

I Thirst
John 19:28-30
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Well this morning I want us to step away from Romans in order to prepare our hearts for the Passion week of our Lord. You may not realize it, but I can tell you that I have been on a deliberate course since 2013 on a few of our Palm Sundays to slowly work our way through the seven extraordinary statements that our Lord made from the cross. These statements are often called *the Seven Words of the Cross*. One of those statements occurs in both Matthew and Mark, three of them are unique to Luke, and the other three are unique to John. Three of them were addressed to God, one of them to the thief hanging next to Him on the cross, one to Mary and John as He took care of His mother, one to the crowd, and one of the statements was made intentionally to everyone who had gathered there for the crucifixion.

Jesus made three of these statements between 9:00 AM and noon. Luke 23:34 is the first of them, "Father forgive them; for they know do not know what they are doing." The second comes in Luke 23:43, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise," to the thief hanging next to Him. The third one is in John 19, verse 27, "Woman, behold, your Son," to Mary. And to John, "Behold, your mother." Those all happened before noon. From noon until about 3pm there was complete darkness that covered the entire land and we hear nothing from Jesus. Nothing, but silence for most of those three hours. But just before 3:00 PM on that Friday, Jesus made a series of four other statements from the cross in quick succession. The fourth is recorded in both Matthew 27 and Mark 15, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" The fifth in John 19:28, "I am thirsty." The sixth in John 19:30, "It is finished!" And then in Luke 23:46, "Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit."

Those are remarkable statements. But I don't think we fully understand how remarkable they are. Listen to J. Oswald Sanders. He writes of these seven last sayings of Christ,

Because they were His last words, and spoken under such tragic circumstances, the Seven Sayings of our Lord, from the pulpit of the cross, are of special significance. In them, He laid bare His inmost soul, and in them he exemplified the Spiritual principles He had been teaching. Each of these sayings, [Sanders writes], is an ocean of truth compressed into a drop of speech. That monstrous moment of the cross was transformed into the most eloquent pulpit of the ages.

This morning, I want us in our continuing study of these over the last number of years, to meditate on Jesus' fifth eloquent sermon from the cross. It's found in John 19 where I invite you to turn with me, John 19. It's contained in just three verses, John 19, and I'll begin reading in verse 28,

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

This fifth saying in the Greek text is just one word, just one two-syllable word. It's translated here in English in three words, "*I am thirsty*." The previous saying, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?*" It was a cry of spiritual torment, as He endured the separation from the Father. This is a cry of great physical torment. I want us to work our way through these verses both exegetically and theologically, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I want us to try to fathom the depths of this profound saying from the cross. Because in just one Greek word, I want us to see six profound implications. Six profound implications.

The first implication that we discover in this saying of our Lord from the cross, is Jesus' real identity as a man. Jesus' real identity as a man. Notice verse 28 again, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, 'I am thirsty.'" A.W. Pink in his book on the last sayings of our Lord writes this,

"I thirst." What a text for a sermon, a short one it is true, yet how comprehensive, how expressive, how tragic. The Maker of heaven and earth with parched lips. The Lord of glory in need of a drink. The beloved of the Father crying, "I thirst." What a word is this? Plainly, no uninspired pen, drew such a picture.

In this saying, "I am thirsty," we discover Jesus' true humanity. The Old Testament had prophesied that the Messiah would be divine. We understand that, you have passages like even the one we sang together this morning in Isaiah 9:6, "a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Mighty God." Throughout Jesus' life there was clear and undeniable evidence that He was truly and fully God, but that's a different sermon for a different time. Jesus was at the same time however, truly and fully man. Again, the Old Testament prophesied that Messiah would be. In the very first prophesy about the coming Messiah in Genesis 3:15 we're told that He would be of the seed of a woman. In 2 Samuel 7, verses 13 and 14, we're told that He would be a physical descendant of David, the King of Israel. Even in that great prophesy of Isaiah 53, we're told in verse 3 that He would be a man of sorrows, a man of sorrows.

In the New Testament, of course, His humanity is crystal clear. The angels said to Joseph in Matthew 1, verse 23, "He shall be called Immanuel," which means, *God with us*. Exactly how would He be with us? Well, John is very clear in John chapter 1. It says in John 1:1 that, "the Word was God," but in verse 14, it says that, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." And

we saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father. He didn't simply dwell with us, He wasn't just God with us, He was God as one of us. He became flesh, he became fully and completely human. We read it together just a moment ago in our Scripture reading, 1 Timothy 3:16, "By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness." Great is this mystery of the Gospel, revealed in the revelation of God Himself. Jesus, it says, "was revealed in the flesh." He was truly man, and if you read the gospels you see that demonstrated again, and again, and again in the ways He interacts with people. Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14, says, "since the children [that's us] share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same." Flesh and blood, just like us. Hebrews 2:17 says, "He had to be made like His brethren [again that's us] in all things".

Do you understand? Jesus was just like you are. He was fully human, body and soul. The only difference was that He was without sin. But He was everything you are as a human being. In the incarnation, Jesus did not cease to be anything He had been before as God, but He took on Himself what He had not before and that was full and complete humanity. And on the cross, we see a key piece of evidence of His full and complete humanity. Think about this, just like us, He experienced physical pain. Physical pain. Oswald Sanders writes, "He who began His ministry with gnawing hunger, in the temptation, forty days, is closing it with raging thirst." Jesus' thirst on the cross confirms again, that He was truly human. Why? Because God never gets thirsty, ever. The fact that He thirsted was proof that He had become fully and completely like us, so His cry of thirst confirms His real identity as a man.

Now I think you understand the humanity of Jesus, but let me ask you a question. Do you understand why that was important? Why does it matter? I can't put it any better than the Heidelberg Catechism does. I was rereading it again recently. Let me just read to you several questions and answers from the Heidelberg Catechism. Here is the explanation of why this matters. Catechism says,

Since according to God's righteous judgment, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into His favor? [The answer is:] God demands that His justice be satisfied; therefore, we must make full payment, either by ourselves or through another.

[The next question says:] Can we by ourselves make this payment? Certainly not, on the contrary, we daily increase our debt. [We can't atone for our sins, because every day we add to them].

What kind of mediator and deliverer must we then seek? [Here we get to the heart of it.] One who is a true and righteous man; and yet, more powerful than all creatures. That is one who is at the same time, true God.

[Now that, listen to this, here is the explanation why He has to be both God and man. First of all:] Why must He be a true and righteous man? [Answer] He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sin, should pay for sin. He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.

Why must He at the same time be true God? He must be true God, so that by the power of His divine nature, He might bear in His human nature, the burden of God's wrath, and might obtain for us and restore to us, righteousness and life.

[And it ends.] Who is that mediator, who is at the same time, true God and a true and righteous man? [The answer of course is:] Our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is exactly what the Scriptures teach. First Timothy, chapter 2, verse 5, "there is one mediator between God and men, [whom?], the man Christ Jesus." He had to be just like you in order to pay for your sin. And yet, he had to be completely unlike you in being without sin so that He could offer Himself for others. This cry from the cross, here's what I want you to understand, this cry from the cross proves, He was truly man and was therefore qualified to serve as your substitute.

A second implications of this cry is Jesus' biblical credentials as the Messiah. Jesus' biblical credentials as the Messiah. Look again at verse 28, of John 19, "After this, Jesus, [now notice this], knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, 'I am thirsty.'" That's a remarkable statement. Do you understand that our Lord was perfectly the blessed man of Psalm 1? No one has ever been the blessed man of Psalm 1 like He was. His delight was in the law of the Lord and in His law He meditated day and night. He truly lived by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. From His youth, He had heard the Scriptures read and taught every week at His synagogue in Nazareth. He studied the Scriptures for Himself. He undoubtedly, as many of His time did, memorized large portions of it. He meditated on it constantly and throughout His ministry, He taught it in a synagogue, somewhere in the land of Israel, every week. Now on the cross, in His greatest trial, in His most intense suffering, it was the Scripture that came to His mind.

He realized He was approaching the end, and it wasn't an end outside of His control; He intended to lay down His life at 3:00 PM on that Friday afternoon at the time of the afternoon sacrifice. Why? Because that was a special Friday, that was Passover. At the very time the Passover lambs were being slain, He would lay down His life as our Passover Lamb. He knew that was coming. He was in full and complete control, and in His mind there on the cross, He rehearsed all of the Old Testament text that prophesied the details of the life, the ministry, and the suffering of the

Messiah, whom He knew Himself to be. And our text says, He concluded that all things had been accomplished, except one. He realized there was one prophesy about His death on the cross that had not yet been fulfilled. Verse 28 says, "to fulfill the Scripture, He said, 'I am thirsty.'"

Now don't misunderstand, Jesus isn't play acting here, He really and truly was thirsty, but He said this, in part, to fulfill an Old Testament prophesy about Messiah. Both His thirst and His effort to ease that thirst, fulfill the Scripture. There are two places that mention the thirst of the Messiah and His sufferings. Two Messianic Psalms. The first one is Psalm 22, Psalm 22, verse 15, one of the most powerful of the Messianic Psalms that details the sufferings of Messiah in the offering of Himself for sin. And Psalm 22:15 says, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." If you've been to Israel, you've seen those little fragments of clay pots, dry to the bone, easily shattered. "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; [my tongue cleaves to my jaws] And You lay me [speaking to God] in the dust of death."

You see this same idea and how that thirst was to be alleviated in Psalm 69 which is really, I think, the primary text Jesus is quoting. Psalm 69, verse 21 says, "for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, it uses exactly the same word that's in our text in John 19. Now in Psalm 69, this verse that Jesus quotes is part of a lengthy description about what the righteous man often suffers from the hands of evil men. And it's, of course, perfectly fulfilled in *the* righteous one, Jesus Christ. In the context of the Psalm, it's interesting, giving the drink to the righteous sufferer is actually part of the torment inflicted on Him by His tormentors- which is exactly what happened in Jesus' case. Some gave Him something to drink remember to say, "Let's see if Elijah comes." He had just called out *Eloi*, they misunderstood, *My God*, for *Elijah*. And this was part of the torment they inflicted on Him, but Jesus knew, Jesus knew this prophesy about Messiah. And He knew that admitting His thirst would move the soldier to give Him sour wine and, thus, fulfill the prophesy. So, think about this, even His cry, "I thirst," was an act of intentional, self-conscious obedience to the Scripture. In the moment of His most intense suffering, the thing that mattered most to Him, was obeying the word of God. Are you that committed to the Scripture?

D.A. Carson writes,

"Others may unconsciously play their part in the divine plan of redemption, but not Jesus. Jesus wasn't an unconscious participant, He was fully engaged. Everything was unfolding according to the divine plan as revealed in the word of God and He was intent on obeying the Father's will down to the last detail."

Notice it says in verse 28, Jesus' cry of thirst, you notice this, "*fulfilled* the Scriptures." The Greek word for *fulfill* there, in verse 28, is not the normal word that's used throughout the gospels, in fact, this word is only used here, this way, in the New Testament.

It means, as it's used here, *to bring something to its end. To bring something to its aim, to its goal.* Most theologians agree that this statement is not just referring to Jesus saying, "I thirst," and fulfilling the prophesy that says I'll thirst and they'll give me sour wine. Instead it's much broader than that, it points to the complete fulfillment of all Scripture has said in Jesus Christ. He said this in order to bring His entire work to its end, to its goal, to its aim, and in doing so, to do so according to the Scripture. In other words, this word from the cross, provides clear evidence, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. He fulfilled every Old Testament prophesy, even down to being thirsty and having that thirst met with sour wine. There's nothing the Old Testament says about the Messiah that was not fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Even this cry, at the very end of His life, punctuates His claim, His credentials, to be the One the Old Testament had promised, that God had promised to His people.

A third implication of this mighty cry is Jesus' suffering with us as our brother. Jesus' suffering with us as our brother. He says, "I am thirsty." Now, I think you understand why that would be true. Jesus had probably had nothing to drink since the Last Supper some 18 hours before. Since then, He had agonized in Gethsemane, and you remember there, He sweat great drops of blood. He had then been violently arrested. Over the process of the night and the early morning, He had endured six separate trials; three before the Jewish authorities, three before the Roman authorities. He had spent the night with little or no sleep. He had been physically abused; He had been crowned with thorns, beaten, He had had His beard plucked, And He had endured, above all that, the incredible torture of the Roman scourge, which often left men dead and even more often left their organs visible. In this ordeal, He had undoubtedly lost a great deal of blood. Then, you remember, He was tasked with carrying the huge cross member part of the way to Golgotha before He collapsed under its weight, and Simon of Cyrene carried it the rest of the way.

Once they had arrived at Calvary, He had been nailed to the cross with great spikes; don't think tiny, little, ten penny nails, we're talking huge spikes through His wrists, through His feet to affix Him to the cross. For three hours, from 9:00 AM until noon, Jesus had hung on that cross with His naked body exposed to the intensity of the Middle Eastern sun. And for all six hours that he hung on the cross, He struggled every single moment to get His breath. That was the death of crucifixion, it was the slow death of suffocation, as you could not get the air you needed to breath. And so for six hours, He had pushed up against the nails in His feet. He had pulled against the nails in His wrist, again, and again, dragging His bare back against the cross, just to get enough air in order not to suffocate. Then there was the raging fever that accompanied all of the physical trauma that He had endured.

And if the physical wasn't enough, think about the emotional trauma that our Lord had endured. Think about what had happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. Think about how taxing the great emotional traumas of your life have been. Think about how devastating. Imagine for a moment the eternal Son of God having become man and, for the first time in His life, being spiritually

separated from the Father. His previous cry shows that He was painfully aware of that, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" So, by the time Jesus says this near 3:00 PM on Friday afternoon, He was desperately dehydrated. And those who have experienced such things, tell us that thirst alone, at this point, was a huge part of the torture that He endured. And yet, all that I just described to you, Jesus endured without complaint or without a cry for mercy. Now, just before 3:00 PM it is from swollen and cracked lips that He spoke the word that captured the physical agony- all of that agony that he had endured that now racked his entire body and out came the single word of suffering, "I thirst."

Physical pain and emotional pain and suffering they are constant realities in the fallen world in which we live. This morning on your way to church, you may have driven past several hospitals. Those hospitals are all filled with suffering people. Likely you or someone you love is suffering in some way right now. We are all tempted in our suffering, aren't we to ask the question, "Does God know? Does God care what I am enduring?" This saying reminds us that Jesus suffered with us as our Brother. Again, listen to J. Oswald Sanders,

Sufferers in all ages have been able to draw comfort from the fact that their God did not insulate Himself from the sufferings of His people. There is nothing in the realm of pain that was not experienced to the full by the Son of Man.

And this is His heart. Even in the Old Testament you see the heart of God for His people. In Isaiah 63, verse 9, we read, "In all their affliction, [speaking of His people, in all their affliction] He was afflicted." Have you ever thought about that? In what you suffer Christian, He suffers. Zechariah 2:8 says, speaking again of God's people, "he who touches you, touches the pupil of God's eye." When you suffer, it's as if someone thrusts their finger into the eye of God.

In this fallen world, we suffer in so many ways. Perhaps right now, you are in the middle of suffering, great suffering. Perhaps emotionally, perhaps spiritually, perhaps physically. Your friends and family, they try to help, they try to serve you, they try to minister to you, but they may not truly grasp the extent of your suffering. They may not fully understand it and they may not adequately empathize or sympathize. But whatever you have suffered, whatever you are suffering, whatever you will suffer, His suffering was greater, and your Lord fully, and completely understands. A. W. Pink writes,

The cross shows us that God is not ignorant of our sorrows. For in the person of His Son, He has Himself borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. The cross shows us, God is not unmindful of our distress and anguish for becoming incarnate, He suffered Himself. The cross tells us God is not indifferent to pain for in the Savior, He experienced it.

Is your body racked with pain? So was His. Are you misunderstood, misjudged, misrepresented? So was He. Have those, who are nearest and dearest, turned away from you? They did from Him. Are you in the darkness? So was He for three long hours. And your Lord doesn't merely understand, but He is able, in light of that understanding, to comfort, and to help you.

Turn over to Hebrews; Hebrews, chapter 5. I love this statement, it's a remarkable one. Hebrews chapter 5, verse 7, talking about His capacity to serve as our High Priest. And a High Priest has to understand what His people deal with verse 2 says. So in verse 7,

In the days of His flesh [Jesus' flesh], He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. [Now watch verse 8]
Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Now, what does that mean? I mean, obviously, Jesus was without sin, so He was always obedient. He was never disobedient. What is the writer of Hebrews saying? He is saying Jesus came to know, and experience first-hand, directly, what it cost to obey God in the middle of both temptation, and suffering. He fully understands your struggle because He has been there. He was just like you. He endured temptation, He endured suffering, and He knows what it's like to trust and obey in the midst of that suffering. And in light of that, go back to Hebrews, chapter 2, verse 18. Verse 17 says,

He had to be made like His brethren [that's us] in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, [and there are two things that come out of His being a merciful and faithful high priest; one is he's able] to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [But verse 18], "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, [and I think the idea behind *tempted* there is not just tempted to sin, but also this word is also used for testing in the midst of suffering, I think both are implied here. He knew what it was to suffer. He knew what it was to face temptation in the suffering, and] he is able therefore to come to the aid of those who are in that place.

Who are either being tempted to sin or who are being tested by some suffering and trial. He can give you help. Run to Christ. Go over to chapter 4. Chapter 4, verse 15,

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. [Verse 16]
Therefore, let us draw near...[that's an expression from the Old Testament where you knew God's address. His throne room was at the Temple and you came to approach Him. That's the picture here, but now, of course, we don't come to a

place, we come before God Himself. Let us draw near] with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Have you ever thought about the connection between what Jesus suffered in His humanity and the help that you can receive from Him because He understands? He fully and completely understands.

There's a fourth implication back in our text in John 19. Jesus' suffering for us as our substitute. We just talked about Jesus' suffering with us as our brother and that's a great comfort, but this is even more powerful and profound, Jesus' suffering for us as our substitute. Notice how verse 28 begins. Two little words, *after this*. After this. That implies a short interval that happened before He said "I thirst." But after *what*? That's the question. Well Matthew and Mark help us understand the chronological flow. And Matthew and Mark tell us that this happened soon after Jesus' statement about being forsaken by God. It's recorded in both Matthew 27 and Mark 15. In Mark 15:34, here's what we read, this is what Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" You're familiar with that statement, we looked at it a couple of years ago. It's the only time during Jesus' earthly life, that He addressed God as anything other than *Father*. He is still loyal to God, He calls Him "My God", but Jesus was aware during those hours on the cross, the Father had forsaken Him. What does the word *forsake* mean? Literally, it means *to desert or abandon*. In a miracle of divine love toward you, believer, for the three hours that Jesus hung there on that cross in darkness, the fellowship and communion, that as a man, He had experienced with the Father throughout His earthly life, was suddenly, completely, severed. Jesus was separated from the Father and from His love. The Father abandoned His Son's human nature in the same way that He would have abandoned us forever. Why?

Well the words that Jesus uses to form this cry come from Psalm 22, verse 1, "Why have You forsaken Me?" The answer to that question, "Why have You forsaken Me?" comes two verses later in Psalm 22:3 where it says, "You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." You see, when God made Jesus to be sin, His holiness demanded that He abandon Him. Just as His holiness demands that He abandon us forever, without Christ. Isaiah 59:2 says, "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." That's what happened to Christ on the cross. Not His own sins, but ours. Romans 3:25 says that, God "publicly displayed Jesus as the propitiation, [the satisfaction of His wrath], in His blood through faith."

At the cross, God abandoned His Son because He publicly displayed Him as the object of His wrath against your sin and my sin. Second Corinthians 5:21, God made Christ, "who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf." Galatians 3:13, He "became a curse for us." First Peter 2:24, "He

Himself bore our sins [plural, every sin you have or ever will commit, He Himself bore our sins] in His own body on the tree." God the Father turned His back on His only Son for us.

Do you understand what this is saying? That day, that Friday, that we'll celebrate this coming week, on that Friday, God treated Jesus like you deserve to be treated for all eternity. God abandoned Him. God deserted Him. Why? Because the essence of eternal judgment, the judgment we deserve, is separation from God. In 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1, verse 9, it says, "These [speaking of unbelievers] will pay the penalty of eternal destruction [listen to this] away from the presence of the Lord." Abandonment, separation is what we deserve, and it's what Jesus got. Let this grip your soul. If Jesus had not died for us, if He had never saved us, His fourth word from the cross would have become our cry for all eternity, "My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?" But He took it in our place.

Now look at chapter 19, verse 28 again, "After *this*..." that's what it was after. "After *this*, Jesus, knowing that all things had been fully accomplished to fulfill the Scripture said, 'I am thirsty.'" You see, His suffering was like ours, in that it was real suffering, but it was unlike ours, in that He was suffering in our place to satisfy God's wrath against our sins. He was abandoned by God. Do you see and understand what's being said here? Jesus experienced His greatest spiritual torment at the exact moment of His greatest physical pain, and all of it together was to pay for our sins. In fact, we could put it this way, he experienced physical thirst so that He might quench your spiritual thirst, forever. Look back at John, chapter 6. John chapter 6 and verse 35. He had said to the Samaritan woman, you remember, in chapter 4, that I can give you water that will cause you not to thirst again, if you drink this water you're going to thirst again. And here He says it more directly, John 6, verse 35, Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; He who comes to Me will not hunger, and He who believes in Me will never thirst."

Listen, He was thirsty, so that you would never be spiritually thirsty again. There's also a warning here, however. If you will not, if you are not a believer, and you simply will not drink of the water of life that Jesus offers you. If you die in your sins, without believing in Him, then, like the rich man in Jesus' story, describing the suffering of hell, tragically, these will be your words: Luke 16:24 says, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue for I am in agony in this flame." That's a hard thing to hear, it's a hard thing to read, it's a hard thing for me to preach, but do you understand, that if you reject Jesus' sacrifice, you will spend eternity saying, "I thirst"? But He took it for you. I beg you, don't refuse Jesus' gracious offer. The New Testament ends with these words, "let the one who is thirsty, come." That's Jesus' invitation to you, come to Him and He will satisfy your spiritual thirst forever. He was thirsty that we might drink of the water of life.

There's a fifth implication back in our text in John 19, and that is Jesus' total certainty of a finished redemption. Jesus' total certainty of a finished redemption. There's an interesting expression in verse 28. It says, "knowing that all things had already been [notice the word] *accomplished*." That word *accomplished* is the same Greek word, and exactly the same tense and form as the word in Jesus' next saying from the cross, in verse 30, "It is *finished*!" Now clearly, when Jesus is said in verse 28 to know that all things had been finished, He still needed to say, "I thirst." He still needed to die. He still needed to be buried in the grave of a rich man and three days later, He still needed to be raised from the dead. But He, at this point, could see the end. The end of His suffering had come. The rest of what He needed to accomplish was so certain, it was as good as finished. He knew the work that He had come from heaven to do had been completely accomplished. Think about this? Jesus died knowing that He had completely accomplished your salvation. Knowing that all things had been finished.

I love the way Isaiah puts it in Isaiah 53:11. Speaking of the Messiah, the suffering servant, it says this, "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He [that is the Messiah, Himself] will see it and be satisfied." He was satisfied, because He knew He had completed the work. He had saved those whom the Father had given Him in eternity past.

There's one last implication. And that's Jesus' intentional preparation for His final words. In response to Jesus' cry, "I thirst." Someone was moved with sympathy and compassion. There were others who did it for different reasons, but there was someone, apparently, who was genuinely moved by sympathy and compassion. We aren't told who it was, but likely it was one of the soldiers.

Look at verse 29, "A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth." The Greek word here translated, *sour wine*, refers to a cheap wine vinegar usually diluted with water that was the common beverage of both soldiers and day laborers because it quenched their thirst better than water alone and, of course, insured that they would be protected from a lot of the bacteria that went with water in the ancient world. John tells us there was a full jar of this sour wine that was literally set there, it says "standing there". It was placed there either for those that had been crucified, some argue, more likely, it was for the four soldiers who were on the crucifixion detail. Someone, possibly one of the soldiers, filled a sponge that was nearby with the sour wine, obviously, you couldn't hold a cup up to His lips. And so, they took this sponge, they soaked it with the sour wine and then they put the sponge on a short stalk of what's here called the hyssop plant. The branches at the end of the stalk likely formed a little nest for the sponge, and then, whoever this was, extended the sponge up to Jesus' mouth.

Some suggest it was the centurion who was just a few moments later to believe in Christ. John says this happened to fulfill the Scripture, but Jesus' statement about His being thirsty, and the

drink that He received of sour wine, also served a more immediate, and practical purpose. Because in just a moment, He planned to shout, with a loud voice. Notice verse 30, "Therefore, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said..." So there was a connection between the drink He received and what He wanted to say.

You remember on the way to the crucifixion site earlier that morning, some compassionate women had offered Him the same drink, sour wine, but in that case, mixed with myrrh. Myrrh was a drug intended to dull the senses, to deaden some of the pain of the crucifixion, especially the nailing of His body to the cross member. Jesus refused to drink it. That is remarkable. He refused to drink something that would deaden His pain, so that with all of His faculties He could drink the cup of wrath that had been given Him by the Father. But now, Jesus, at the point of death, accepts the soaked sponge and drinks a few swallows of sour wine. He knew all things were finished, and so He wanted to prepare Himself, He wanted to wet His parched lips so that He could speak and be heard across the entire crucifixion site. Verse 30 says, "Therefore, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said..." The other gospels tell us, "He cried with a loud voice, it is finished! He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." Having taken the sour wine, He shouted with a loud voice, it has been completed, it has been accomplished. He wanted everyone there that morning to know. He wanted us to know... it's done. It's complete. It's *tetelestai*, it is finished. And then he laid down His own life with the words, "Father into your hands, I commit my spirit."

This week as you meditate on the Passion of our Lord, it's my hope that you will meditate on these six profound implications of the word of suffering, "I am thirsty." Remind yourself that Jesus was a real man, and because He was a real man, He could be your substitute. Remind yourself that He was biblically credentialed to be the Messiah. He met every single prophesy down to, "I thirst," and being offered sour wine. He suffered, he suffered physically, emotionally, spiritually, with us, as our brother. There is nothing that you are enduring that He doesn't understand and that He can't help you walk through. He suffered for us as our substitute. He suffered in a way we will never suffer, because He suffered for other; for our eternal blessing and salvation. Jesus was certain that He had finished the work. There was just one thing left to do: simply to say, "I thirst." He had done all of the rest of it. He died satisfied with what He had accomplished. And He intentionally prepared for those final words, because they remind us that it was finished. That it was complete. There was nothing left to do. The plan of redemption had been accomplished. Your salvation had been purchased; and therefore, you can celebrate His death and His resurrection.

Let's pray together. Our Father, our hearts are deeply and profoundly moved by what we studied together this morning. Thank you that there is an ocean of meaning in those words spoken by our Lord on the cross. Thank you that the cross did serve as the most eloquent pulpit in history. From which He preached these profound truths. Father, for those of us in Christ, help us this week to

think on, to meditate on, these things and fill our hearts with joy and praise and worship and adoration. Father don't let this be just another normal week in our lives. Help us who are believers to understand its importance, to grasp its significance, to be compellingly, powerfully moved and changed by its realities.

And Father, I pray for those who are here this morning, who are not in Christ. O God, help them to see the graciousness of Your offer of salvation. That You allowed Your Son to suffer these things, so that if they will believe in Him, they won't. May they run to You, believing the gospel of Your Son, even today. But Father, if they leave unwilling to do that, help them to see, that if they will not have Christ, then their cry for eternity will be, "My God, My God, why have You abandoned Me?" And, "I thirst."

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.