

Before we look at the text, let's examine the context of John 19: 28-30 for a text without a context can be a pretext. The context is Mark 15: 33-36a: "And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink..." Did you notice how long the darkness was? Yes! Three hours, from Noon—the sixth hour until 3 PM, the ninth hour. At the ninth hour, Jesus cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sebachthani!" What happened after Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?" God responded and though no answer was given verbally, it was again light outside after 3 PM. The darkness was past. Fellowship with the Father for Jesus was again available as Jesus cried out-loud to God the Father, "I thirst!" God the Father's presence was now restored. The sun was now shining as Jesus was now dying. There was enough light for a bystander to run and fill a sponge with sour wine, mixed with gall and to visibly hold it up to Jesus lips on a branch of hyssop for Him to drink. That's the context for this text.

### **"THE FOUNTAIN CRIED, "I THIRST!"**

John 19: 28-30 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

On February 27, 2001, I had been sleeping for five nights in my Mother's room in Beresford, South Dakota. I just slept on the floor beside her bed. At midnight, she awakened me and asked me to take notes as she asked me to write down plans for her funeral. It was a time I never dreamed I would experience. She told me the three points she wanted me to preach in her funeral message. Then she asked for two songs, "When He Shall Come," to be sung by the Brooklyn Quartet. As the baritone was gone, I sang in the quartet as we sang Mom's request. For the congregation to stand and sing, Mom chose an old, old song written in 1912 by Lucy J. Rider, called, "Ho, Every One That Is Thirsty." I led the packed out church in singing, "Ho! everyone that is thirsty in spirit. Ho! Everyone that is weary and sad, Come to the Fountain, there's fullness in Jesus. All that you're longing for, Come and be glad. "I will pour water on him who is thirsty, I will pour floods upon the dry ground. Open your heart for the gift I am bringing. While ye are seeking Me, I will be found." I've been singing this song all week as I have meditated on these shortest of Jesus' seven last words, "I thirst!"

Pastor Kevin chose for us to sing the other song that has also been on my mind as well. We sang it earlier in our time of worshipping in song. Brenton Brown and

Glenn Robertson wrote it. “All who are thirsty, All who are weak, Just come to the fountain; Dip your heart in the stream of life. Let the pain and the sorrow, Be washed away, In the waves of His mercy, As deep cries out to deep. Come, Lord Jesus, Come.” What has amazed me as I have been meditating, studying and meditating on this message, “I thirst!” – is that these words came between two loud cries. After three hours of utter darkness, Jesus cried with a loud voice—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Following this loud cry, Jesus said, (and it was probably in a dry, hoarse gasp) “I thirst!” Then having taken the vinegar or sour wine, Mark 15: 37 tells us Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed His last. Matthew 27: 30 tells us, “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit.” The last loud cry was just a few words we call the sixth and seventh words, “It is finished! Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit!” It would be easy to miss these two English words—which were only one Greek word—**dipsao**. Dipsao means “I thirst or I desire earnestly.” Both of those meanings let us into the heart of our Lord Jesus in his last few moments of earthly life in a body like ours. The blackness of darkness has ended. There was now enough light for a bystander, (Matthew 27: 47) to put sour wine or vinegar up to Jesus’s lips. Perhaps Spurgeon is right in saying that Jesus spoke this word dipsao in a fainting voice, and in immediate anticipation of saying His final words from the cross. I ask you, with me to study today this one Greek word and its meanings in five different ways. What are they?

**“I THIRST!” IS A SEAL OF JESUS’ TRUE HUMANITY AS HE DIED AS MY SUBSTITUTE AND YOURS. (I.)** Thank God as not a bone of our Lord was broken, so not one word of Christ from the cross was lost, including “Dipsao—I thirst!” John 19: 28 declares, “*After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, to fulfill the Scripture, “I thirst!”*” In each of Jesus’ seven utterances, there is a great depth of meaning. Jesus was fully conscious as He cried, “I thirst!” for we read part of His motive in saying, “I thirst!” was not only to have a clear throat for His final cry, but also to prepare Himself for His very last two words. Jesus died, with a clear mind and will to fulfill His Word, the Scriptures. In David’s Messianic Psalm 60: 21, we read, “They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst, they gave me sour wine to drink.” The work of Christ on the cross had now come to a climax. Jesus’ mortal flesh had to share in the agony of His inward flesh for He was both the Son of man and the Son of God. As the Fountain of life, Jesus cried as He also fulfilled another Messianic psalm, Psalm 22: 15 which declares, “My tongue cleaves or sticks to My jaws.” Some of us have had that feeling. Jesus was moments away from dying, and there was nothing He could do to relieve His parched tongue so He could form His last words. His hands were fixed to the cross. As I prepared this message, I began to cry at this point throughout the rest of my

preparation. It made me remember in how many ways, like Jesus, with His hands nailed to the cross, my hands and your hands are tied. There is nothing more we can do but cry out to God the Father, and wait for Him to act or send someone to help us if it is only a bystander. Jesus died as we all will someday, dependent upon others to ask for a drink. Jesus' only hope for a drink was to receive something from the hands of another. Many a time at a dying bedside, I have taken a sponge swab and dipped it in cold water as I have heard those words, "I am very thirsty!" Deep thirst is one of the marks of approaching death as half closed lips are usually very thirsty, often very parched, cracked, split and dry. Next time you are so thirsty you feel you could die, remember Jesus was there first. Our Redeemer's cry of "I thirst!" cries out to me as I can by faith hear that gasp of Jesus. What a lesson in patience for me! What a call for me to be conformed to His image! Secondly,

**"I THIRST!" IS A SURE SIGN THAT JESUS WAS DYING IN MY PLACE AND YOURS.** (II.) "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabathani" points to the anguish of our

Lord's soul at Calvary. "Dipsao—"I thirst" points to the torture of Jesus' body in our place for us. It is written of the God of justice that He is "able to destroy both soul and body in hell," (Matthew 10:28) The pangs of thirst on the cross are pangs both of soul and body, touching both heart and flesh. We read in John 7: 37, 38, "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly, or out of his heart, or out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Beloved, our inner thirst is not only of the body, but of the soul and spirit. It is a craving, a satisfaction withdrawn that we pine for, or a dissatisfaction we face. This inner thirst physically is the result of sin in every sinner. Jesus faced this physical thirst on the cross for you and me. Physical thirst is the eternal result of sin. How do we know? Jesus tells us the story of the unbelieving rich man and the believing poor man in Luke 16: 22-24, saying, "The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side, The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, or Hell, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'" Beloved, Jesus not only suffered the spiritual anguish of hell at Calvary, but also the physical anguish. If Jesus has not thirsted at the cross, there would eternally be a great gulf fixed for each of us between heaven and hell and there would be no one to quench our eternal thirst or even one drop of water to cool our tongues in the flames of torment. Jesus' thirst at Calvary was a sure sign He was bearing my sin in His own body on the tree of crucifixion. Jesus' thirst for you and me ended the thirst in our

bodies and souls that would have gone on eternally in hell, an insatiable thirst, that He freely bore for you and me in our place. Thirdly,

**“I THIRST” IS A SIGNAL THAT THE BATTLE WAS OVER FOR VICTORY OVER SIN AND DEATH FOR MY SOUL AND YOURS. (III.)**

Read John 19: 28. “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, to fulfill the Scripture, “I thirst!” “I thirst” is an affirmation to us that the victory was won, the battle was over. He had won the battle for our souls. Having paid it all, Jesus cried out, “I thirst.” “I thirst” is an embodiment of the phrase, “It’s all over but the shouting!” As Jesus would push Himself up on the cross for one of the last times to get His breath, He would then shout next, “It is finished!” This thirst of our great Deliverer was a signal that Jesus’ grief had reached the high water mark. From this moment on, Jesus had passed the flood of His greatest grief and anguish on the cross. The battle was fought. His victory for us who believe was won forever! As Jesus sipped out of that drenched sponge a few tablespoons full of sour wine or vinegar, He knew He had smitten the last foe—death, and He had won. The grief of “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do was over. Jesus was dying as the one Mediator between God and men. As He said to the repentant, dying thief, “Truly, I say to you, “This day you will be with me in Paradise,” Jesus, whose kingdom was not of this world, was dying in kingly power, opening with the key of David a door that no man can shut—admitting every repentant believing sinner to heaven. As Jesus said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son,” and to John, behold your mother, Jesus was dying as the Son of man caring in gentleness and love for the His earthly mother.” All of these were huge horizontal griefs as Jesus saw a sword had pierced Mary’s soul as well as the other huddled women with John at the foot of the cross. When the horizontal matters ended, now with the vertical grief of Jesus knowing the absence of His Father’s presence and communion for three dark hours, we see the Son of God crying out to the Father, “My God, my God, why?” At the end of the darkness, we see Jesus’ human soul as our Substitute in anguish crying and gasping out “I thirst.” “I thirst!” is the grievous pain of His mortal body, but doubtless, it must have been a lesser pain than the first pain of crying, “Father, forgive them.” The incredible struggle to pay fully for your sins and mine was now over, and Jesus took a moment to mention an equally terrible anguish, His mortal pain, which was a lesser pain. Sometimes in the battle, we have deep hurts and wounds we don’t feel at first because we are in the thick of battle. But as the battle is ending, we notice, we are parched and dry and thirsty. Our glorious Lord was dying of thirst, and in need of His mouth and throat being moistened so His thirst could be thrown off and He could shout as a Conqueror, “It is finished!” Fourthly,

**“I THIRST” IS A SOUL FOOD FOR ME AND YOU EXPLAINING WHY JESUS WOULD NOW DRINK THE VINEGAR HE ONCE REFUSED. (IV.)**

Notice John 19: 28-30 and see Jesus received or sipped or drank some of the sour wine vinegar. Jesus drank, in the moment of death, but earlier, before the moment of crucifixion, Matthew records in Matthew 26: 33, 34, “And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.” So what is the difference? The drink offered to Jesus was a cheap vinegar wine with myrrh or gall mixed in to dull the senses. Posca was a cheap vinegar wine diluted with water. It was the custom of the Romans to offer a man being crucified drugged wine so he might more easily endure his cross. Jesus refused the wine vinegar after tasting it. He would suffer all of the cross for you and me with no dulling of His senses. At the point of death, Jesus was offered from the same vessel of cheap wine vinegar mixed with gall. Jesus now wanted to drink, not to deaden His senses but having fought the fight and won, He wanted simply to be able to moisten His parched lips and throat with moisture for His final cry and shout of victory. Fifthly,

**“I THIRST” IS A SUFFERING THIRST JESUS HAD FOR COMMUNION WITH HIS FATHER THAT WAS NOW AVAILABLE AS HE WAS DYING, AND FOR COMMUNION WITH YOU AND ME. (V.)**

First, let’s think of the absence of the presence of God the Father from Jesus. “I thirst” was the spiritual cry of the heart of our Savior, the desire of His heart for fellowship again. The crucifixion of Jesus began with fellowship with His Father as Jesus was crying to His Father repeatedly as He was being crucified, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” The darkness that fell in the last three hours of crucifixion did not begin until 12 Noon, the sixth hour. As Jesus was just seconds away from His sixth and seventh words from the cross, the fellowship was restored. Light from the Father’s eyes was now visible to Jesus. The sun had come back out. We read in Isaiah 53: 11, “Out of the anguish of His soul, He shall see and be satisfied.” The Father now saw the Son and the work done. The satisfying of the righteousness and justice and holiness of God was complete—it was a full propitiation for our sins. For the Son of God to see the Father’s eyes now and for the Father to see into Jesus’ eyes,—it had to be a sight no one but the Son and the Father could ever fully know and understand. For the Father to look on our Substitute now with our atonement complete, it had to be a satisfaction beyond belief. When I’ve seen my children face a storm and by faith make it through, the look we’ve exchanged is priceless. When my wife bore each of our children, the looks we exchanged were unable to be captured by any photo. I believe this thirst of Jesus marks the end of the 3 hours of “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabacthani, “My God,

My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This thirst for moisture so Jesus could cry, “It is finished!” was first of all a cry to His Father, and it was a cry for God the Father’s presence and fellowship again. The sun was again shining and the radiance of the Father’s eyes had to be paramount on heaven’s portals. No more could the Father withhold His holy presence when the work was done. Our sin was paid for. The price was eternally priceless—unfathomable, but Jesus did it and the Father did it and the Holy Spirit did it for you and me. I believe the moment of death that the centurion saw must have had something to do with the look of love Jesus cast to His Father as prepared to close His eyes in death. We read in Mark 15: 39, “And when the centurion who stood facing Him, **saw** that in this way Jesus breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

I’ve seen that look of wonder when loved ones have been dying, and what they see no one can fully know for sure, but I am sure some see our Father, our Savior, and heaven and perhaps even loved ones. Even in death, often there comes a smile that ends the looks of pain, a look of wonder and peace that passes understanding, for death is hard and painful. But when we die in the bosom of the Father, in the presence of the Lord, and are absent from the body, present with the Lord, it’s eternally all right. All now was finished. As Jesus said, “I thirst!” It was all right again with the Father and the Son. God the Father’s presence was restored to Jesus.

But there’s a bit more, almost mystical—but none the less true and precious. You see, the Fountain was gasping and saying and faintly crying out, “I thirst!” You say, “The Fountain”? Yes, David cries in Psalm 36: 9, “For with You, is the Fountain of Life.” In Psalm 68: 26 The Lord is “Israel’s Fountain. In Jeremiah 2: 13 and 17: 13, He is “the Fountain of Living Waters.” In Zechariah 12: 10, we read about the whole Jewish nation, that the Jews will look upon the One whom they have pierced and the Holy Spirit will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, as they mourn for Jesus, and Zechariah 13: 1 tells us that “On that day, there shall be a Fountain opened for the house of David to cleanse them from sin and from uncleanness.” And in Revelation 21: 6, 7, John heard Him who was seated on the throne say, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the Fountain, from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”

So what is this final mystical spiritual meaning of “I thirst?” This thirst Jesus had for communion with you and me was on Jesus’ heart at age 12, when He said to Mary and Joseph, “Didn’t you know I must be about My Father’s business?”

Twenty one years later, at age 33, Jesus told His disciples, “I have a baptism to be baptized with and how great is My distress until it is accomplished.” What was this business, this baptism, that made our Fountain’s hands and feet and head and back and side be filled with His own blood? Yes, there is a Fountain filled with blood. Jesus thirsted to pluck us as brands from the burning, from the jaws of hell, to pay our redemption, to drink the cup for us, so we could share communion with Him. Remember when the woman at the well came to Jesus, He told His disciples, “I have meat to eat that you know not of.” When Jesus stands at the door and knocks, waiting for us to open to Him, He wants to come in to sup with us and us with Him. Why was He thirsty? The answer is the same as why He is still knocking at the hearts of every lost soul. He is thirsty still, and He will be thirsty until the last soul is saved. That spiritual thirst will never be fully assuaged until the last person is saved and the end comes. I close with the words we have been studying in our small groups—“I am crucified with Christ.” Yes, I do, I have His thirst for souls. I do. I know many of you do to. This is one true sign that we are crucified with Christ. We thirst for lost souls. I cry today with Jesus, “I thirst!” May God keep us thirsty for the lost until we see Jesus’ face as we are crucified with Him. Amen.