

Christ's Fifth Saying From The Cross

“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst” (John 19:28).

Those who have walked through a battlefield of suffering and death verify that the worst cry from the lips of helpless men is their cry for water. Any scene from the ugly side of war is one of great agony and terrible misery. But while there are all sorts of moans of anguish, the cry for water seems to swallow up all other cries. In that hour, the yearning of the human body for the only liquid that quenches thirst is at an all time high.

We all know the common cry of daily thirst in our bodies. When the water level of the body falls below a certain point, the brain signals that we are thirsty. On a hot day, we have all become especially thirsty for water. But most of us have never known the thirst that accompanies suffering and death. Physicians have assured us that there is no suffering comparable to that of an unassuaged thirst.

The Lord Jesus had suffered in many unfathomable ways. He had been mocked, beaten, and scourged. Then He had the cross laid upon His bleeding shoulders and back. When He reached Calvary, His hands and feet were nailed to the tree. The cross was then dropped into a prepared hole. As His body screamed with pain, indicating the intense level of His sufferings, Jesus cried, “I thirst.” What truths these two words set before us.

These two words are associated with an interesting movement! Christ did all He did according to a divine arrangement and order. The words “After this” culminate the movements of this occasion. “After” His prayer for forgiveness; “After” His acceptance of the thief; “After” His mother and His disciple were addressed; “After” the Father withdrew His presence from the Son; “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished . . . saith I thirst.”

These two words are associated with an important matter! It is clear that the Lord Jesus was concerned “that the scripture might be fulfilled.” In this chapter alone, four references are made to special prophetic fulfillments related to His crucifixion (see 19:24, 28, 36, 37). In His life and in His death, the Living Word did what He did in perfect agreement with the written Word. May we seek to follow this disciplined pattern.

These two words are associated with an infinite moment! When Jesus cried, “I thirst,” no doubt He was thirsting for the Father’s presence from which He had been separated. Perhaps He was thirsting for the finality of His redemptive work. As the rich man was thirsty in the tormenting flames of hell (see Luke 16:24), so the Savior, bearing our sins in His own body on the cross, was thirsty as He suffered the judgment of hell for us. Oh what infinite love!