

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

I Thirst

Bubba Garner

Jesus summed up the purpose of His whole life when He said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He spoke those words after James and John had requested to sit in positions of authority, on His right and on His left, in His coming kingdom. Jesus’ response was to remind them that the greatest of all is the servant of all.

No one proved that more frequently than the Savior. The King of kings was born in a barn. The Creator of all the earth had no place to lay His head. He who formed everything in the beginning took on the form of a lowly man from Galilee. The Master was never too important or too busy to stoop and to serve the very people He came to save. It’s what made Him the greatest of all.

Even on the cross, Jesus demonstrated His concern for the needs of others over His own. For the soldiers who drove nails through His innocent hands and feet, He prayed, “Father, forgive them.” To the thief who at first hurled insults at Him but later repented, He promised, “Today, you shall be with Me in paradise.” To His mother who was losing her firstborn and to John, the disciple He loved, He gave the comfort of one another’s companionship. His last hours were spent the same as every other hour of His life: in selfless service.

The seven sayings from the cross allow Jesus to tell the story of the crucifixion in His own words. What message could possibly be meant for us when He “knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I am thirsty’” (John 19:28)?

Jesus suffered for real. He was the “Son of Man,” born of a virgin, yet still born of a woman. And His cry of thirst is an indication of His humanity. He could not push a button and magically be deadened to the pain and agony of the cross. He felt the emotional torment from being reviled and mocked. He felt the spiritual separation from His Father when He took on the sins of the world. But He also felt the physical anguish of the crucifixion. His muscles cramped. His wounds bled. His mouth dried up. For real.

The gospel writers do not give much detail about the process of crucifixion. Their original audience was much more familiar with the practice than we are. We have to look at historical records and medical viewpoints to gain a better understanding of this ancient method of execution. According to experts, death was often hastened on a cross by exhaustion, suffocation, or dehydration. It took Jesus only six hours to die. His sufferings were real. How much are you really suffering for Him?

Jesus declared His deity. “I thirst” was said “in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John 19:28). That does not suggest that Jesus had a checklist of prophecies in His head that He was trying to mark off before He died. That would remove the passion and sincerity from them. “That the Scripture might be fulfilled” is the same description given earlier in the chapter when the soldiers were dividing and casting lots for His garments (John 19:24). Surely they weren’t concerned with making sure Jesus fulfilled all the passages about the Messiah. What these and other passages prove is that the Son of Man was also the Son of God who came in perfect accomplishment of prophecy. The Scripture fulfilled by Jesus in this instance is most likely taken from one of the Psalms. In Psalm 22:15, David wrote, “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws.” In another Messianic Psalm, David said again, “They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psa. 69:21). How could something so specific, forecasted so long ago, just happen coincidentally? It happened because an all-knowing, all-powerful God predicted it centuries in advance and an equally divine Son fulfilled it. Isn’t it time to let Him direct your affairs?

Jesus remained in submission. When the guests at the wedding feast in Cana were thirsty, Jesus turned water into wine. When the multitudes who followed Him were hungry, He fed more than five thousand of them with five loaves and two fish. Yet when He fasted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness and “then became hungry” (Matt. 4:4), He did not take matters into His own hands and turn stones to bread. Why not? Because man does not live by bread alone but by faith in God. Even the Son of Man. Even the Son of God.

Father knew He was hungry in the wilderness and would satisfy His appetite. He did not need to work a miracle on the cross to quench His thirst, He left matters in the hands of God to provide. When the soldiers arrested Him in the garden, He did not call twelve legions of angels. When the angry mob reviled Him, He did not revile in return. When He cried, "I thirst," He did not make water pour from the sky. He just kept "entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23). You can't serve Him until you submit to Him. You can't find your place until you place yourself in His trust and care.

Because Jesus endured the cross, He made it possible that all who hunger and thirst for righteousness can be filled. And having come to the fountain, we can spend our lives in humble service to the greatest One of all. There, no act of kindness goes unnoticed. Not even a cup of cold water.

What's Happening To Us?

Dee Bowman

It's right there. In broad daylight. Everybody can see it. What's happening to us? It says, "Who's the real father?" then it gives a number, "DNA-Help." What's happening to us?

Can you believe that? There is enough sleeping around and there are enough babies being born out of wedlock that someone one has found a way to make money off it. It's very depressing to me that we have stooped to such low moral depths. And what bothers me about as much as anything is where do we go from here? It should be obvious that just a little evil seed sown will result in a considerable more being harvested—in this instance, I fear—a bumper crop!

The Scriptures speak to such times. In Romans , Paul speaks of the degeneration of the Gentiles. He says, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened." That's a description of where and what we are, folks.

"What can I do?" you say, "I'm only one person—one person without much influence." Well, maybe so, but there are several things you can do. For instance.

You can talk against evil. Just talk about it with folks. Tell folks you don't like that sign. Tell them you don't like the direction our "morality" has taken. Tell them it's time for folks who are repulsed by such obvious disdain

for righteousness to speak out against it. You may not can do much, but everyone can touch just one.

Keep yourself from being involved. Far too many folks are being gradually taken in by the pressures and possibilities of a society filled with lewdness and putridity. Some folks are saying "I can handle it," and are carrying home "R" and "X" rated movies. This kind of filth takes its toll on your spirituality. It gradually wears away your protective coating. Paul says, "Give no place to the devil" (Eph 4:27).

You can feast on higher things. It's actually not enough to get the evil out; you must put the good in, as well. A person who has constant, daily contact with the word of God is far less likely to be impressed with the allurements of the world. How often do you read your Bible? As often as you watch your favorite TV show? You will likely subscribe to the things to which you are most often exposed. That's a serious matter, don't you think? And it's beyond me how we think we can just give some sort of mental assent to the Scriptures and that's all that's needed. The Bible is to be mined. Its principles are to be practicalized. If you are to overcome the world, you'll have to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph 6:11). Notice that it requires the whole armor, not just part of it. Whatever area you neglect, you become vulnerable in that area.

You can make your real citizenship known. "This world is not my home," the song says, "I'm just a passing through." It's true—this world is not your home. "For our conversation ("citizenship," ASV) is in heaven; from whence we look for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." If we are really dedicated to going to Heaven, why is it that we become so enamored with this world. This is not our home! We are strangers here. We are of another culture, one where holiness and piety are the norm. It's hard being what you ought. But being what you ought you must. It's the only course of conduct that makes any sense at all. And besides, we don't belong here.

We are fighting against great odds. But that's been the case for God's people for all time. But that for which we fight has real substance, so let's do it with our might. Someday we'll be glad we did.



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