

SUFFERING AND FULFILLMENT AT THE CROSS

Mark 15:35-46

INTRODUCTION

Chronicles of Narnia – “The Silver Chair” – C.S.Lewis – Allegorical story

"Are you not thirsty?" said the lion. "I'm dying of thirst," said Jill. "Then drink," said the lion. "May I- could I- would you mind going away while I do?" said Jill. The lion answered this only by a look and very low growl. As Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience. The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic. "Will you promise not to- do anything to me, if I do come?" said Jill. "I make no such promise," said the lion. Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer the lion. "Do you eat girls?" she said. "I have swallowed up, consumed girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms," said the lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it. "I daren't come and drink," said Jill. "Then you will die of thirst," said the Lion. "Oh dear!" said Jill, coming another step nearer. "I suppose I must go and look for another stream then." The lion said, "There is no other stream."

READ Mark 15:33-36

This passage is at the end of 6 hours on the cross

- 3 hours, 3 words, 3 hours of darkness, darkness and quiet shattered by 4th word (v. 34), then the last (5th) word found in parallel passage (John 19:28-29)

Proposition: In these two verses, we see a vivid demonstration of 3 Foundational Theological Truths:

1. **God's Sovereignty**
2. **The Savior's Agony**
3. **Man's Depravity**

Key elements: all part of the Gospel:

- God – His Holiness
- Man – Sin
- Christ – Salvation (by faith, repentance)

1st Theological Truth ...

I. Man's Depravity

Point – Man's Depravity

- what we can't escape
- the heart of man is deceitful above all else
- with God as a starting point – as the standard of perfection
- we fall infinitely short of God's standard of perfect holiness
- we can't do anything truly good for the Lord without the newness of life through Christ

Proof – 15:35 “**And when some of the bystanders heard it, they began saying, "Behold, He is calling for Elijah."**”

- would seem to be the Jewish bystanders

- Roman soldiers would not understand His cry as a cry for Elijah
- they turn His loud cry, scream, into a joke
- this continues the mockery

From **Mark 15:22** to this verse:

- more words written by God on the mockery than on the suffering of Christ

Malachi 4:5 – “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

Matthew 11:14 – “if you care to accept *it*, he himself is Elijah, who was to come.”

- John the Baptist is the spiritual fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy
- they weren't truly wondering if Elijah would come down
- this is one more demonstration of why Jesus is on the cross
- we are hopelessly lost
- whenever we put ourselves ahead of God we may as well be there with the mockers

Mark 15:36 “And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down."”

“put it on a reed” – John adds the reed was a hyssop branch (**John 19:29**)

- would not have been longer than eighteen inches
- in order for such a short branch to reach Jesus' lips, the cross is close to the ground
- the feet of Christ were most likely only two feet from the ground

“gave Him a drink” – imperfect – “was giving Him a drink”

- he continues to hold the sponge while Jesus continues to suck some of the wine from the sponge

“sour wine” – LXX – “vinegar”

- cheap mixture of sour wine and water
- popular beverage of the poor and Roman soldiers
- effective in quenching thirst
- probably the wine taken to the cross by the soldiers for their own refreshment during the time of the crucifixion

This is not an act of mercy. The purpose of this drink (in contrast to the drugged wine in v.23) was

- to prolong life
- to lengthen His suffering
- this entire method of execution was tortuous and evil – this act just adds to it

Consider this quote by Charles Spurgeon:

“man is a fallen creature, with a carnal mind which cannot be reconciled to God; a worse than brutish creature, rendering evil for good, and treating his God with vile ingratitude. Alas, man is the slave and the dupe of Satan, and a black-hearted traitor to his God. Did not the prophecies say that man would give to his incarnate God gall to eat and vinegar to drink?”

Recall the timeline:

- from 9am to noon – mocked and suffering

- noon to 3pm – supernatural darkness then shattered by Jesus’ cry

It is incredible that the mockers are still there!

- they are ready to continue their mocking
- even the pitch darkness of midday does not alarm this wicked crowd
- they are there for the show!

Consider this illustration: – Genesis 19

- this is the Old Testament’s strongest demonstration of man’s depravity
- Lot is demonstrating hospitality to the angels but he is also trying to protect them because he knows the wickedness of the city
- Lot is not doing much better than the wicked men outside by giving up his daughters
- Demonstration of the supernatural power of the angels by closing doors at the end of v.11
- The men kept groping around trying to find the doorway to continue their evil intent

2nd Theological Truth ...

II. Savior’s Agony

Point – Why didn’t He just come on a Thursday, die on a Friday, raise on a Sunday and be done with it?

- because sin requires a penalty in God’s economy - blood/death – **Hebrews 9**
- your sin requires blood/death ... of a Man
 - expiation and propitiation→substitution

→ Death, blood AND ... Justice

- His wrath must be quenched for His glory
- God’s justice must be satisfied

Proof – **John 19:28-29** – “said, **“I am thirsty.”**”

- a burning thirst

This is the shortest word of the 7 words of Christ.

- the one most closely related to Himself
- one 4-letter Greek word from the parched lips of an innocent Man

“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” – teaches us the torture of His soul; “I am thirsty”

- brings us back to the torture of His body

The physical torture and exhaustion of crucifixion, intensified by the unspeakable mental distress, account for the thirst which possessed the lips of our dying Savior.

This thirst is caused in part by the loss of blood, and by the fever created by the disease caused by his wounds. The nails are pounded into sensitive parts of His body. The wounds widen as the weight of His body drags the nails through His flesh, and tear His tender nerves. The extreme tension produces a burning fever. It is unbearable pain that dries His mouth and makes it like an oven.

The **Lord over Nature** (the God Man) can feed the multitude with bread and supply a banquet with wine. He who made water flow from a rock is now thirsty.

Our Lord is the Maker of the ocean and the waters that were above the expanse. His hand stays or opens the fountains of heaven, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust. He pours out the streams that run through the hills, the floods that rush down the mountains, and the flowing rivers which water the plains.

All the clouds and rains would be glad to refresh his brow, and the brooks and streams would joyously flow at his feet.

God does not thirst. There is no hint in Scripture that angels ever thirst. We will not thirst in Glory. But Christ, as Man, thirsts in the depths of His humiliation as no one has ever thirsted before.

Consider this personal illustration:

You know, it is sad to have not grown up in church. You don't have tradition. Tradition can be good depending on the "tradition." But more often than not, Tradition competes with the Bible. At the same time, there is a freshness you have. You just read the Bible and take it at face value ...

For instance, I never understood why this day is called "Good Friday." It seems like if we wanted to have a name for this day it should be called "Bad Friday."

On this Friday (whatever you wish to call it) – all of the physical pain; all of the emotional pain; all of the spiritual pain is voluntarily accepted and voluntarily endured by Jesus Christ for the glory of his heavenly father and for the eternal well-being of his people.

He had refused drugged wine which was offered 6 hours earlier at the beginning of the crucifixion (**Mark 15:23** – mixed with myrrh). This would have deadened the pain.

He is fully determined to drink the cup His Father gives Him (**Mark 14:36**)

Jesus will not accept anything that might hinder His entering fully into all the cross involves

- He has a burning thirst
- His human *body* is tormented by excruciating pain
- His mortal flesh is sharing in the agony of the inward spirit

→ Jesus is resolved to die with an unclouded mind

→ He is determined to remain conscious to the end and to take the full measure of pain on Your behalf

Richard Baxter: "Christ leads me through no darker rooms than He went through"

3rd Theological Truth ...

III. God's Sovereignty

Point – Nothing is happening to Jesus that catches Him by surprise. All of it was anticipated when He was in Gethsemane. All of it is part of God's eternal decree.

Jesus is in total command of every aspect of the situation.

- Jesus Christ is not a helpless victim

All things are accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Proof – **John 19:28** "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled,"

"after this" – John passes over three hours of darkness from noon until three

“**had already been accomplished**” – *tetelestai*

- fulfilled, completed, made perfect
- all things are done which the Law requires
- all things which have been prophesied – EXCEPT one...

“**in order that**” – *hina* – purpose statement

- in death, as in life, Scripture is the authoritative Word of the living God for Lord Jesus
- every jot and tittle of Scripture is elevated, secured, & fulfilled

Psalm 22:15 – “**My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And Thou dost lay me in the dust of death.**”

- fulfilled when Jesus cries out “I thirst”

Psalm 69:21 – “**They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.**”

Everything planned in the ageless counsels of eternity is being brought to a culmination at the Cross

- the Victory gained
- the Battle won
- God’s Justice is satisfied
- the ransom for sin is paid in full
- His Wrath is quenched

CONCLUSION

Remember:

The **arrows** of persecution which pierce you, are first stained with His blood.

The **cup** of affliction which you are made to drink may be bitter, but it bears the mark of His lips on its brim.

He traveled the **Via Dolorosa**, the Way of Suffering, before you.

→ Every footprint you leave in the dirt is stamped side by side with his footprints.

He is innocent, and yet He is thirsty with a burning dying thirst.

→ Should we who are guilty wonder when we are now and then chastened?

He was so poor that his clothes were stripped from him. He was hung up on the Cross, penniless and friendless, hungering and thirsting.

→ Will we grumble and complain because we might bear the yoke of poverty and want?

In your quiet time let the dying gasp of your Lord as he said, “I am thirsty,” go through your ears, and as you hear it, let it touch your heart and cause you to gird up yourself and say, “I will thirst with Him and not grumble, I will suffer with him and not complain.”

The rich man in Hades – “Father Abraham, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.”

If Jesus had not said "I am thirsty," every one of us would thirst forever, far from God, with an impassable chasm between us and heaven. Our sinful tongues would be blistered and burned forever, had not His tongue been tormented with thirst in our place.

This soft, expiring sigh, "I am thirsty," ends for us the thirst which would have preyed on us through all eternity.

The beautiful substitution of the just for the unjust, of God for man, of the perfect Christ for us - guilty, hell-deserving rebels.

He thirsted on the Cross that we might drink the water of life and thirst no more forever

- **John 4:13-15** – let it sink into your heart in the context of Jesus' thirst on the cross
- ➔ There is only one stream of Living Water