

SI: Next Sunday is Palm Sunday, Easter after that. Holy Week Service, April 12
We're preparing for the celebration of our Lord's resurrection,
by looking at a special portion of the Gospels. Seven last words of Christ.

INTRO: If you go to the Naval Air Museum in Pensacola, one of the exhibits is a
small rubber raft that three American sailors survived on for 34 days when their
plane crashed in the Pacific during WWII.

A book was written about their experience called *The Raft*.

It tells how the men became desperate for fresh water.

Rainstorms would occasionally come and to capture the water they would take off
their underwear and would wipe up the rainwater as it came down on the raft.

Then they would wring out it out and drink it.

They describe another time they caught a small shark and drank its blood.

That's the first story.

Second story is from Charles Colson's spiritual autobiography *Born Again*.

Colson describes a conversation with friend Tom Phillips, President of Raytheon.
Phillips told Colson about his success, how he became president at age 40.

Then he said:

"The success came but something was missing, I felt a terrible emptiness. Sometimes
I would get up in the middle of the night and pace the floor of my bedroom or stare out into
the darkness for hours at a time."

Colson interrupted and said, I don't understand, you had everything.

"That may be true, Chuck, but my life wasn't complete. I would go to the office each day and
do my job, striving all the time to make the company succeed, but there as a big hole in my life.
I began to read the Scriptures looking for answers. Something made me realize I needed a
personal relationship with God."

So what do these two stories have in common?

Both stories about thirst—one thirst of body, the other thirst of soul.

Some men were driven to suck rainwater from underwear and drink shark blood

Another man was driven to pursue success, and then driven to seek living God.

In the Bible, the thirst of the body is often used as a picture of the thirst of the soul.

There is a thirst for God in the souls of all people.

We want something big that will satisfy us, something that will refresh us.

And the refreshment that our souls need is God himself.

His love, he presence, his smile.

Because of sin, people are estranged from God.

They sense that separation as a thirst, or a void, or a restlessness. Since we are worshipping creatures, always looking for something bigger than ourselves to live for and to refresh deepest part.

And that brings us to the 5th word of Jesus from the cross—"I thirst."

Like all of Jesus' sufferings, this was not just physical.

His physical thirst pointed to more a more intense spiritual suffering.

On the cross, Jesus was deprived of the refreshing presence of God.

He did that for you—so that your thirst could be quenched forever.

And so what does he want you to do?

He wants you to quit trying to quench your spiritual thirst anywhere else— and to come to him and through him, to received the refreshing love of God.

Let's look at this word from the cross more deeply—three headings:

1. Biblical thirst
2. Jesus' thirst
3. Your thirst

MP#1 Biblical thirst

In the Bible thirst is a major theme.

Out of all the places on earth that God could have chosen to carry out his salvation plan, he chose a dry land.

He told Abraham to leave his home and go to Canaan, which became land of Israel. Israel is a dry place in a dry part of the world.

So thirst and water was always part of the consciousness of God's chosen people.

In Genesis, Abraham's herdsmen fought over wells in the desert region.

Moses' leadership was threatened when people panicked because no water.

There were times when people almost died of thirst: Hagar and Ishmael, Samson.

They cried out to God, and he miraculously provided a springs in desert.

That particular image—of springs in the desert, streams in the desert was used by the poets of Israel. Because in some the driest and most barren places imaginable, deserts that look like the moon—you will find little springs, little streams tucked away like refreshing gifts of God's grace.

So over and over in the Old Testament thirst is a picture of longings of the soul.

And that thirst is only quenched by God.

David "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.

Isaiah: "The poor and needy search for water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst. But I the LORD will answer them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on dry ground, I will pour out my Spirit.

"Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert."

With joy you will draw water from wells of salvation."

Zechariah: "On that day living water will flow out of Jerusalem."

There is also a negative side to this.

Trying to quench thirst apart from God always leads to greater thirst and death.

Jeremiah: "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

Amos speaks of a drought that comes on the soul when people forget God.

"In that day the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst."

This image carried over into the New Testament and applied to Christ.

The most famous place is in John 4, the woman at the well.

It was noon, hot. Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink.

She drew water from the well. He drank and then he said to her:

Anyone who drinks the water from this well will get thirsty again.

But anyone who drinks the living water I give him will ever thirst again.

In fact, that living water will become a spring in you bubbling up to eternal life.

Woman said, Wow, tell me about this living water. Show it to me. Give me some.

Jesus said: OK, Go get your husband and we'll talk about it.

She said: I don't have a husband.

Jesus said: I know. You've had five husbands,

and the man you are living with now is not your husband.

Why did Jesus say that?

Here she was talking about spiritual things, about living water—

and he changed the subject and brought up her messy love life.

Why did he change the subject? Why was he being so harsh?

He didn't change the subject and he was being incredibly tender.

He was explaining her thirst.

You keep looking for Mr Right to fill your love bucket but can't find him.

The reason your life is so broken is because when you look to anything besides

Father for your ultimate love, significance, meaning, hope—will thirst again.

There is a satisfaction that only the love of God can give you.

And I can give you that. I can give it to you so that you drink it down

and once it gets down inside of you it will continue to spring up and quench thirst.

Book of Revelation describes heaven this way:

“Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,

He will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

In the Bible, physical thirst is a picture of spiritual thirst.

And it is God alone, through His Son Jesus Christ who quenches that thirst.

He will begin to quench that thirst right now, fully quench it in heaven.

Any thing but God, any lesser god, any idol—no matter how good might be,

will never satisfy, will make you more thirsty.

That brings us to . . .

MP#2 Jesus' Thirst

Jesus had probably not had anything to drink since the night before.

So he had perhaps gone 20 hours without water by this point.

He had been flogged and crucified.

He had been hanging on the cross from early that morning.

His wounds were draining moisture from his body.

Part of the torture of crucifixion was the terrible thirst.

This particular aspect of Jesus' suffering was prophesied.

That's what John meant when he said: "So that the Scriptures might be fulfilled."

Ps 22 "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.

That clues us in to the fact that this was more than physical thirst.

This was part of Jesus' spiritual suffering.

He was being deprived of the refreshing presence of God.

If you were here last Sunday when we studied the fourth word:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" think of it this way.

"I thirst" is simply Jesus expressing being forsaken by God in another way.

Hell is the place where thirst is never quenched

because the refreshing presence of God is gone.

Jesus was in hell.

In Jesus' parable of rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16,

The poor man, Lazarus, dies and goes to heaven. Rich man dies and goes to hell.

And in hell he says:

"Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."

Why was the rich man so thirsty in hell? Do you remember Abraham's answer?

"Remember, that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony."

Throughout your life you quenched the thirst of your soul on money and luxury.

That was your drink of choice, not God.

You didn't quench the thirst of our soul on the love of God, comfort of God

like the poor man Lazarus did. Now God's refreshing presence is gone forever.

And you have the memory of your money to quench your thirst.

In the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie there is a description of hell

that is right on target—even Hollywood gets it right sometimes.

There is this pirate ship with a crew cursed by a chest of gold.

The curse is that they become immortal, but they cannot quench their thirst.
Captain Barbosa says:

“There be the chest, inside be the gold, we took them all. Spent them and traded them. We frittered them away...on drink and food and pleasurable company. The more we gave them away, the more we came to realize—the drink would not satisfy, food turned to ash in our mouths, and all the pleasurable company in the world could not slake our lust. We are cursed men. Compelled by greed we were, and now we are consumed by it . . . We are not among the living and so we cannot die but neither are we dead. For too long I’ve been parched with thirst and unable to quench it. Too long I’ve been starving to death and haven’t died.”

Do you see why this was so terrible for Jesus Christ?

Because he didn’t quench his thirst on drink and food and pleasurable company. His food and drink for his whole life was fellowship with his heavenly Father.

Even when he was a twelve year old boy in the Temple.

“Don’t you know I have to be about my Father’s business.”

It was his relationship with God that sustained him and refreshed him

all the weary days of his life. And then he came to the end and the refreshing presence of God was gone. He suffered the thirst of souls in hell.

Why did Jesus do it? He did it for you.

Old Puritan preacher John Flavel put this way:

That voice, “I thirst,” pierced heaven and reached the Father’s ear; but he did not refresh him in his agonies, nor abate him anything of the debt he was now paying, and all this for the love he had to poor sinners. Had Christ been relieved in his sufferings, and spared, then God could not have pitied or spared us.

On the cross, Jesus suffered the deprivation of God’s refreshing presence.

But he did it for you. So that your soul-thirst can be fully quenched.

So that you can be saved from the awful thirst of an eternity without God.

And that brings us to your thirst.

MP#3 Your Thirst

I want to ask you some personal questions about your thirst.

Answer them in your heart before God.

1. What are you drinking to quench the thirst of your soul?

There are just two answers:

1. You are either drinking a relationship with Father through Jesus Christ.
2. Or you are drinking something else.

If you are drinking something besides the living water of Jesus your thirst will never be satisfied. The Bible calls those broken cisterns. You dip water out of a broken cistern and think you have plenty left, and then one day you look inside and it's completely empty. There's a crack in the bottom and all the water has run out.

Some broken cisterns are dysfunctional and run dry more quickly and visibly.

A person who uses drugs or alcohol or pornography to quench his thirst will discover quickly that the cistern is broken. Will be shame and breakdown.

On the other hand some broken cisterns are very functional and take a long time to run dry because in an of themselves, they are good things.

But even though they are good things, they aren't intended to quench the thirst of your soul and become a substitute for God.

Marriage and family are good things.

They are gifts of God, great helps in life. Can be places of great happiness.

But they can't quench the thirst of your soul. Death or disappointment separate.

Money is a good thing. But if you look to it for security and self-worth, will always let you down. Christ alone is your security and worth.

Same could be said of your reputation, success, control, self-worth, relationships, something as mundane as your looks or possessions.

Drink from them and you are drinking from a broken cistern. Will go dry.

You need Jesus. You need that living water bubbling up in you.

He gives it to anyone who comes to him in faith and says:

Jesus, I want you. I need you. Forgive me and fill me, and he will.

2. Are you growing in contentment with the life God has given you?

A Christian whose thirst is quenched by Jesus will become more content with his life because the biggest thirst in his life has been quenched.

When you are able to say: "This is the life God has given me and I am content."

That shows you have been drinking deeply of Jesus.

Are you content with the standard of living God has given you?

With the money he has given you? The stuff you have?
Do your spending habits reflect your contentment?
Are you content with your wife (if married)? Content with singleness if not?
Or is your life filled with agitation, restlessness?

If you are a Christian and you aren't content.

You are not drinking as deeply of Jesus as you should.

You're sipping water from one of those broken cisterns.

Make use of all of the means he has given for fellowship with him.

3. Are you growing impatient in your struggle with sin?

A Christian whose thirst is quenched by Jesus will become more impatient and upset about his sin because he knows what it's like to be close to God. And sin interrupts that.

Whenever you wander, try to quench your thirst with other things—
and we all wander, we all sin. Whenever you do that, does it grieve you?

Do you kick yourself and say, Why did I do that?

Why did I drink from that broken cistern?

Communion with the Lord is so good, why do I think anything else is better?

Fight with sin. Long for the day when delivered completely.

In new heavens and new earth we will no longer be thirsty.

Because delivered forever from the presence of sin and our communion with Jesus will be uninterrupted.

If you aren't impatient with yourself. If you aren't grieved by your sins.

If you don't see the sinfulness of sin, how it separates you from Jesus, then maybe you aren't thirsty enough for Jesus.

Ask him to make you hunger and thirst for righteousness,
so you want him more than anything else.

CONC: The old hymn says:

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one, Stoop down and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, And now I live in Him.

On a hill outside Jerusalem, 2000 years ago Jesus said, "I thirst."
He suffered the thirst of hell for you, so that your soul-thirst
could be quenched forever.
Don't pass by this stream of living water, drink of Jesus by faith,
and you will be refreshed by the presence and love of God.