

**THE STORY of THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST****Lesson 23****John 19.28-29****“I THIRST!”**

Again, we must emphasize that this FIFTH STATEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE CROSS was *a very personal expression of the very real pain* He was suffering. This is His only recorded statement He made from the cross which reflects His agonizing experiencing of the intense and excruciating **physical** pains He suffered during His crucifixion.

His other FOUR STATEMENTS we have examined so far have focused on either: His Divine responses to His abusers (“**Father, forgive them...**”); or His concern for the needs of others (“**Today, you will be with Me in Paradise**” / “**Woman, behold your son; Behold your mother**”); or the deep spiritual agonies of His soul-sufferings (“**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**”).

BUT, HE ALSO REVEALED HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL PAINS AND AGONIES. He felt them intensely. His Deity didn’t cushion or buffer His physical human sensitivities. He felt everything we would feel, and maybe even more so because of His Divine character.

**THIRST!**

**THIRST IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST, MOST INTENSE AND OBSESSIVE SENSATIONS WE CAN FEEL.** It is often coupled with “hunger” as one of our primary essential needs for self-preservation.

THIRST is one of our strongest sensations of LONGING, DESIRE, and CRAVING. Even God uses THIRST to inspire us toward what our intense desires for His company and fellowship should be like.

***Psalm 42.2: My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.***

***Psalm 63.1: O God, You are my God; early will I seek You.***

***My soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.***

We are probably never any more needy than when we are thirsty. We can survive being hungry for a long time; but when we are thirsty, we must get water or else we will die. There may not be any physical pains which are any more intense and obsessive than being thirsty.

*My Dad has often told the story (with deep personal regrets now) about being in Europe during the Battle of the Bulge and coming across a wounded, dying German soldier. He was already out of his head, but he was pitifully moaning something. They knew enough German to recognize that he was crying out for “Water!” But then he kept saying something else after that.*

*Dad’s unit had an interpreter, so they asked him what the German was saying. The interpreter said: “He’s begging for water. But if you won’t give him water, he’s begging you to shoot him and kill him.” Dad said, “We didn’t want to give him any kind of relief. So, we didn’t do either. We just walked off and left him there to die thirsty.”*

**WILLINGLY, VOLUNTARILY THIRSTY**

**WE KNOW THAT JESUS COULD HAVE WILLED ANY OF HIS PHYSICAL AGONIES**

**AWAY.** He COULD have healed Himself of any of the infirmities He had taken upon Himself. But, of course, if He had done so, He would not have fulfilled the eternal covenant of redemption He had come to finish.

He is dying in every detail of every experience precisely the way the Covenant had mandated that He die. John emphasizes in *John 19.28*: **After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!"**

**He must suffer the pains of death in order to deliver us from those same pains.** We are the ones who have inherited the sicknesses and sufferings and infirmities—and ultimately death. All of those afflictions are the curse God imposed upon humanity because of our sin against Him.

If Jesus Christ had not become a Man, and had not come in the flesh, and had not taken upon Himself the form of a Servant, He **COULD NOT** and **WOULD NOT** have suffered any of these human infirmities. But, ***He must take them upon Himself in order to take them away*** -- and also so He can sympathize with us in all our weaknesses and infirmities.

*Matthew 8.16-17* describes Jesus' ministry of healing the diseased and His casting out demons from those who were oppressed and tormented by the powers of the Devil. The way He healed was **BY TAKING OUR INFIRMITIES AND SICKNESSES UPON HIMSELF**. **When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses"**.

*Hebrews 2.14-18* teaches us how Jesus Christ **BORE ALL OUR WEAKNESSES** so He can sympathize with us and **JOIN US TO HELP US** in all our human sufferings of all kinds. **Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,<sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.<sup>16</sup> For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.**

<sup>17</sup>**Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** <sup>18</sup>**For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.**

*Hebrews 5.1-2* says much the same thing: **For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.<sup>2</sup> He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.**

Now, I have said all this to emphasize how Jesus Christ **WILLINGLY** suffered all these afflictions and agonies inflicted upon His soul, spirit, and body.

#### **THE CREATOR AND GIVER SUFFERS DEPRIVATION**

**THIS SAME ONE WHO IS SUFFERING THIRST IS ALSO THE VERY CREATOR WHO CREATED ALL THE WATER IN THE WORLD.** This same apostle John who witnessed and recorded Jesus' cry: **"I AM THIRSTY!"** also wrote in his opening testimony about the Christ (*John 1.3*), **All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**

This is the same Jesus who told the Samaritan adulteress (*John 4.10, 13*): **"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."... "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,<sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."**

But, ***He must suffer the pains of thirst Himself while dying the death He had been given to die...***

in order to release these living fountains of waters for the supply of our needs.

He promised never-ending supplies of the Holy Spirit's life and power to those who would believe upon Him (*John 7.37-38*): **On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.**

**<sup>38</sup>He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."** *But, He Himself must suffer extreme thirst dying the death He had been given to die...*

in order to receive the authority and position to pour out the Gift on us (*Acts 2.33*).

THE LORD JESUS MUST FIRST GIVE US **THE GIFT OF HIS THIRST ON OUR BEHALF** IN ORDER TO SECURE FOR US THE GIFTS OF HIS GRACE AND ETERNAL LIFE.

Since suffering thirst for eternity is one of the torments of Hell, when Jesus Christ suffered all the pains of God's wrath in our place, He saved us from having to cry out from Hell ourselves: ***"Send someone to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue...I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME!"***

### THE PHYSICAL AGONIES

**Of course, the physical source and reason for His intense and excruciating thirst was His extreme dehydration.** We don't know when He had last had anything at all to drink. We do remember that when they first began to nail Him to the cross, they offered Him the potion of vinegar-wine mixed with gall. He refused it because it would have had a sedating / anesthetizing effect on His body. ***And, He must drink the cup of His agonies with His faculties fully awake and sharp.***

But, before that, we don't know if He asked for...or received...anything to drink during His overnight trials and hearings.

But, now, after these six hours on the cross, not only is He extremely physically dehydrated, but His body is craving any kind of liquid sustenance and refreshment to relieve the ravages of fever and infection.

And, to compound all the physical afflictions, *He also has just cried out of the agonies of His soul to ask His God and Father why He had forsaken Him.* So, you can compound **the physical effects** of the crucifixion with **the mental and spiritual stress of His travails of soul.** (*This is the real "cup of suffering and death" which He so feared and dreaded*).

### HE HAD BEEN ABSORBED IN THE "DRINKING OF THE CUP"

Here is something else which very well may have transpired: we all have experienced at some time or another how you can be so absorbed in one activity that you completely ignore a mounting need which may be developing at the same time. But then your mind suddenly snaps back to this physical necessity and it all rushes upon your consciousness with compounded force and fury.

You can get lost in a work project or so focused on it...or get engrossed in a good book or a movie you're watching...or in some kind of sport or recreation -- and all of a sudden realize your muscles are aching, or you have forgotten to eat for some time, or maybe you are extremely thirsty. But, other preoccupations of your mind have so absorbed you, you didn't give it your attention until it all suddenly rushes to the front of your mind.

That, too, is much of what is happening here. Jesus' cry of thirst seems to come right after His agonizing screams of being forsaken by God.

In fact, His executioners thought He was calling for Elijah to come and rescue Him or save Him from His sufferings. They mistook His calling out for **"ELI, ELI"** (Matthew) or **"ELOI, ELOI"** (Mark) (which is God's Name, **"EL"**) for His calling out for ELIJAH.

*Matthew 27.47* and *Mark 15.35* both record that the soldiers around the cross thought He was calling for Elijah. So, they sarcastically remarked that they would watch to see if Elijah came to rescue Him.

***Matthew 27.49:* The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”**

But, it was at this time that one of them ran to get a sponge, stuck it on to the end of a hyssop branch, soaked it in vinegar, and then raised it up to Jesus’ mouth so He could suck the sour moisture out of it.

But, John records that in the meantime, after crying out for “**ELI, ELI**”, He also exclaimed, “**I’M THIRSTY!**” Then, John says, **Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.**

### **HAVE YOU GIVEN HIM ANYTHING TO DRINK?**

The soldiers did, in fact, answer His request. It may be argued whether this vinegar was all they had (I seriously doubt that the soldiers customarily drank vinegar for their own thirst), or whether they gave it to Him to actually irritate His thirst and torment Him further, or whether it was a genuine act of mercy and human kindness.

It may also have been the same wine / gall potion which He had refused before.

**Psalm 69.21** They also gave Me gall for My food, and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.

But, at any rate, Jesus’ foreordained time of suffering was drawing to a successful conclusion. (His next statements will be: “**IT IS FINISHED! FATHER, I COMMIT MY SPIRIT INTO YOUR HANDS!**”

But, I’m sure everyone one of us would say: “**Oh, I wish I had been there. I would have gladly done whatever it took or given whatever I had to give in order to relieve His thirst and give Him something to drink.**”

Well, we all have multitudes of opportunities all around us every day to do just that. In fact, the Lord Jesus is going to ask every one of us **WHETHER WE GAVE HIM SOMETHING TO DRINK WHEN HE WAS THIRSTY**. That is going to be one of His measurements and standards for evaluating our works we have given HIM during this lifetime of service. ***Matthew 25.35-36:* For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”.**

Sometimes, we may be tempted to say: “Oh, He’s just bluffing. He’s just being overly dramatic.”

No, He’s telling us how we can touch Him and show our love to Him every day -- ***by how we reach out to those who are suffering the afflictions and deprivations of life*** -- and by how willing we are to give needed help and assistance and support and encouragement to those who genuinely need it, and whom we can physically touch.

And the King will answer and say to them, “**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**” When was the last time you visited...helped...encouraged...supported someone in their times of need? When was the last time you gave JESUS a cup of cold water – JUST BECAUSE IT WAS HIM! If you meet Him in need tomorrow, or the next day, **WILL YOU HELP HIM? HE’LL ASK YOU ABOUT IT LATER, I’M SURE!**