

## **The Thirst of the Great I Am for You**

Kerry Doyal, Pastor

"I am thirsty" are words a mother hears all through the day from her children. "I am thirsty." Workers say it after long hours of sweat, toil & effort. "I am thirsty" is a phrase that shows our humanity, frailty, neediness. In the mouth of the Lord Jesus, the cry "I am thirsty" reminds us of His humanity, His suffering, His seeming frailty. It also reminds us of His deep drive & desire to meet our deepest inner thirst.

In the previous hours - some 17 long hours - Jesus had hardly had His needs cared for. Beat, bleeding and battered, His body was in crisis. Up most of the night, He had been hauled all over the city. He had been mocked, falsely accused & called on to defend Himself. Having carried His cross till He could no longer, He arrived up the scraggly hill of Golgotha -the place of the skull.

He was offered wine mixed with a painkiller. Tradition suggests that compassionate women of Jerusalem provided it to condemned men to ease their pain. He refused it. He wanted full use of His mind. He did not want to cheat the process in any way. He did not want to cheapen the payment.

Now, it is the heat of the day. He's bleeding from fresh wounds: nails in His hands & feet, crown of thorns in His head. His tongue is sticking to the roof of His holy mouth. Understandably, He was thirsty. Jesus, the Almighty Son of God, was a real man with real needs. Ones He could not meet for Himself because He chose not to.

"I am thirsty," He says. Pitiful. Tragic. The very God who created oceans, lakes & rivers full of water was thirsty. The Creator who was the true well of life, source of living water needed a drink. So, in mockery, hoping to hear what He says, soldiers offer Him a bitter wine mixed with vinegar. They are confused about what He said. Is He expecting Elijah to come & rescue Him? Does He still think He is a king - hanging there to die? Wine mixed with vinegar. A common man's cheap drink, offered on a sponge attached to a hyssop branch.

Don't miss this sad picture. Jesus, the King, should be served the finest of drinks in cups of gold. He is the Master who should be honored & not have to ask for mere drink. Yet, here He hangs as a common condemned criminal. Helpless to meet His own basic needs, they press to His lips bitter, cheap wine in mockery.

"I am thirsty." Jesus knows all about the needs you have: from betrayal

by friends and loved ones to rejection by fellow countrymen and torture by callous enemies. Here He is enduring indescribable physical & emotional pain. And now He has this most basic human need - thirst.

Nothing you know is unknown to God. Nothing you have suffered has not been suffered by Jesus in some way. As Max Lucado wrote in *No Wonder They Call Him Savior* "our master knew what it meant to be a crucified carpenter who gets thirsty" (pg. 54). Don't miss the irony, the odd twist of this story. Man feebly seeks to meet God's needs, while God was beautifully meeting ours.

There was a second thirst that day. One deeper, one eternal, one not mentioned by Christ. Yet it was the deepest thirst of His soul. It was His thirst to bring us to God.

A few hours earlier, Jesus spoke with His Father about a different cup and thirst. In the Garden, He spoke of a different cup He would drink from - the cup of God's wrath towards man for sin. It too was bitter, like the wine and vinegar the soldiers offered. Yet it was a cup He was willing to endure. One only He could drink.

The cup of God's wrath was one He would rather change out for another. If there was any other way, He wanted to not drink from it. But there was no other way. It was a bitter medicine that had to be taken. Not for His illness or need, but ours.

Jesus had the same feeling a parent does when their child is ill. There is a desire, a pleading with God to put their illness on you. A willingness to suffer in their place. All because of a thirst to see them healed. Here, Jesus is dying for those He longs to make His children. He yields His life an atonement for sin not for children who love Him, but dying for sinners, rebels, rejecters. People who have sworn their hatred & shown their hostility.

"I am Thirsty." Yes, He thirsts for drink. But, His greater thirst was to do the will of God. That was His food, His drink. He had no greater need or satisfaction than to please God. Greater than His drive for food or drink was His desire to please the Father.

"I am Thirsty." We are reminded of His suffering the deprivation of needs. His humanity, needing drink, wanting some relief. Even in this He meets our needs. Even in this He shows us life and how to live. No mere selfish act this request for drink - though proper in itself.

Nothing Jesus did was random or purposeless. All was meaningful, instructive, exemplary. He had a thirst to do God's will. He had a

thirst to see our sins paid for. He had a thirst to accomplish salvation. His soul was parched from longing to provide salvation. We are reminded of His thirst for us.

What are you most thirsty for today? Your physical needs are real and valid. They are worth meeting. But, your deepest needs are not physical. We do not live by bread alone. We need every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Jesus longs to satisfy your inner thirst.

Once before He told someone of His thirst - a sinful woman at a local well. There too in His need, He was the one meeting the deeper thirst. His Spirit can become a well springing up unto eternal life.

"I am Thirsty," Jesus said, "I have a need to be met. You are thirsty too, with needs I alone can meet. I am thirsty to meet those needs. I'm thirsty to do God's will, provide salvation, meet your deepest thirst within."

We can only meet physical needs, the temporal needs of the body. Man was honored to do that for Christ on the cross. Jesus alone can meet spiritual needs, our deep, eternal needs of the soul. Jesus was honored in disgrace to do that through the cross. He invites us to come to Him in our thirst. "Come to Me, all you who are thirsty, and I will give you drink."

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