

## Last Words: Sayings from the Cross and from Beyond the Grave (The Word of Suffering) John 19:28-29

### INTRODUCTION

**Computer Generated Imagery** ...commonly known as CGI is the application of computer graphics to create or contribute to images in art, printed media, video games, simulators, computer animation and VFX in films, television programs, shorts, commercials, and videos. Works well for games, television and small and large screens but doesn't work well when we read a book. Logical, right? Yet, I sometimes think that you and I miss out on much of what we read about the Passion of the Christ because we tend to imagine the scene using CGI. Because we are so removed from the original scene, we don't really experience the Passion of the Christ.

On the outskirts of Jerusalem, overlooking the garbage dumps Jesus was crucified on rough-cut timbers with iron spikes. Can you see it? There's no green screen in the background to aid CGI. This is truly a multi-sensory experience: **(Sight)** – naked men nailed to a cross; **(Sound)** – hear the screams, the profanity and the words from those there; **(Smell)** – death is in the air. This is not a video game...this is real life. This is real men dying on real crosses suffering unspeakable pain.

It is here that we find our Lord Jesus at His best. For the last few Sundays, we have been studying the Sayings from the Cross uttered by Jesus Christ. So far, we have considered **4 of the 7 sayings**. We have learned that that forgiveness received is forgiveness that needs to be extended. In other words, forgiven people forgive people (*the first saying - the word of forgiveness*); we have learned the importance of reaching out to others with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Present others with the message of reconciliation - *the second saying: the word of salvation*. The *third saying - the word of affection* - reminds us that we are to be ministers of mercy...meeting the needs of those around us. The importance of sharing the gospel not through words but deeds. And *the fourth saying - the word of*

*anguish* - reminds reiterates the seriousness of sin. Sin does matter. Jesus Christ became the God-forsaken man as He suffered God's punishment of sin. He's our sin-bearing substitute. This doesn't mean that everyone is saved automatically. God's forgiveness is not general; God's forgiveness is particular. God's forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please join me as we turn our attention to the Fifth Saying of Cross...**the word of suffering**. Please turn in your Bible **John 19:28-29**.

*I thirst...what does this mean and how does it apply to us...*

### **I. Perfect** \_\_\_\_\_

There are many people today who struggle with the notion that Jesus was God. They say, "*He was a good man...a prophet...a moral teacher...but God in the flesh is a little too much.*" They ask with cynicism, "**How can a man be God?**" Truth be told, you & I readily accept the idea of Jesus calming the seas and raising the dead (**the deity or divinity of Christ**) but question the extent of His humanity. The idea of Jesus being tired, or sick, or frustrated, or needing a bath (**the humanity of Christ**) is not always embraced as easily as His miracles.

The Bible puts it this way:

a) **John 1:14** – "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

b) **1 Timothy 2:5** – "*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*"

*PERFECT HUMANITY...next note with me...*

## II. Profound

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Because Jesus was perfectly human, Good Friday was anything but a good day for our Lord. The truth of the matter is that we have cleaned up (sanitized) the cross. We have wiped off the blood, the pieces of flesh, and the smell of death. We have become too comfortable...too familiar.

Please allow me to share with you something I found that describes the suffering Jesus Christ experienced written by a medical doctor in 1965. Dr. C. Truman Davis paints a vivid picture of it for us from a medical point of view. I want to share it in detail including the flogging that preceded Calvary. The Jews limited flogging to forty stripes; the Romans set no limitation. The Roman whip was made of leather with pieces of bone and lead. Dr. Davis thus describes Jesus' suffering and agony:

*“The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus’ shoulders, back, and legs. At first the heavy tongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper in the subcutaneous tissues, first producing oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. . .Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue.” “When they reach Calvary’s summit, “Jesus is quickly thrown backward with his shoulders against the wood (of the cross). The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. “The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and*

*up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places the full weight on the nail through His feet. Again, He feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet. “At this point, another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward to breathe...Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one small breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. “Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins, a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. “It is now almost over—the loss of tissue fluids reached a critical level—the compressed heart is struggling to pump, heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air...The body of Jesus is now in extremis, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues...His mission of atonement has been completed. Finally, He can allow His body to die.”*

[C. Truman Davis, “The Crucifixion of Jesus: The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View,” *Arizona Medicine* 22, no. 3 (March 1965): 185-7].

It’s in the midst of this profound suffering that Jesus Christ says, *“I thirst.”* **It has been said that Jesus thirsted under the heat of God’s wrath, that we might not be scorched with it forever.** At the cross we see the depths of God’s love for us and the ugliness of our sin.

*PERFECT HUMANITY...PROFOUND SUFFERING....next...*

### III. Fulfilled \_\_\_\_\_

Now this is clearly different from what is recorded in **Matthew 27:34** and **Mark 15:23** where at the beginning of His crucifixion Jesus was offered a drink of wine mixed with myrrh, a drug offered to help dull the pain. At that point Jesus refused the drink, desiring to face His hour of suffering and death with a clear head. Now approaching the moment of His death Jesus accepts this drink of wine vinegar to meet His own physical needs, to moisten His mouth so that He might offer clearly and loudly His next words, the triumphant *"It is finished"* (**John 19:30**), and as our text indicates so that the scripture might be fulfilled. The particular text that Jesus had in mind is not mentioned. **Which one is it?** Some have thought that it refers to the prophetic picture of thirst during the death of the Messiah given in **Psalm 22:15**: *"My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth"*. Perhaps more likely is that Jesus had in mind **Psalm 69:21**: *"They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst"*. Whichever text Jesus had in mind, the picture is one of Jesus, even in the midst of the most intense physical agony, very much aware of the word of his Father in Scripture and very much committed to order all of His life, even these last few moments, by it. **This scene speaks volumes about Jesus' commitment to Scripture and should speak very loudly and very clearly to us about our need to order all of our lives by Scripture especially in the moments of our deepest suffering.**

### CONCLUSION

Remember...even in His dying Jesus Christ teaches us how to live. What lessons can you & I draw from this fourth word? Two in particular:

➤ **Truth #1 – Don't fail to appreciate His \_\_\_\_\_.**

➤ **Truth #2 – Strive to imitate His \_\_\_\_\_.**

I conclude with the following poem from Swindoll's book:

#### **The Maker of the Universe – F.W. Pitt**

The Maker of the universe,  
As Man, for man was made a curse.  
The claims of Law which He had made,  
Unto the uttermost He paid.

His holy fingers made the bough,  
Which grew the thorns that crowned His brow;  
The nails that pierced His hand were mined,  
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest from whence there sprung  
The tree on which His body hung;  
He died upon a cross of wood,  
Yet made the hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er His head,  
By Him above the earth was spread.  
The sun that hid from Him its face,  
By His decree was poised in space.

The spear which spilled His precious blood  
Was tempered in the fires of God.  
The grave in which His form was laid  
Was hewn in rocks His hands had made.

The throne on which He now appears  
Was His from everlasting years;  
But a new glory crowns His brow,  
And every knee to Him shall bow:  
The Maker of the universe.

<http://craggiemore.com/2006/08/03/maker-of-the-universe/>