy, v28—"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst!"
3. In other our Savior's thirst, was in direct fulfillment to Psalm 69, in which we find a prophetic picture of the Messiah.
4. Ps.69:21—"They also gave Me gall for my food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink"—gall refers to a bitter herb or plant.
5. It's most likely that Psalm 69 is a typical Psalm, where David's experiences shadow those of the Messiah to come.
6. It's also possible that it's prophetic which means David merely spoke as a mouthpiece for Christ, and doesn't intend to speak about his own experiences.
7. Either way, whether or not the Psalm is typical or prophetic, ultimately speaking, this Psalm foretold Christ's suffering.
8. The obvious reason being—our Savior alludes to this ancient Psalm, and says it was fulfilled in Him on the cross.
9. If we were to compare the gospel accounts, it becomes evident our Savior was offered something to drink twice.
10. Mk.15:23—"Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh (gall) to drink, but He did not take it" v36—"Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink."
11. Apparently, when our Savior reached the place of His crucifixion, they offered him something to drink and He refused it, and then again when He was on the cross, He cried "I thirst" and they gave Him some sour wine and He drank it.
12. Now, there have been various answers suggested as to why He denied drinking the first and then drank the second.
13. Many have suggested that the first drink was offered Him as a sedative designed to dull the agony and pain of crucifixion.
14. If this is true, then it would teach us our Savior refused to water-down the cup of suffering His Father gave Him.
15. One thing is for certain, He drank the second because He intended to fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 69 and v21.
16. And thus, the Roman soldiers attached a sponge soaked in sour wine attached to a stalk of hyssop, and raised it to His lips.
17. And again, dear brethren, we are reminded that our beloved Savior suffered intentionally, knowing what it would entail.
18. He came into this world with His eyes wide open—He went to Jerusalem fully aware of what awaited Him there.
19. (2) To prove His humanity—that is, our Savior endured thirst in order to experience all human affliction and hardship.
20. Poverty, loneliness, hunger, abandonment, nakedness, these are things are Savior Himself endured during His lifetime.

21. Simply put, there is no human suffering or affliction that He cannot sympathize with, for He Himself endured it.
22. 1Cor.4:11—"To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless."
23. O dear brethren, what an encouraged this is for the poor suffering saint—in many ways, Christians in this country suffer little.
24. We have so much! And yet, in days gone by, and presently in other countries, many Christians go without their basic needs.
25. But here, dear brethren, in our Savior's thirst, we are reminded that He too suffered great affliction and need—He too thirsted.
26. Heb.4:15—"For 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."
27. CHS—"If Jesus said, I thirst, then He knows all our frailties and woes. The next time we are in pain or are suffering depression of spirit we will remember that our Lord understands it all, for He has had practical, personal experience of it. Neither in torture of body nor in sadness of heart are we deserted by our Lord; His line is parallel with ours. The arrow which has lately pierced thee, my brother, was first stained with His blood. The cup of which you are made to drink, though it be very bitter, bears the mark of His lips about its brim. He has traversed the mournful way before you, and every footprint you lave in the sodden soil is stamped side by side with His footmarks. Let the sympathy of Christ, then, be fully believed in and deeply appreciated, since He said, I thirst."
28. (3) To illustrate His suffering—by this again I mean, the thirst our Savior endured, physical and spiritual, was a punishment for our sins.

III. The Lessons from His Thirst

1. Here, I simply want to use our last few minutes to summarize and suggest, four important lessons from our Savior's thirst.
2. (1) In our Savior's thirst, we learn about the severity of sin—why was it brethren, that our Savior thirst as He did.
3. What was the cause of His suffering? Was He not enduring the agony and punishment of an angry and just God?
4. And if so, Why? Why was the Father so angry that He must punish even His own beloved Son? What could have been the cause of such wrath?
5. Well, friends, I trust we all know the answer to that question. SIN. It was because He was punished for sin that He thirsted.
6. I suggest this is one of the greatest incentives for us to hate and forsake sin—it necessitated our Savior's thirst.
7. John Flavel—"In the looking glass of the cross, we may see more of the evil of sin, than if God should let us down to hell, and there we should see all the tortures and torments of the damned."
8. John Flavel—"If we should see and hear all this, it is not so much as what we may see in this text, where the Son of God, under His sufferings for it, cries out, I thirst. O then, let not thy vain heart slight sin, as if it were but a small thing! Fools make a mock at sin, but wise men tremble at it."
9. (2) In our Savior's thirst, we learn about the torments of hell—we learn that hell is physical and spiritual torment.
10. John Flavel—"If Christ complained, I thirst, when He had conflicted but a few hours with the wrath of God; what is their state then, that are to grapple with it forever? When millions of years are past and gone, then thousand millions more are coming on. There is an everlasting thirst in hell, and it admits of no relief."
11. Historically, the punishment of hell is described in two ways—(a) pain of sense, and (b) pain of loss, and both are illustrated in the concept of thirst.
12. The punishment of hell will entail the pain of sense—that is, the body and soul will burn within the flames of God's wrath.
13. The punishment of hell will entail the pain of loss—that is, there will never be any comfort or satisfaction given.

14. (2) In our Savior's thirst, we learn what a sinner needs—that is, a sinner needs to know and feel his own thirst.
15. For a poor sinner to rightly come to Christ, there must be a measure of thirst in His soul—He must know, to some degree, God's hot displeasure against him.
16. Isa.55:1—"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters" Jn.7:37—"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."
17. I think oftentimes, people take these texts, which speak about sinners thirsting, to merely mean, lack of satisfaction.
18. That is—If all the things of this world have left you thirsty, have failed to give true and lasting satisfaction, then come and try Jesus.
19. Now, don't get me wrong, brethren, I agree, the poor thirsty sinner has failed to find true and lasting satisfaction from this world.
20. But, that's not all that this thirst entails, it also entails, and I suggest largely entails, a sense of deep spiritual agony.
to such people the invitation comes—"Come to the waters, and yes find satisfaction, but also, come to the waters and find relieve.
21. (4) In our Savior's thirst, we learn about the glory of the gospel—this of course, is a very wonderful and beautiful truth.
22. Our Savior invited every person who thirsted, to come to Him, that they may drink from the drink from the wells of salvation.
23. Thus, there is a true sense in which, our thirst as poor and needy sinners, is remedied in Christ's thirst upon the cross.
24. Or perhaps, put another way—Christ thirsted so that every person who comes to Him by faith, will have their thirst quenched.
25. Or perhaps, best yet—Christ not only thirsted that we wouldn't, but secured for us the joy of drinking from the fountain of life for all eternity.
26. John Flavel—"O bless God, that Jesus Christ thirsted under the heart of His wrath once, that you might not be scorched with it forever. If He had not cried, I thirst, you must have cried out of thirst eternally, and never be satisfied."
27. Thus, hell is not only described as eternal thirsting, but heaven is also described as eternally drinking from the river of life and being satisfied.
28. Ps.36:8-9—"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You will make them drink of the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life (Isa.41:17-18)."
29. If eternal punishment is described as being banished from God, dwelling in a desert of sorts without any water.
30. Then eternal blessedness is described as dwelling in Paradise, drinking eternally from the river of God's pleasures.