

SEEING JESUS IN JOHN

WEEK FORTY-FOUR: THE DEATH OF JESUS

READING

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. 30 When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. 33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. 34 One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35 (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) 36 These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," 37 and "They will look on the one they pierced." John 19:28-37 (NLT)

TEACHING

In this passage, John records two things Jesus said just before he died – "I am thirsty" and "It is finished!" Both statements are loaded with meaning and filled with hope for you and me.

Jesus was literally thirsty. He had suffered terrible beatings, an agonizing walk through Jerusalem, and the horrors of Roman crucifixion. In the midst of his pain, he was also suffering from dehydration. But Jesus wasn't just speaking of physical thirst, he was also speaking of spiritual thirst. On the cross, Jesus became our sin and one of the metaphors for sin in the Old Testament is thirst. Just like thirst can drive and control us, so can sin. The prophet Jeremiah said, *"For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!"* (Jeremiah 2:13) Sin is rejecting the life found in Jesus and looking in other places for that life. On the cross, Jesus was experiencing the insatiable thirst of sin – it will never be satisfied by the things of this world. It will only make us more "thirsty."

When Jesus said, "It is finished!", he was speaking of both his life and his work. After he said that, he "gave up his spirit." Remember: Jesus said no one could take his life; he would lay it down. And that's what happened. Jesus died. But thankfully Jesus was also speaking on his work. He had completed his mission: He came to die, to give his life as a ransom for many and he did it! His work is finished and complete – we can't add to it, we can only receive it. We should be so grateful that Jesus finished his work so that we can receive and continue his work!

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RESPONSE

OPENING QUESTION(S):

- When is the last time you were really thirsty? What did you do?

TODDLERS/PRE-K:

- In this story, who said “I am thirsty” and “It is finished!”?
- Was Jesus’ life taken from him or did he lay it down?

CHILDREN:

- In this story, what two things did Jesus say?
- How is sin like thirst?
- What did Jesus mean when he said, “It is finished!”?

TEENAGERS:

- What two things did Jesus say?
- Jesus was physically and spiritual thirsty. Why was he spiritually thirsty?
- When Jesus said, “It is finished!”, he was speaking of his life and his work. What does that mean?

ADULTS:

- How do you see “thirst” controlling and driving people in your life?
- What does it mean to receive Jesus’ finished work? How is that different than trying to add to his work?

PRAYER

God, forgive me for when I thirst for the things of this world more than I thirst for you. Help me to hunger and thirst for righteousness – for the right things. Convict me when I reject the living water found in Jesus and try to satisfy my thirst in useless places. Thank you, Jesus, for becoming my sin – my thirst – on the cross! Thank you for laying down your life and finishing your mission of seeking and saving the lost. Help me to receive your work as my source of salvation and help me to continue your work as my life’s mission. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

NEXT LEVEL (ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL TEACHING)

This sour wine was used by the Roman soldiers to quench their thirst. The ESV Study Bible notes point out that it was different from “wine mixed with myrrh,” a sedative that Jesus was offered (and refused) on the way to the cross (Mark 15:23). Jesus did nothing to mask or mute the pain of the cross. He embraced the cross, chose the way of suffering and was a willing sacrifice. This was not “divine child abuse.” This was the plan of the Father, willfully carried about by the Son in the power of the Spirit.