
I THIRST

*Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty"
John 19:28*

I.

"I'm tired," he sighed. So he stopped. "You go on and get the food. I'll rest right here." He was tired. Bone-tired. His feet were hurting. His face was hot. The noon sun was sizzling. He wanted to rest. So he stopped at the well, waved on his disciples, stretched a bit, and sat down. But before he could close his eyes, here came a Samaritan woman. She was alone. Maybe it was the bags under her eyes or the way she stooped that made him forget how weary he was. "How strange that she should be here at midday."

II.

"I'm sleepy." He stretched. He yawned. It had been a long day. The crowd had been large, so large that preaching on the beach had proved to be an occupational hazard, so he taught from the bow of a fishing boat. And now night had fallen and Jesus was sleepy. "If you guys don't mind, I'm going to catch a few winks." So he did. On a cloud-covered night on the Sea of Galilee, God went to sleep. Someone rustled him up a pillow and he went to the boat's driest point and sacked out. So deep was his sleep, the thunder did not wake him. Nor did the tossing of the boat. Nor did the salty spray of the storm-blown waves. Only the screams of some breathless disciples could penetrate his slumber.

III.

"I'm angry." He didn't have to say it; you could see it in his eyes. Face red. Blood vessels bulging. Fists clenched. "I ain't taking this no more!" And what was a temple became a one-sided barroom brawl. What was a normal day at the market became a one-man riot. And what was a smile on the face of the Son of God became a scowl. "Get out of here!" The only thing that flew higher than the tables were the doves flapping their way to freedom. An angry Messiah made his point: don't go making money off religion, or God will make hay of you!

We are indebted to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John for choosing to include these tidbits of humanity. They didn't have to, you know. But they did – and at just the right times.

Just as his divinity is becoming unapproachable, just when his holiness is becoming untouchable, just when his perfection becomes inimitable, the phone rings and a voice whispers, "He was human. Don't forget. He had flesh."

Just at the right time we are reminded that the one to whom we pray knows our feelings. He knows temptation. He has felt discouraged. He has been hungry and sleepy and tired. He knows what we feel like when the alarm clock goes off. He knows what we feel like when our children want different things at the same time. He nods in understanding when we pray in anger. He is touched when we tell him there is more to do than can ever be done. He smiles when we confess our weariness.

But we are most indebted to John for choosing to include verse 28 of chapter 19. It reads simply:

"I'm thirsty."

That's not THE CHRIST that's thirsty. The other six statements are more "in character." They are cries we would expect: forgiving sinners, promising paradise, caring for his mother, even the cry "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me" is one of power.

But, "I thirst?"

Just when we had it all figured out. Just when the cross was all packaged and defined. Just when the manuscript was finished. Just when we had invented all those nice clean “ation” words like sanctification, justification, propitiation, and purification. Just when we put our big golden cross on our big golden steeple, he reminds us that “the Word became flesh.”

He wants us to remember that he, too, was human. He wants us to know that he, too, knew the drone of the humdrum and the weariness that comes with long days. He wants us to remember that our trailblazer didn’t wear bulletproof vests or rubber gloves or an impenetrable suit of armor. No, he pioneered our salvation through the world that you and I face daily.

He is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Word of Life. More than ever he is the Morning Star, the Horn of Salvation, and the Prince of Peace.