**Sermon Mid-Week Lent 5 – John 19:28-29**

***28****Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”****29****A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips.*

When my youngest grandson was about five we took him to the local playground. He loved it and as children often do, tried every swing, slippery dip and seesaw. His favourite was a rope tower which seemed far too high for such a little boy. All of a sudden in the middle of his play he came running over to my wife and I and said he was thirsty. There was no drink fountain and we had no water with us. We told him we would have to leave the playground and go home to have a drink of water. Thinking he would surely want to keep playing for a while, instead he surprised us as he suddenly said, “I need a drink of water, I am so thirsty I am going to die!”

Can you imagine being so thirsty that you think you will die?

Moments before his death on the cross, Jesus was thirsty. It is no wonder after everything he had gone through that day, the whipping, carrying the cross to the point of exhaustion, being hung out to dry and die for hours. Here we see the true humanity of Jesus. Yes, he was the Son of God, but he was also the son of Mary. A human being with a human mother, who felt pain and discomfort and now in his dying moments thirst.

“I thirst.”

Those simple words remind us that on the cross Jesus experienced all the physical discomfort and agony of that day of his crucifixion. It reminds us that the suffering Jesus went through was more than emotional and spiritual, it was also physical. He felt the slaps, the whipping, the crown of thorns, the unbearable weight of the cross as he dragged it up the hill, the exhaustion of not being able to drag it all the way, the pain of the nails, the suffocation of hanging on the cross. He felt his life slip away more and more as the hours went by, he felt the thirst. He felt his final breath.

“I thirst.”

When we thirst, in Jesus we have someone to turn to who knows what it is like and can sympathise with us. When we experience physical discomfort and pain and agony, in Jesus we have a someone to turn to who knows what it is like. When we feel our life slipping away from us and even when we take our final breath, in Jesus we have someone to turn to who stays with us through to the end, because he knows exactly what it is like.

“I thirst.”

There is something more though in those words, “I thirst.” Jesus says those words in order to fulfil prophecy. In psalm 22 the psalm that begins with the words, “MY God my God, why have you forsaken me?” (NIV), there are so many verses which relate strongly to the crucifixion of Jesus, that many believe it is a prophetic psalm about Jesus. In verse 15 we read, “My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;” (NIV), and we are reminded of Jesus’ words, “I thirst.”

Jesus fulfils prophecy, because of this we know that Jesus is more than a man, Jesus is the Messiah, the one and only Son of God. Jesus fulfils prophecy because of this we know that Jesus is God in human flesh. That means God knows what it is like to experience physical discomfort and pain. God knows what it is like to die.

“I thirst.”

Jesus fully God and fully human was also totally innocent yet he was crucified, not for his own sin but for our sin. On the cross he took upon himself all the consequences of living in this sinful world. He died for every single human being who had ever lived and who will ever live. The apostle Peter says, “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24 NIV).

The physical thirst that Jesus felt reminds us of deeper thirst that we all have. It is the spiritual thirst for God. Once Jesus asked a woman at a well for a drink. In the ensuing conversation Jesus says to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (John 4:10, NIV). On the cross when Jesus says, “I thirst,” he is inviting you to ask him for the living water that only he can give you.

“I thirst.”

My grandson was so distracted in the playground that he didn’t realise how thirsty he was until he was so thirsty that it overwhelmed him, and he thought he would die. We can be the same. We can get so distracted by life that we forget to drink from the one who provides living water. Remember Jesus on the cross, remember he is the source of living water. Remember that he has suffered and died so that you might live. Remember that whoever drinks the water [he] gives them will never thirst. Indeed, the water Jesus gives them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:13 NIV). **Amen.**

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