

The Seven Words of the Cross

The Fifth Word From the Cross

"I thirst" → Christ understands suffering

The Bible verse **"I thirst"** (or **"I am thirsty"**) is found in **John 19:28**. Jesus said this while on the cross to fulfill Scripture (prophecy), particularly **Psalms 69:21**, signifying both his intense physical suffering and the completion of his work.

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"

I. THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION (Christology & Soteriology)

The fifth word from the cross is one of the most profound declarations of the incarnation and suffering of Christ. It is brief—only two words in English—but it carries immense theological weight.

This statement reveals:

1. The True Humanity of Christ (Hypostatic Union)

Jesus is not merely appearing human—He is fully human.

Hebrews 2:17 NKJV

¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

John 1:14 NKJV

The Word Becomes Flesh

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

At Calvary, we do not see a distant deity immune to pain. We see God in flesh experiencing dehydration, exhaustion, and agony. This destroys every false theology that denies Christ's real suffering.

2. The Fulfillment of Messianic Prophecy

Jesus explicitly speaks **"that the Scripture might be fulfilled."**

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'"

Psalms 69:21 NKJV

²¹ They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

This is not accidental suffering—it is divinely orchestrated redemption. Christ is not a victim of Rome—He is the fulfillment of Scripture and the Lamb of God.

The Seven Words of the Cross (5)

3. The Completion of Redemptive Work

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”

The text says: *“knowing that all things were now accomplished...”*

“I thirst” comes after:

- Bearing sin
- Enduring wrath
- Experiencing abandonment

Now, as the work nears completion, His body speaks what His mission has endured. The suffering is both physical and redemptive in purpose.

II. MODERN-DAY INTRODUCTION (Relational & Experiential)

We live in a world that is deeply familiar with pain, but unfamiliar with redemptive suffering.

People today say:

- “No one understands what I’m going through.”
- “God feels distant in my pain.”
- “My suffering is meaningless.”

But at Calvary, Jesus declares: **“I thirst.”** This is not just a statement of dehydration— It is a declaration that: God has entered human suffering fully. Christ understands pain from the inside, not the outside. He does not observe suffering— He experiences it.

III. EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT (John 19:28)

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”

1. “After this...” — The Sequence of Suffering

This comes after: Scourging, Mocking, Crucifixion, Darkness, Separation (previous word: “Why have You forsaken Me?”)

This is the exhaustion of total suffering.

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”

2. “Knowing that all things were now accomplished...”

Jesus is fully conscious. Even in agony: He is aware, He is intentional, He is sovereign. The cross is not chaos—it is divine precision.

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”

The Seven Words of the Cross (5)

3. “That the Scripture might be fulfilled...”

Every detail matters. Even thirst is: Prophesied, Planned, and Purposeful. There is no random suffering at Calvary.

John 19:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ **“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’”**

4. “I thirst” — The Cry of the God-Man

This is: Physical dehydration (blood loss, exposure, trauma) and Spiritual symbolism (He who gives living water now thirsts). The Creator of water now cries for water.

IV. DOCTRINAL TRUTHS

1. Christ Fully Entered Human Suffering

- He knows pain, weakness, exhaustion

You cannot suffer beyond what Christ understands.

2. Suffering Does Not Mean God Is Absent

At the cross:

- The greatest suffering
- Coincides with the greatest work of God

God is often most active where suffering is most intense.

3. Christ’s Thirst Secures Our Satisfaction

He thirsted so that we would never thirst spiritually.

John 4:14 NKJV

¹⁴ **But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.**

V. SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS (3)

1. Psalm 22 — The Suffering Messiah

Psalm 22:15 NKJV

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.**

David prophetically describes:

- Extreme dehydration
- Physical collapse

Fulfilled precisely at the cross.

2. The Wilderness Temptation — Matthew 4:2

Matthew 4:2 NKJV

² **And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.**

Jesus fasts 40 days and becomes hungry.

Even before the cross, Christ experiences physical limitation.

The Seven Words of the Cross (5)

3. The Samaritan Woman — John 4:6-7

John 4:6-7 NKJV

⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

The One who offers living water asks for water. A pattern: He enters human weakness to provide divine strength.

VI. MODERN-DAY ILLUSTRATIONS (3)

1. The Hospital Bed

A believer lies in a hospital bed, weak and in pain, asking:

- "Does God understand this?"

Yes. Christ experienced physical agony, exhaustion, and thirst. He is not distant from suffering—He has felt it in His own body.

2. Emotional Exhaustion

A person drained from life's pressures—family, ministry, conflict.

They say:

- "I have nothing left."

Christ understands depletion:

- He gave everything
- He endured total exhaustion

3. The Thirst of the Soul

People try to satisfy their thirst with:

- Success,
- Money,
- Relationships,

Yet remain empty.

Why? Because only Christ satisfies the deep thirst of the soul.

VII. KEY CONTRAST (POWERFUL PREACHING MOMENT)

Christ on the Cross	Humanity
"I thirst"	"I am satisfied without God"
Physically empty	Spiritually empty
Gives life while dying	Seeks life but remains dying

The irony: The only One who can satisfy thirst is Himself thirsty.

VIII. PASTORAL APPLICATION

1. For the Suffering Believer

- Christ understands your pain
- He is not distant

- He is compassionate

Hebrews 4:15 NKJV

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.**

2. For the Spiritually Thirsty

- You are not empty because life failed
- You are empty because you need Christ

3. For the Church

- We must minister to suffering people with Christlike compassion
- Not theory—but incarnational ministry

IX. CHRIST-CENTERED CLIMAX

At the cross: The Living Water thirsts, The Bread of Life hungers, The Creator suffers, and The Savior completes redemption

Why?

So that: The thirsty sinner may drink, The broken soul may be restored, and The lost may be redeemed

X. CONCLUSION

“I thirst” is not weakness—it is revelation.

It reveals:

- The depth of Christ’s suffering
- The reality of His humanity
- The completion of redemption
- The compassion of our Savior

Final Call

Because He thirsted...

- You can be filled
- You can be forgiven
- You can be satisfied

Invitation Scripture

Isaiah 55:1 NKJV

¹ **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price.**

Revelation 22:17 NKJV

¹⁷ **And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Christ thirsted on the cross so that sinners would never thirst again—He entered our suffering so that we might enter His salvation.