

Christ's Twofold Estate

Lesson 13: A Cry of Anguish, Jn 19.28

On the face of it, this is an odd cry to find among the esteemed *Seven Sayings of our Lord from the Cross*. It's not odd that Christ was *thirsty* while He hung on the cross, but it seems a little odd that it would be recorded as *inspired* (and therefore *profitable*) *Scripture* (2Tim 3.16).

But be that as it may, it *is* recorded, it *is* among our Lord's last words, and therefore it's *not only necessary* to the accomplishment of our redemption, *but also profitable* for our instruction and comfort. So let me speak to *two things* and then I'll share with you several of *the lessons* which Flavel encourages us to take from *this cry of anguish* from our Saviour.

I. The occasion of Christ's thirst was His extreme agony and suffering.

A. His physical agony

1. His suffering was acute, Ps 22.16. His body was miraculously formed to suffer unparalleled miseries and sorrows, Heb 10.5. It would be raised up to the greatest heights in glory, but it must first be abased to the greatest depths in shame and suffering, Jn 18.11.
2. His sufferings were universal, seizing every member of His body and awakening every sense of His being.
3. His sufferings were continual. Wave upon wave came upon Him, one grief after another, until ALL of God's waves and billows had gone over Him, Ps 88.1-7.
4. His sufferings were unrelieved. The martyrs were encouraged in their sufferings by the comforts that filled their souls, but Christ had not a single drop of comfort, but only grief upon grief.

B. His spiritual agony

1. His soul felt the *wrath* of an angry God, Nah 1.6; Heb 12.29. If the strength that supported Christ wasn't divine, He could never have borne up under God's wrath.
2. His soul felt the *pure* wrath of God. Not a single drop of comfort, not the least degree of sparing mercy, Rom 8.32.
3. His soul felt the *full* wrath of God. There's not one drop left for the elect to suffer.
4. His soul felt the *aggravated* wrath of God. It was beyond what the damned in hell will ever feel.

II. The cry of thirst

A. It was a cry of extreme anguish. Of all the pains and afflictions of the body, there's scarcely anything more intolerable than *extreme thirst*. It causes a painful compression of the heart when the body seeks to draw in moisture like a sponge, and there's nothing but dryness.

B. This cry evidences Christ's true humanity and the truth of Christ's suffering. He was truly feeling what crucified persons feel: a burning and consuming thirst. So that when we read in the Scriptures that He *suffered* for sins, we're to understand that He really and truly *suffered*.

1. During those three dark hours of Christ's suffering when the sun didn't shine, Christ spoke only four times: 1) *My God! My God!* 2) *I thirst*. 3) *It is finished*. and 4) *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*.
2. With an unprecedented resolve and calm patience, He tread the winepress of God's wrath alone, saying *nothing* in all those three hours but the words, *I thirst*.
3. In Lk 16.24 the torments of hell are represented by a *violent thirst* in the complaint of the rich man. So that when Christ says *He thirsts*, it's a public testimony that He's suffering our hell, cf. Rev 21.6.

C. This cry fulfilled prophecy.

1. This is pointed out by John to show us that every part of this great atoning sacrifice was foreordained and arranged in the eternal counsels of the Trinity, even to the very words which He would speak on the cross.
2. John *is not saying* that Christ said “I thirst” only to fulfill the Scripture. His saying it did fulfill a prophecy about Him, but His actions and words are the root and cause of OT prophecy, not the fruit and effect. In the eternal decree of God, what Christ would do came *before* anything was written of it.
3. John was indicating that Christ’s suffering the wrath of God on that cross was in fulfillment of the OT types and prophecies regarding His redeeming work, cf. Isa 53.

III. Application

- A. Hell is a dreadful place, and in Christ’s thirst we see the liveliest representation of the state of the damned in hell (Lk 16.24). There are no cups of water in hell. No relief. No respite. If the eternal and almighty Son of God suffered so much on the cross, what must the suffering of weak sinners in hell be like?
- B. Christ thirsted upon the cross so that believers will never thirst. If hell is represented by a consuming thirst (Lk 16.24), heaven is represented by a satiated thirst (Rev 7.15-17; Jn 4.13-14). Bless God if you’ve been satisfied with the water of life, never to thirst again.
- C. Consider the great love of God for sinners by exposing His Son to the thirst of hell.
 1. He put His Son into this condition. Such was the strength of God’s love for us that He willingly gave up Christ to the misery of hell for us, Isa 53.6, 8, 10; Eph 3.18-19.
 2. His cry pierced heaven and reached His Father’s ears, but He neither relieved Him nor decreased any of the debt He was paying. If God had pitied or spared Christ, He could not have pitied and spared us. The extremity of His suffering was an act of justice to Christ and an act of mercy to us. In fact, Christ Himself was not willing to be relieved until He’d finished His work, so great was His love for us, Gal 2.20.
 3. We should never forget that Christ underwent these greatest of sorrows for the greatest of sinners who didn’t deserve a single drop of God’s mercy. This commends the love of both God and Christ to us, Rom 5.8. Admire, adore, and be ravished with the thoughts of this great love! And, above all, let us give thanks to God for His inexpressible gift! 2Cor 9.15.