

Seven Words From the Cross - Obedience

by Warren Wiersbe

Warren Wiersbe's sermon explores the profound significance of Jesus' words 'I thirst' as a reflection of His suffering, obedience, and love for humanity.

Duration: 37:00

Scripture: Psalm 69:3-4, Psalm 69:8-9, Matthew 25:31-46, John 2:17, John 15:25, John 18:1-11, Romans 15:3

Topics: "The Cross", "Christology"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the last words of Jesus on the cross, specifically focusing on the statement 'I thirst.' He emphasizes that even though it may seem like a simple statement, there are spiritual treasures to be found in it. The preacher highlights three portraits of Jesus that can be seen in this statement: the suffering Son of Man, the one who identifies with those in need, and the one who fulfills the hunger and thirst for righteousness. The sermon also draws parallels between the six hours Jesus spent on the cross and the six days of creation, emphasizing the significance of Jesus' work in the new creation.

Transcript

We open the word of God to John chapter 18 and then John chapter 19. But first I'd like to read John chapter 18 verses 1 through 11. When Jesus had spoken these words he went forth with his disciples over the brook Chidron where was a garden into which he entered and his disciples and Judas also who betrayed him knew the place for Jesus often resorted there with his disciples.

Judas then having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees cometh there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him went forth and said unto them whom seek ye they answered him Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them I am he and Judas also who betrayed him stood with them.

As soon then as he had said unto them I am he they went backward and fell to the ground then asked he them again whom seek ye and they said Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered I have told you that I am he if therefore ye seek me let these go their way. That the saying might be fulfilled which he spoke of them whom thou gavest me have I lost none.

Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it and smote the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter put up thy sword into the sheath the cup which my father hath given me shall I not drink it.

Now John chapter 19 verses 28 and 29. After this Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled saith I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar and they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon Hyssop and put it to his mouth.

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Our Lord was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning and was on the cross for six hours. When you open the book of Genesis you find God creating and the record tells us that in six days the work was done.

At Calvary you find God recreating. You find God in the person of Jesus Christ the son of God doing the work for the new creation. The first three hours that he was on the cross our Lord was in the light and he dealt with those who were around him.

First he prayed for his enemies father forgive them. Then he spoke to a thief today you'll be with me in paradise. Then he talked to his mother and to John the disciple.

From noon until three o'clock there was darkness over the land and out of that darkness came our Lord's cry my God my God why hast thou forsaken me. And then there followed three statements one right after the other referring not to others but to himself. How like our loving Lord first to deal with others and then to talk about himself.

His first statement was I thirst referring to his body. His second statement was it is finished. He made his soul an offering for sin.

His last statement was into thy hands I commend my spirit his spirit given to God. And so the last three statements tell us that our Lord Jesus gave his all his spirit his soul his body yielded there on the cross for us. The shortest of his words is I thirst.

In the Greek New Testament one little word of four letters I thirst. It may seem that we could look at this word and not get much from it but if Jesus said it then there is some spiritual treasure in this word that you and I need to get a hold of and invest. I thirst.

Well there are some spiritual treasures in this statement. The better we understand this statement the more we're going to love him and I think the better we're going to serve him. Because in this statement I thirst the Lord Jesus gives to us three portraits of himself.

When you see those words or hear those words I thirst there should flash upon the screen of your soul three marvelous portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ. First we see the suffering son of man. He was thirsting just plain physical thirst.

You see Jesus Christ was truly man. The big problem that's being discussed today is the deity of Christ. For some reason or another the old doctrine that Jesus is not God is resurging again.

Books are being written to prove that Jesus is not God but that wasn't the problem back in the early days of the church. In the early days of the church they knew he was God. There was no question about that.

The first heresy that sprang up was that he was not man. That he just seemed to be God or that God came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him when he died on the cross. And those heresies are still with us today too.

In the early church the battle was not is Jesus God the battle was was he truly man. And he was truly man. He was born the way men are born.

He grew up the way people grow up. He went through childhood and youth and young manhood. And he lived the way people lived except without sin.

He ate. He drank. He got tired.

One night he was so weary he went to sleep in the boat in a storm. I could not do that. He knew what it was to feel pain.

He knew what it was to weep. He had all of the sinless infirmities of a human body and he died. Because he did have a human body he died and he suffered when he died.

Jesus Christ felt the depths of physical suffering when he was on the cross. And of course a part of the suffering of crucifixion is an intense thirst. When you read back in Psalm 22 which is the Old Testament picture of crucifixion.

You read in verse 15 my strength is dried up like a pots herd and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. This entire psalm pictures the crucifixion of our Lord. They pierced my hands and my feet.

And so Jesus was enduring physical suffering. Now you will recall that when our Lord came to the cross a group of Jewish women were there to help all of the people being executed. There was a sisterhood in Jerusalem that was dedicated to the purpose of alleviating the suffering of those who were being crucified.

And they had mingled a narcotic. They had some wine mingled with myrrh. And this was a narcotic.

If you drank it it would sort of deaden your nerves and you wouldn't feel things quite so sensitively. And the Lord Jesus refused that. When he had taken a sip of it he said no I don't want it.

That's a remarkable thing. No it isn't remarkable. I would have accepted it.

Every time I've had surgery I've always rejoiced. I didn't feel it. I'm grateful for nurses who come in and say now we're going to put this into your veins.

You start counting and you never get much past four or five and you're gone. I'm glad for all of the devices men have discovered from God to deaden pain. But our Lord Jesus said no I'm going to the cross and I'm going to accept the full load of physical suffering.

Back in the Old Testament when the priest when the high priest was serving in the tabernacle or the temple he was not permitted to drink strong drink. My Lord Jesus was not only the priest he was the sacrifice and he said no strong drink. You remember when David had to restore to God.

God said to him you purchased this property David you put an altar up here. And the man from whom David purchased the property said oh my Lord let me give it to you. And David said no this is not for me this is for the Lord.

I will not give unto the Lord that which has cost me nothing. My savior on the cross is saying I am not going to give unto my father that which costs me nothing. I'm not going to take a shortcut.

I'm not going to go the easy way. I will bear the full price of sin and I will bear the full load of suffering. And therefore he did not drink the narcotic.

I'm glad that he didn't. For had our Lord been under the influence of some narcotic he could not have spoken these marvelous words. I wonder if he could have turned to a thief and said today you'll be with me in paradise.

I wonder if he could have said I thirst. We have here the suffering son of man. Now I say that to say this.

You and I go through suffering. Each one of us here today has at some time or another experienced physical or emotional suffering. And when we are suffering we are tempted to say God doesn't know.

God doesn't understand. And yet the Bible teaches just the opposite. In the first several chapters of the book of Hebrews where the writer spells out in detail the humanity and the deity of Jesus Christ.

And he says to us let me tell you why Jesus took upon him a body. That he might die and in dying he might destroy Satan who has the power of death and that he might deliver us. But he says there's another reason why he has a human body.

It's so that he might learn by experience what you and I go through day after day after day. And my friend you can never come to Jesus Christ and say Lord you don't know how I feel. Because he does know how you feel.

We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our weaknesses. We have a high priest who can be touched. Who can say to you I know how you feel.

I know what you're going through. And you know what he says to us? Keep going. Don't quit.

I was on the cross. I know the meaning of physical suffering. And I stayed there.

I didn't take the easy way. I'm sure there's some heart here today that says you know pastor if I had been there I would have given him a drink. I'm sure you would have.

I'm sure if you and I had been there knowing what we know today and loving as we love today we would have given him a drink. If we had heard him say I thirst we would have run and in some way gotten to him not just a sponge to wet his lips. We would have gotten to him a good drink that would help him.

You say I would have done that. Then do it. We say I can't.

He's no longer on the cross. This is true. He no longer has a physical thirst.

This is true. But do you remember what he said in one of his parables? Do you remember the story he told about the sheep and the goats? When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the angels with him then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all the Gentiles and he shall separate them as a shepherd separates his sheep from his goats. He's going to say to the sheep now you enter into the kingdom because I was hungry and you fed me.

I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was naked and you clothed me. I was in prison and you visited me.

And they're going to say well Lord when did we ever do that? Oh he said in as much as you've done it unto these the least of my brethren you've done it unto me. You know what he's saying in that story? He is saying that when you and I give a cup of cold water to somebody who needs it we're giving it to him. That's why we do it.

When you and I visit somebody who needs visiting we're visiting him. When you and I clothe someone who needs it we're clothing him. Whatever we do to his people in loving service we're doing to him.

And so when Jesus says I thirst he says look at this portrait of the suffering son of man. I know how you feel. I know what you're going through and I know that if you will help others you're helping me and I can come and help you.

There's a second portrait though that we find in these words I thirst. Not only the suffering son of man but we also have the portrait of the obedient servant of God. Why did Jesus say I thirst? Listen to the scripture.

After this Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled saith I thirst. The Lord Jesus Christ was not only the suffering son of man but he was the obedient servant of God. He was on the cross to fulfill the word and what he said on the cross fulfilled the word and what he did on the cross fulfilled the word.

Everything about the earthly life of my Lord was in obedience to the word of God. His reference of course is to Psalm 69. Psalm 69 is one of the messianic psalms in the Old Testament.

It's one of David's psalms picturing an experience he went through but in this experience picturing an experience that Jesus went through. I look at verse 3 of Psalm 69. I am weary of my crying.

My throat is dried. Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head.

That's quoted in the Old Testament in John chapter 15 and verse 25. Verse 8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren an alien unto my mother's children for the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. That's quoted in John 2 17.

The reproaches of those who reproach thee are fallen upon me. That's quoted over in Romans 15 3. Look at verse 21. They gave me also gall for my food and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Now this vinegar was the cheap wine that the soldiers drank. They couldn't afford the expensive wine. They had to cheap wine.

But our Lord Jesus on the cross is obedient to the word of God. Now he was born by the word. I come to do thy will O God.

Thy word is within my heart. In the volume of the book it's written of me. How he was born fulfilled the word.

Behold the virgin shall conceive and be with child. Where he was born fulfilled the word. But thou Bethlehem of Judah though thou be least among the princes of Judah.

When he was born fulfilled the word. In the fullness of the time God sent forth his son. Where he lived fulfilled the word.

They went down to Egypt. Out of Egypt have I called my son. They went to Nazareth.

He shall be called a Nazarene. It's an interesting thing to sit down and read the Jewish gospel. The through this book Matthew rings the same bell.

That it might be fulfilled. That was spoken by the prophet. That it might be fulfilled.

That it might be fulfilled. Everything that happened on Calvary was in fulfillment of the word of God. When they gambled for his garments back in John chapter 19 verse 24.

They cast lots that the scriptures might be fulfilled which says they parted my raiment among them and for my vesture they did cast lots. After our Lord died and when they came and stabbed him they were going to break his bones but verse 36 says that the scripture should be fulfilled a bone of him shall not be broken. But they pierced him and this fulfilled another scripture verse 37.

They shall look on him whom they pierced. My dear friend Jesus Christ in his life and in his death was obedient to the word of God. That's why his death was a victory and not a defeat.

If you and I regardless of what experiences we go through are simply obedient to the word of God then God will see us through. Jesus Christ came to be the suffering servant of God. Philippians chapter 2 says he emptied himself became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

He came as a servant. We don't hear much about being servants today. Most people want to be rulers.

Most people want to be sovereigns. Jesus came as a servant and he was willing to obey the word of God even though it meant suffering and dying. Now there aren't very many of us who are called upon if any of us to obey the word of God unto death.

The writer to the Hebrew says you have not yet shed your blood in your battle against sin. You say oh my Christian life is so hard life is so difficult you aren't being crucified. And the Lord Jesus Christ when he said I thirst said it because he was obedient to the word of God.

His words and his walk and his works were in obedience to the word of God. Wherefore God also highly have exalted him and given him a name that is above every name. I would say to you today as I say to my own heart the most important thing in life is not to escape suffering and the most important thing in life is not to escape trouble.

The most important thing in life is to obey the word of God no matter what our circumstances may be because when we obey the word of God then we fulfill the will of God and as we fulfill the will of God then we are bringing glory to God. That's why we're here. The suffering son of man he knows what you're going through.

The obedient servant of God he says whatever you're going through obey the word of God. It would be a difficult thing to come to the end of life and have no Bible to rest on. Here is my Lord innocent yet treated as though he's guilty.

Perfect and yet accused of crimes. Here is my Lord dying and what is it that he rests upon as he is dying? He rests upon the word of God. Not the latest researches of the psychologists.

Not the inventions of the occultists. Not the vague dreams of the spiritists. He rests on the word of God and my friend when you come to that day of your death you'd better be able to rest on the word of God.

A third portrait comes to us in these words I thirst. He is not only the submissive obedient servant of God and the suffering son of man but far above everything else in these words I thirst we see Jesus Christ as the loving savior of sinners. Now there's a physical reason why Jesus was thirsty we don't argue that point at all.

There is a physical reason why Jesus was thirsty but don't stop on that level please. There is a spiritual reason why Jesus is thirsty. I'm not denying that his tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth.

I'm not denying that he was partaking of the dust of death. What I am saying is we don't stop there. When Jesus said I thirst he had just gone through three hours of darkness.

The sun had not been shining on him. He had not been breathing that hot air of sunshine. He'd been shaded from that but he had just gone through the darkness.

May I put it this way? The darkness of hell. He had cried out my God my God why has thou forsaken me? Remember David said my soul thirsteth for God for the living God like as the deer pants after the cool water brooks so my soul is panting after God. But our Lord had been denied the face of God for a moment.

Our Lord had discovered the face of God turned away from him. Thou art of pure eyes to behold iniquity. And when all of the sin of all of the world was placed upon Jesus God wasn't there.

Now God was in Christ reconciling the world. But for that instant my Lord tasted what it was like to be in hell. I don't have to tell this congregation what people are saying in hell.

Our Lord told us an account of a certain rich man who had a beggar at his door. The beggar was a believer. The rich man was an unbeliever.

The beggar died and was carried to Abraham's bosom. The rich man died and was buried. And he woke up in the other world in the place of punishment.

And he cried out and said Father Abraham I didn't want to talk to that beggar when he was here on earth when I was on earth. I wouldn't pay any attention. He had nothing to give me.

I had everything. But oh Father Abraham would you send him over here. Let him dip just the tip of his finger in some water because I'm in torments in this flame.

You know what people are saying in hell. I thirst. I thirst.

You say well pastor you're certainly not going to try to beat us down a sawdust trail and talking about all of the punishments of hell. I don't care if the trail is sawdust or marble. If you've never come to the cross there will be a day when you will say I thirst.

Hell is no joke. When my Lord spoke about hell I'm sure there was a tear in his eye and a breaking in his voice. My Lord never spoke about hell as though he were glad people went there.

When the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross and was made sin for us he tasted the punishment of hell. And he said what people say when they are in hell. I thirst.

You see there were really three cups at Calvary. When my Lord came to Calvary they offered him the cup of charity. Drink this and it won't hurt so much.

He refused it. The soldiers offered him a cup of mockery. Luke says that from time to time the soldiers would try to offer him some wine then they'd pull it back again.

Finally one of the soldiers was sympathetic and went and moistened his lips with the vinegar. The cup of mockery. Oh if you're the king here's some wine for the king.

Come down from the cross. Our Lord endured the cup of mockery but the most important cup at Calvary was the cup of iniquity. Jesus said to Peter the cup that my father has given me to drink shall I not drink it? And there on the cross when Jesus said I thirst it was because he had drunk of the cup of iniquity and sin never satisfies your thirst.

You read Psalm 32 where David is crying out for forgiveness after a year of iniquity and deception and sin. You know what David said? When I kept silence, when I was infected with sin, I got old. In fact my body felt like the drought of summer.

I dried up. That's what sin does to a person. When my Lord drank the cup of iniquity on the cross he cried out I thirst.

Now he did this for you. He did this for me. He did this for sinners all over the world throughout history.

He died for the sins of the world. He drank that cup for the world. It's rather interesting to trace water in the gospel of John.

You ought to do it someday. In John chapter 2 Jesus goes to a wedding feast and they run out of wine. What an embarrassing thing.

And the Lord Jesus has them fill the pots with water and he turns water into wine. Then in John chapter 4 the Lord Jesus meets a sinful woman by a well and she's taking water from the well and my Lord says you keep drinking that water you'll keep on thirsting. He wasn't talking about the bucket and the water.

He was talking about her life. You keep drinking at those dirty cisterns of sensuality you'll always be thirsty. You'll thirst forever.

But you drink of the water that I'm going to give you, you'll never thirst. And she trusted him and he put within her an artesian well of water that springs up into everlasting life. And never again did she have to drink at the sordid cesspools of the world.

Then in John chapter 7 the Lord Jesus stood up at the feast of Tabernacles when the priests were pouring out the water from the pool of Siloam remembering when God gave water to Israel in the wilderness. And Jesus said if any man thirsts, and is there any man who doesn't thirst, if any man thirsts let him come unto me and drink. As it is written in the scriptures out of his innermost being, out of the Messiah, the rock shall flow rivers of living water.

Now you get to John chapter 19 where the one who said I'll give you a well in your heart, the one who said I'll let you drink of the rivers of living water said I thirst. He thirsted that we might never thirst again. When John wrote the book of the Revelation, he must have rejoiced exceedingly when he got to chapter 7 and verse 11 where it talks about the saints of God in heaven where God's going to shepherd them, the Lamb is going to shepherd them and they're never going to thirst.

You see hell is a place where thirst is never quenched. Heaven is a place where thirst is never experienced. We shall never thirst for we shall drink of the bounties of his blessing forever.

I think that's why the Apostle John when he got to the end of the last book of the Bible gave this invitation. And the Spirit and the Bride say come. And let him that heareth say come.

And let him that is a thirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely. You know why it's free? Because Jesus paid for it.

That's why. And so the question today my friend is not do you thirst? Everybody thirsts. The sinner is thirsting for satisfaction.

Nothing that he endures, nothing that he experiences really satisfies. And he's thirsting for satisfaction. Everybody has thirst.

So the question is not do you thirst? The question is simply how long are you going to thirst? That's the question. If you receive Jesus Christ you'll never thirst again. And for all eternity the satisfaction and the sufficiency of his eternal life.

If you don't trust Christ as your Savior I'll tell you how long you'll thirst. You'll thirst forever. Hell is a place of unfulfilled cravings.

Where the things that you craved in this life you will crave forever never to be satisfied. And so we say to you today tenderly lovingly very simply. Jesus thirsted for you the loving Savior of sinners.

That's the portrait that I want you to see today. The loving Savior of sinners who drank the cup from his Father's hand that you might never thirst. Now will you receive him? Will you come to him and let him save you? We come our Father thankful that you have quenched the thirsting in our hearts.

We have drunk of the living water and are satisfied. You have placed within our hearts this artesian well of life that keeps springing up fresh and pure and satisfying. And we take it with us.

We don't look to the circumstances of this world to satisfy us because they are but broken cisterns that contain dirty water. We carry with us this beautiful artesian well that you have given to us. Thank you Father.

Thank you that the rock was smitten that the water might come forth. Thank you Lord Jesus that you thirsted that we might never thirst again. And I pray that this hour there might be many who will trust Christ and experience that deep satisfaction that comes with salvation, that changed life that creates new appetites.

O gracious God, work today that sinners will turn and trust the Savior. I pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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