



WEEK 5

by Jacqueline Broberg

“Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’ 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 he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

– John 19:28-30 (NIV)

What is so significant about Jesus’ thirst on the cross?

Thirst seems to be a theme in the book of John. We see Jesus discussing thirst four distinct times. The first time is when Jesus is talking to the woman at the well (John 4). Jesus is sitting at the well when the Samaritan woman draws near. Jesus asks her for a drink and the Samaritan woman, surprised that this Jewish man would be talking to her (and obviously unaware she is speaking with the Messiah) asks, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” The woman, who is unseen and unknown in her community, rejects Jesus. But Jesus responds, “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... Everyone who drinks this [well] water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.” What is Jesus offering to her? He is offering to quench her eternal thirst, her eternal desires to be known and deeply loved, by offering an eternal fountain of living water.

In John 6, the Pharisees approach Jesus, demanding him to answer if he is really the one whom God had sent. Jesus answers them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty... whoever eats of my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” Again, Jesus is claiming to be the living water, offering eternal life to the Pharisees, if only they would realize that Jesus fulfills their true desires for salvation and the end of all oppression, not just from the Roman Empire.

The third time, in John 7, Jesus is preaching at the Temple during the Festival of Tabernacles. It is important to know that this festival happens late in the dry season. The wells and the land have dried up, and there is concern that if the rains don't start soon, that people will die of thirst. Jesus preaches, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:37-39). The people think they desire water, but Jesus is offering them the living water, the Son of God who can quench their deepest needs.

And the final time, we see Jesus on the Cross. Just hours before, Jesus tells Peter, "Shall I not drink the cup my Father has given me?" (John 18:30), and now Jesus asks for a drink. Each time Jesus has brought up thirst, he has used it as a teaching moment, suggesting that what we really need to quench our thirst is the life-saving, always flowing, living water of God. Even here, on the Cross, it seems as though Jesus' thirst has a greater meaning, that Jesus' thirst was his desire to fulfill the will of the Father, even unto death. His enemies give him vinegar, and after Jesus drinks the bitter drink, he takes his final breath and pours out his blood for us so that we could have eternal life with God. Jesus knew that his death and resurrection would allow for us to be filled with the living water, if only we come to Jesus with our own thirst.

Questions for Reflection:

1. What sort of desires are you thirsting for?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to quench those desires by offering you living water?



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