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THE CRY OF SUFFERING

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"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were not accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." John 19:28.

INTRODUCTION: This was the fifth of the sayings of Christ from the cross. It was spoken at the close of the three hours of darkness and just before He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. It might be called the cry of suffering. It was a tragic cry. The Maker of heaven and earth with parched lips! The Creator of all the water in the sea, and lake and river, in need of a few drops for His own comfort! The Lord of glory in need of a drink. What a scene! What a word is this!

And look at the human response. Do they give him some of the water he had created? Do they lift to his parched lips the water for which his lips cried? No! There was none of the milk of human kindness to be found among the enemies of Christ while he was enacting the Gospel. One of the soldiers dips a sponge into a mixture of vinegar mingled with gall and places it on a reed and puts it to his lips. In the spirit of deepest reverence and sincere humility may we ponder this cry of Him of Whom we are not worthy.

1. Here we have an evidence of Christ's humanity. Our Saviour has a unique and singular personality. He was both God and man. He was as much God as if He had been nothing but God; He was as much man as if he had been nothing but man. He possessed all the nature and attributes of God and also the nature and attributes of man. He was not a deified man nor a hu-

manized God. He was the God-man. The union of the two natures in one personality is a great mystery. *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."* I Timothy 3:16. He was forever God and since his incarnation He is forever man. When he became man he did not cease to be God. He did not empty himself of any divine attribute, but he gave up the glory of God for period and purpose of suffering. No manifest glory of God while suffering the wrath of God and man.

This twofold nature of Christ was a subject of Messianic prediction. Prophecy represented the coming Messiah sometimes as divine and sometimes as human. *"Branch of the Lord;"* Isaiah 4:2. *"Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* Isaiah 9:6.

On the other hand he is represented as a man: *"The seed of the woman;"* Genesis 3:15. *"A prophet like unto thee;"* Deuteronomy 18:18. *"A lineal descendent to David."* II Samuel 7:12. *"Jehovah's servant;"* Isaiah 42:1. *"Man of sorrows,"* Isaiah 53:3.

While on earth he gave full proof of both his deity and humanity. As God he spake with divine wisdom, acted in divine holiness, and exhibited divine power. As God he read men's minds, moved men's hearts and compelled men's wills. When and as He pleased he exerted power over forces of nature. At his word the storm was stilled, the sick were healed, the dead were raised,

the devil was silenced. And his humanity was equally evidenced. As a babe he was wrapped in swaddling clothes, as a child he increased in wisdom and stature, as a boy we find him asking questions, as a man he was hungry, as a man he was weary with his journey, as a man he slept, as a man he marvelled, as a man he wept, as a man he rejoiced, as a man he groaned, as a man he prayed. And here in our text he manifests his humanity by crying "I thirst."

2. Here we see the intensity of His sufferings. It was the very climax to a period of intense suffering and sorrow. Look at what he had gone through in the few preceding hours. That day and preceding night were hours into which an eternity of suffering was compressed. The night before he had instituted the supper and delivered the discourse to his disciples; recorded in John 14, 15, and 16, He prayed the Lord's prayer: *"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was, have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now*

they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love

wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:1-26. Then He retired to the mount of Olives where he had his Gethsamane.

This was followed by the coming of Judas the traitor with soldiers and officers to arrest him. In the middle of the night he was taken to Annas, father-in-law to the high priest, who bound him and sent him on to Caiaphas the real high priest. While being examined and condemned by Caiaphas he was denied by Peter. From there he was taken to Pilate's judgment hall. After a lengthy trial by this weak official he was scourged. Then when Pilate heard he was a Galilean he sent him across the city to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee. He was glad to see the prisoner. He had heard many things about him and wanted to see him perform some of his miracles. But to all of Herod's questions Christ made no reply. Herod and his soldiers made sport of him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate made some more weak efforts to release him, but let the soldiers mock him and spit upon him and put a crown of thorns on his head and a royal robe and a reed in his hand and addressed him as a king. It is hard to tell at whose hands he received the most shameful treatment. Then the soldiers start to Golgotha with him. With bleeding back and thorn pierced brow he is carrying his cross until through sheer exhaustion he falls under it and another is forced to carry it. When they reach the place of a skull, the soldiers begin their work. They lay his body on the cross and nail his hands and feet to it. His only response is, "Father, forgive them." Then the cross is raised and placed in the hole dug for that purpose. The motley crowd mills around the cross, taunting and reviling and wagging their heads. His nude body is exposed to the glaring heat of the sun from nine till twelve. And then the darkness begins and lasts for three hours. It was during this time that God forsook him and brought from his lips that awful cry of soul anguish. And now he has reached the end of his sufferings. He knowing that all things had been

accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled saith, "I thirst."

3. Here we see our Saviour's deep reverence for the holy Scriptures. Early in his ministry when tempted by the devil he met his thrust with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, saying, "Man shall not live by bread alone, etc." He meditated day and night on the word of God. In His teaching the word was his authority. In his controversy with the Scribes and Pharisees his appeal was always to the law and testimony. And now in his death hour his mind is occupied with the word.

We find in the context why he cried, "I thirst." It was not an appeal for pity or help. It was that the saying might be fulfilled. The reference was to Psalms 69:21. As he scanned the whole of prophetic truth he saw one verse yet unfulfilled. The 69th Psalm is Messianic. Much of it had been fulfilled. *"I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."* Verse 2. *"They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away."* Verse 4. *"Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."* Verses 7-8. *"I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards."* Verses 11-12. *"And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor: mine adversaries are all before thee."*

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IF IN THIS LIFE ONLY

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"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." I Corinthians 15:19.

INTRODUCTION: This is the resurrection chapter. We learn more about the resurrection here than anywhere else in the Bible. We find two things necessary for our salvation: Christ's resurrection and ours. If Christ is not raised, we are still in our sins. Without His resurrection His death would not redeem and without our resurrection His redemption would be worth little. It is a lesson hard for us to learn but the visible and material and bodily benefits of salvation will not be ours in this life. Paul had a poor salvation if he got all of it in this life which ended by his head being chopped off by a Roman soldier. The martyrs had a sorry salvation if their hope ended with this life. If our salvation is limited to this present life it is a very short and sorry thing. Salvation makes a man worse off so far as ease and pleasure are concerned. Cross here; crown over yonder.

Suppose we analyze our salvation and see just what we have. Let's separate our present tense salvation from the future tense. Let's see what salvation consists of in this life and what it will consist of in the other world.

In this life we have:

1. Justification before God. His law no longer condemns us. *"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."* Acts 13:39. *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1. A matter of faith not sight. How do I know I am justified before God's law? By faith in His word. Justi-

fied before God is an invisible blessing. While justified by God the visible curse of men may be resting upon me.

2. I am a child of God and an heir of God in this life but this is no visible and physical blessing. How do I know I am a child of God? I only know it by faith in His word. Having had certain inward experiences His word tells me I am God's child, having been born of His Spirit. But while a child and heir of God I may be poor and afflicted. *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."* I John 3:2. In this life I receive chastisement and this is not joyous but grievous.

3. In this life I am delivered from the guilt of sin before God but not from the conflict with sin. This is a bitter struggle. Fight the devil, world, and the flesh.

4. The believer is exhorted to be happy in this life. But this happiness is not based upon visible and physical blessings. Here is why believers are not happy: they are trying to find happiness in things that make the world happy: visible and physical and material things such as wealth, health and worldly amusements. What is Christian happiness?

a. We are to rejoice in the Lord, be happy that Christ is ours. Happy that we have His righteousness, His sanctification, His redemption, forgiveness through Him. But none of these are visible and physical blessings.

b. Rejoice in hope. To rejoice in hope is not to rejoice in possession of something but in anticipation of something. Rejoice in hope: patient in tribulation. Rejoice in what you are going to get beyond this life; patient in present tribulation.

c. Rejoice in hope of the glory

of God. While having present conflict with sin we can be happy that the warfare will be over and we will reflect the glory of God in our very person.

d. Rejoice in tribulation and persecution, not because of them but because great will be our reward in heaven. Matthew 5:12.

What salvation will consist of in the other world:

A glorious inheritance which is now laid up for us in heaven. In the other world we will possess that inheritance. Too much to attempt to describe. *"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for you."* I Peter 1:4.

a. It will consist of freedom from bodily pain.

b. Freedom from mental disappointment.

c. Freedom from heart-aches. This world is full of broken hearts but there will be no broken hearts there.

d. Freedom from poverty. No tumbledown shacks there, no meat and bread problem in our Father's house. No transportation problem, no housing problem, no health problems there.

e. No persecution there. There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom, but none after we enter Christ. In this world ye shall have tribulation, but not in heaven.

Let me put my finger on one of the chief errors of God's people today: They are not willing to wait for their inheritance. They want visible and physical blessings here and now. Esau could not wait for his birthright, he despised it because it was something future, and so he sold it for a mess of pottage. Satisfied his stomach at the expense of his soul. Traded his glorious inheri-

tance for a temporary snack.

Let us be happy but let us learn where to look for happiness. Let us who are children of the day quit looking around in the darkness of night for our inheritance.

Let us rejoice in the blessed Saviour and the salvation we have in Him against that awful day of judgment. Let us rejoice in hope of future glory and we will be more patient in present tribulations.

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Philippians 4:11.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5.

"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." I Timothy 6:8.

The Lord has not prepared better things for us here because He has glorious things for us over there. This is a sort of training ground for appreciation of good things over yonder. The cross here will make the crown all the more beautiful yonder. Pain here will add to our pleasure there. We cannot eat our cake here and have it there. We cannot have heaven until we get to heaven.

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Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Verses 17-21. Verse 21 which says *"in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" was still unfulfilled. And so his cry was to bring about its fulfillment.*