Let’s begin with some questions. Feel free to shout out your answers.

How long can an average individual go without food? *Thirty days.*
How long do you think a person can go without sleep? It depends on how long the sermon is, right? The record for sleeplessness is *10 days.* That means you can hang in there for at least 40 more minutes.
How far can a human being walk? The record for a man is over *600 miles.* The record for a woman is about *500 miles.* One pastor did some research and figured out that these two were actually married and got in a fight and started walking in different directions. The man must have been 100 miles madder than his wife.

The human body is amazingly resilient in a lot of ways, except we’re wimps when it comes to water. Do you know how long the human body can last without water? About *three days,* maybe up to a week. If you’re working outside in a hot place and you get dehydrated, you could croak in two days.

The geographic area where most of the Bible encounters take place is a very arid, parched and barren land. Back then water was a life and death deal because people literally died of thirst. The Bible uses the metaphor of thirst in a number of places. Here’s one from *Proverbs 25:25:*

“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”

We have all sorts of drinks that claim to satisfy thirst. There’s Gatorade and Powerade and Vitamin Water and Smart Water (whatever that means – I think the person who came up with this is pretty smart and the rest of us who spend $1.79 on it are not so smart). Other drinks promise a burst of energy like Red Bull and Monster and of course, Mountain Dew (which I’m told is the drink of choice in the QCA).

Several years ago when we were on vacation a couple of our daughters discovered a drink called, “Neuro…” This company has figured out how to cover the whole day with their product – Neuro Sonic in the morning strengthens focus and creativity. At noon it’s time to drink Neuro Daily for a boost of nutrients. At supper you can say bye-bye to stress with Neuro Bliss. Right before bed you can down a bottle of Neuro Sleep.

Have you ever been really, really thirsty? **[Hold up water bottle and take a drink]**

As we continue in our Seven Shouts from the Savior series, please turn in your Bibles to *John 19:28-29.* Let’s start by looking at the first two words: “*After this…*” Which should lead us to ask, “*After what?*” John records Jesus’ tender words to his mother in the verses preceding but when comparing the other gospel accounts, we can establish the order of the seven short cries from the cross. I like what Charles Spurgeon said about these shouts: “*Like the steps of a ladder*
or the links of a golden chain, there is mutual dependence and interlinking of each of the cries, so that one leads to another and that to a third.’’

The first three take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and noon:

1. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
2. “Today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)
3. “Woman, behold your son.” (John 19:26)

From noon to 3:00 p.m., there was darkness over the land. And then Jesus uttered his final words:

4. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)
6. “It is finished.” (John 19:30)

If you’ve missed any of the sermons in this series, you can pick up a free CD at the Welcome Center or jump online at www.edgewoodbaptist.net and watch the video, listen to the audio or read the full-text manuscript. Sermons are also available as free podcasts on iTunes. In addition, we have a new app that will allow you to access everything on your phone or tablet. We’ll also be pushing out Easter prayer notifications beginning next week. You can read about how to enable notifications in your bulletin.

I see three main truths from this fifth cry in John 19:28-29. Let’s stand and read this together: “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.”

1. Jesus finished the sacrifice. We’ll flesh this out more next weekend when we focus on the words “It is finished,” but notice verse 28: “Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished…” The word “now” has the idea of “even now” or more literally “now even already.” “Accomplished” means “fulfilled or complete; to execute fully to the end.” Jesus did not die on accident; He fully finished everything He set out to do. We see this commitment of Christ to finish in John 17:3: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

2. Jesus fulfilled Scripture. Check out the next phrase, “…that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said ‘I thirst.’” I think it’s really cool how conscious Christ was of how He was fulfilling prophecy. Early in His ministry, in Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that He had come to “fulfill the Law and the Prophets.” It’s almost as if, right before He died, He did a search of Scripture and then shouted out that He was thirsty, thus fulfilling another prophetic promise. The Scriptures were more on His mind than His thirst. J. Vernon McGee has counted 28 different prophecies that were fulfilled while Christ hung on the cross.
By the way, if you want to do some further study on how Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled in Christ, check out Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. You could also add Genesis 22 and Leviticus 16. If you’re having any doubts about whether the Bible is true, fulfilled prophecy will help fortify your faith.

Like we did last week, let’s return to Psalm 22, a song of David written about one thousand years before Christ. Check out verse 15: “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; you have brought Me to the dust of death.” The New Living Translation renders it like this: “My strength has dried up like sunbaked clay. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.”

“I thirst” is just one word in Greek. This is the only cry from the cross that deals with the personal pain of Jesus. We’re reminded that He is fully God and fully man. Of all the shouts from the Savior, this one most reveals His humanity. This exclamation of thirstiness counteracts a false teaching called Docetism, which taught that it just “seemed” like Jesus was a man. Jesus is 100% God and 100% man.

I like how one pastor describes what Jesus went through…

Our Lord Jesus died in terrible, terrible pain. If you run the clock back from 3 o’clock in the afternoon—the moment of his death—back to about 3 o’clock in the morning...arrested in the middle of the night. Slapped around. Pushed around. Mocked. Slapped again. Crowned with thorns that went into his scalp. Scourged with...those sharp pieces of leather studded with bits of bone and stone and metal...they took his beard and ripped it out. They made him carry the cross. They nailed the nails into his hands and into his feet...when Jesus hung on the cross he was not the beautiful, manicured Savior we often see in the artists’ renditions...he was a bloody, maimed, disfigured version of a human being.

No wonder he was thirsty. Loss of blood. Exposure. Heat. Exhaustion. Dehydration. He’s been on the cross now for 6 hours. The sweat rolls off him like buckets. It’s hot. And the flies are buzzing around him. The crowds [are] taunting him. The blood mixes with the sweat as it pours off his body. In the end dehydration sets in. You know what dehydration is like? First it gives you a fever. Then it gives you a terrible throbbing pain in your head. And then cramps in your abdomen. And then nausea sets in. Then your eyeballs begin to dry up in the sockets. And then your lips begin to go dry. Then your tongue gets swollen and thick. And then your throat feels like sand paper. Your vocal cords swell up. In the end you can barely whisper. It doesn’t sound like human words; it sounds like an animal croaking. No wonder Jesus was thirsty.

Before we leave this second point, there’s one more absolutely stunning fulfillment of Scripture found in Psalm 69:21. Before I read it let me remind you that this was written 1,000 years earlier when crucifixion was not even practiced: “And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.”

3. Jesus found satisfaction. Look at verse 29: “Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.” Jesus was actually offered two drinks. The first offer came about 9:00 a.m., which He refused.
We see this in Matthew 27:34: "They gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink." When gall or myrrh was mixed with wine it would deaden the pain. Several weeks ago I had a tooth pulled. In retrospect I wish they would have knocked me out but at least I was given something that numbed the area so I wouldn’t feel the pain. Jesus didn’t want a sedative or an anesthetic because He wanted to fully endure all the atrocities and experience all the pain of becoming our sin substitute.

Jesus didn’t take the easy road or a painless way out. He didn’t seek to numb Himself or escape reality through a substance. I wonder if you’re being tempted to take an “easy” way out. Are you so focused on comfort that you’ve compromised your commitment to Christ? Jesus tells us that the path of fully following Him will not be easy. John 15:20: “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

Now, at 3:00 p.m., Jesus was given a sponge full of sour wine from a pail that the soldiers carried with them. It was filled with a type of vinegar mixed with water. It was the first-century equivalent of Gatorade. This was a common drink for slaves and soldiers and they had it with them because they would be sitting in the hot sun at Calvary for many hours (though it had just been dark for three hours). The Romans soldiers knew that if they drank straight water they would get sick because of the bacteria so they put vinegar into it to kill all the bugs.

Beth and I had the privilege of going to Israel two years ago. On the first day we were there we were seated in a group outside surrounded by trees and bushes. Our guide gave us what looked like an herb and asked us to smell it and then taste it. I remember it being pungent with a minty flavor and yet a bit like oregano or marjoram. He then asked us what we thought it was. We were stumped. And then he told us it was hyssop and explained how it was used in the Bible.

Because it’s a shrub with low bushy stalks, it was often used like a brush to sprinkle blood and thus purge people from their sins. This is how David describes it in Psalm 51:7: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.” 1 John 1:7 says that we are made clean through the death of Christ: “And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Hyssop is first mentioned in Exodus 12:22 when the Passover lamb was sacrificed: “And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.” Earlier in John’s gospel we hear the words of John the Baptist when he sees Jesus in John 1:29: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” The Apostle Paul picks up on this in 1 Corinthians 5:7: “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.”

Hyssop is also mentioned in Leviticus 14 where it was used to sprinkle a mixture of blood and water on a person healed of leprosy. According to Hebrews 9:19, Moses sprinkled blood on the people in order to seal them in a covenant with God.

It’s unusual that the soldiers would use the hyssop shrub and attach a sponge to it to quench the thirst of one who was crucified. While this may have been lost on them, the religious leaders and other people would have immediately made these deep spiritual connections to hyssop. The
stem could be some three feet in length so it, along with the sponge, was put to the Messiah’s mouth. From His lips come words of life. This small amount of liquid would have moistened his throat enough to complete the final two shouts.

**Application**

As I pondered this cry from the cross, it struck me that God has some ways that he wants us to apply this agonizing exclamation.

1. **Let’s get thirsty for righteousness.** Jesus said it this way in Matthew 5:6: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” God wants us to long for Him to rule and reign. It sure doesn’t seem like that is happening right now, does it?

   This past Tuesday in our team time I started our meeting by saying that Satan is a liar, a thief, a murderer, and a punk. I shared a story posted in Britain’s Telegraph about how the bodies of thousands of aborted and miscarried babies have been incinerated as clinical waste, with some even used to generate power for heating hospitals. That is so gross and horrifying and somehow seems so far away, doesn’t it? And yet that same day a story hit the airwaves out of East Moline about how a toddler was cut by razor blades that were super-glued to playground equipment. Police found twelve razor blades at Millennium Park. This story was reported on CNN. What blatant disregard for the dignity and value of children! That same day a large evangelical ministry announced that they were no longer going to hold to the biblical definition of marriage. Fortunately, they later admitted that this was a mistake and reversed their decision.

   What’s going on in our world? How do we thirst for righteousness when so much just seems so wrong? Don’t quit. Don’t stop doing what’s right. Speak up for the preborn and for those who can’t speak for themselves. Stand up for the definition of marriage as one man and one woman in covenant for life. Live rightly and proclaim righteousness. Here’s an idea. The next time you hear yourself say, “Man, I’m thirsty!” ask yourself if you’re thirsting for righteousness as much as you are for something to drink. I’m reminded of Psalm 42:1-2: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” When we thirst for God and for what matters to Him, we will be filled.

2. **Jesus understands what you’re going through.** This cry from the cross shows us that Christ cares for us. Many of you have been praying for Scott McMeekan, who is fighting cancer. I talked to him on Tuesday and he said the worst thing about his situation is that he can’t quench his thirst. This is how he described it in a post last week (he gave me permission to share this): “My thirst rages day and night and though I can drink; I get about a five-second sense of relief...and then it’s like I never had anything...Every night I wake about every hour to a parched mouth that is nearly stuck together. My nightstand is full of bottles of water, juice, Gatorade, and ice just to get me through the night.”

   I struggled with what to tell Scott in the midst of his suffering and then God brought this cry from the cross to mind. Jesus understands thirst and pain and weakness and loneliness because He experienced it all. Hebrews 4:15: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”
This cry from the cross reminds us that when we suffer we have a Savior who sympathizes with our weakness. I turn to Spurgeon again: “The arrow that has lately pierced thee, my brother, was first stained with His blood. The cup of which thou art made to drink, though it be very bitter, bears the mark of his lips about its brim.”

3. People who are not saved will be thirsty forever. The truth of the matter is that those who don’t find their satisfaction in Christ now will spend eternity in Hell where they will be tormented by unquenchable thirst according to Luke 16:24: “Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’”

4. We must thirst for souls like Jesus did. That’s why He went to the cross. Jesus was certainly physically thirsty and no doubt dehydrated but His greatest thirst is for people to be saved. Let’s ask God for a thirst like that. May we not be quenched until we see people converted. May we not be satisfied until we see our family members and neighbors and classmates and co-workers get saved. Please use the Epic Easter invites we put in your bulletin and put up a sign in your yard. We also have copies of a gospel booklet I wrote called, “Soul Satisfaction” in the lobby. Pick up a bunch and give them to people who have not yet satisfied their spiritual thirst.

Think of one person right now who is far from God. Determine to thirst for them until they find their satisfaction in the Savior. May God give us deep and parched thirstiness to see people saved, much like he gave to the Apostle Paul when he wrote these words in Romans 9:2-3 and 10:1: “That I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen…my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”

We know that if we don’t undergird our Easter services in prayer that we won’t see much fruit. In light of that, I want to ask Randy and Nichole May to lead us in prayer. God has reignited within them a passion to reach the Quad Cities for Christ. Randy is going to focus on praying for people who have no church in their background and Nichole is going to pray for churched people who have strayed.

→ Randy and Nichole Prayer

5. Let’s satisfy the Savior by satisfying the thirst of others. There are people all around us who are literally hungry and thirsty. Check out what Jesus said in Matthew 10:42: “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.” In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus said, “I was thirsty and you gave me drink…” Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see you…thirsty and give you drink?” I love His answer: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me.”

Do you know of anyone who is physically hungry or thirsty? When you see a need will you meet that need? Here’s an idea to consider. Between now and Easter, cut way back on the
things you drink and try to just stay with water (or coffee, I can’t cut that out). Oh, in honor of the Dairy State, you should still drink your milk. For the next three weeks don’t buy that energy drink or Gatorade or pop or beer or wine or juice or Neuro-whatever and then use all these shekels to serve a neighbor in need or consider sponsoring a Compassion International child.

6. You won’t be ultimately satisfied until you’re eternally saved. Check out Psalm 107:9: “For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.” To put is simply: You will never be satisfied unless the Savior takes your sins away. Some people try to satisfy their thirst for meaning and purpose through another person, through possessions, or by pursuing pleasure through a substance or an experience…only to find that their souls are still parched. There’s a popular commercial out for a brand of beer that ends with these words, “Stay thirsty, my friends.” Let me say it clearly. If you’re not saved, you will be forever thirsty.

Here’s what God thinks of all that in Jeremiah 2:13: “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.” A cistern was a container that captured rain water and was often chipped out of rocky ground. God says that they messed up in two ways. First, by bailing on Him, they left the source of water that brings life. Second, they constructed containers to catch water but they didn’t work because they were cracked.

[Demonstrate by pouring water through strainer]

Here’s the problem. Most of us try to pour activities or experiences into our lives hoping that they will satisfy our thirsty souls, not realizing that whatever we put in just runs out the bottom.

No substance will satisfy your thirst. That’s why the buzz always wears off and you need another hit or another six-pack or another experience or person or possession or party. Whatever you put in will run out.

There’s one other time in the Gospel of John where Jesus asks for water. One day He sat down by a well and met a woman who was wounded and wandering. He asks her for something to drink and then they have a conversation about water.

Her background is shady and her sin is just hanging in the air, dirty and foul, and then Jesus makes this statement in John 4:10: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

[Hold up “Smart Water”]

However much she drinks, she remains thirsty. None of her relationships have replenished her. With a yearning soul, she is just shuffling and stumbling through life. The bitter disappointments, the poor decisions, the shattered dreams, the broken promises, the embarrassing moments, the constant gossip, and the endless shame have taken their toll and she’s shriveling inside. Not only is her body dehydrated, her soul is parched. Her thirst is unquenchable, that is, until she drinks of Jesus.
It’s time to take a long drink of the water of life that only the Lord can supply.

[Drink “Smart Water”]

Some of you have parched throats and dehydrated hearts. His living water is free for the taking, regardless of who you are or what you’ve done. Do you have a deep dryness and a shriveled soul? It’s time to come thirsty, drink deeply and be fully satisfied.

In the next to the last chapter of the Bible, we read these words of Jesus: “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.’” (Revelation 21:6)

Water only works if you drink it and the Savior won’t save you from your sins unless you swallow Him. The blood in the bucket didn’t save anyone at Passover; it had to be personally painted on the doorposts with the hyssop brush. Likewise you must personally apply His blood to your life and open the door to your heart. I know this to be true: You won’t be satisfied until the Savior washes your sins away.

You can try to seek meaning in things that won’t satisfy, or you can have your thirst quenched and your soul satisfied by trusting Jesus with your life.

Invitation Prayer

Lord, I admit that I’ve tried to wash my hands of you. I confess that as sin. I’ve turned my back on you. Not only that, I’ve been trying to satisfy my thirst in ways that are wrong. Please forgive me. I now step into the shower of your forgiveness and ask you to save me from my sins. I believe that you died as my sin substitute as full payment for all my sins and I now receive you into my life. I’m thirsty and so now I come. May your streams of living water flow from within me, as I surrender to your Holy Spirit. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Lead Me to the Cross