

Wednesday of Judica  
The Seven Last Words - "I thirst!"  
John 19:28-29

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

When Jesus preached on the mount, He said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6) This evening, you heard Him cry out from the cross, "I thirst!" For what does Jesus thirst?

According to John, He said it to fulfill the Scripture. Many point to Psalm 69, wherein the Psalmist bemoans the fact that his enemies outnumber the hairs on his head. (cf. Psalm 69:4a) But it also says that "they" have given him gall for food and vinegar to drink. (cf. Psalm 69:21) Finding a hyssop branch, they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on the branch, and placed it on Jesus' lips. And so were the words of Psalm 69 fulfilled.

Now, if this word were all about the fulfillment of Scripture, I could end right there. But I can't simply leave it alone. To this point, even of Jesus' last words had a profound meaning beyond what was going on at the foot of the cross.

- Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of His torturers and the two criminals crucified beside Him. But His prayer of forgiveness was for you, too, even as He procured that forgiveness shedding His blood on the cross.
- Jesus told the repentant criminal that he would be with Him in Paradise, having acknowledged Jesus to be God and innocent of the sins for which he and the other criminal were being punished. He was baptized in the same fire as Jesus, you were baptized in the floodwaters at the font whereat you have entered Paradise, and are there, even now!
- Jesus spoke to His mother and the disciple John, by which He gave care of His mother to John. He did this as He was being joined to His Bride in a death that Her members deserve, but that He takes in their places. He left mother and Father and was joined to you!
- Jesus cries to the Father, bemoaning the fact that He was being forsaken. In that moment on the cross, the Father turns His back on the most vile sinner creation has ever known. Accordingly, it is your sin for which Jesus was forsaken; therefore, the Father never forsakes you!

"I thirst!" For what does Jesus thirst? He thirsts for your righteousness.

Jesus is fulfilling His own word, that which He preached from the mount. The fourth of eight Beatitudes—statements of blessing that describe the state of blessedness that the saints of God find themselves in—proclaims blessing for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Now, you've heard at length that the Beatitudes are not to be read as a sort of checklist, as if you are blessed if you are or do A so that you get B. Your being filled has nothing to do with your hungering and thirsting for righteousness, just as in and of yourself, you are not poor in spirit, mourning over sin, meek, merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, or even persecuted for your own righteousness.

These are all qualities that define you as a saint, but you are not a saint for the sake of being these things. Just as you are not a sinner because you sin—no, you sin because you are a sinner—so are you not a saint because you are righteous; you are righteous because you have been made a saint. And therein is another distinction to be made. In and of yourself, you are a sinner, your righteousness is completely from outside of yourself so that you are most certainly *made* a saint.

So, Jesus thirsts for your righteousness from the cross. And nailed to that tree, He spills the drink by which He wins for you your righteousness. His nail-pierced hands and feet, His thorn-encircled brow, His striped back all spill forth your life, even as He gives His life on the cross. As you just sung, on the cross He gains your love—not that He necessarily earns your love for Him, but gains the love of the Father for you!

"Jesus, in Thy thirst and pain, / While Thy wounds Thy life-blood drain, / Thirsting more our love to gain: / Hear us, holy Jesus."

From here, Jesus would speak His last two words, the words before His death, the words by which He finally dies. Everything is done, and Jesus speaks His last. "It is finished," you'll hear on Good Friday, but that doesn't mean that His work is done. Daily, members are being added to His Bride. Daily, the members of His Bride, by way of the grace given to them, hunger and thirst after righteousness. And daily, as He sends that Holy Spirit and grace, they receive that righteousness as their sins are forgiven.

"Thirst for us in mercy still, / Satisfy Thy loving will: / All Thy holy work fulfill. / Hear us, holy Jesus."

"May we thirst Thy love to know; / Lead us in our sin and woe / Where the healing waters flow: / Hear us, holy Jesus."

And so, you are here tonight. You hear Jesus cry out for you, "I thirst!" He receives a sponge of sour wine, but doesn't drink. No, on the cross, He sheds His life-blood to assuage your need—your unknown thirst—for righteousness, and by bringing you into His Bride by way of water, He fills you with righteousness and makes you a new creation. But you still live in this fallen world and struggle with your own fallenness, yet you are a new creation.

So, you know. Now you know of your thirst; you feel it by way of faith as the New Man earnestly desires that which gives Him life—the blood of Christ. Therefore, knowing, you are led to the place where you can drink and drink and drink, and never thirst again. (cf. John 4:13) You have been filled with living waters—there at the font, here at the table, and in your daily walk in the Word. The Holy Spirit leads your New Man in your sin and woe to this humble place, wherein you are given to drink again from those living waters, filling you with righteousness, forgiving you for all of your sins.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.