



Seven Last Words Weekly Prayer Guide

"I am thirsty"

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Scripture Focus: John 19:28

The Seven Last Words and Us

"Seven last words ... they begin with words addressed to the Father, find their centre in a cry at the absence of that Father, and return to address Him again at the end. The words that Jesus addresses to us are held within that relationship with his Father, just as it is there that we shall find our home, within the life of the Trinity. We nestle within that divine conversation."
~ *Timothy Radcliffe*

Because somehow the true identity, passion and purpose of God's kingdom is displayed through the dying man Jesus, who claimed to be the focus of God's messaging for the world, is found at the cross, these final words uttered by him during his crucifixion are so crucial to us. And so we slow down in these words, quieting ourselves and straining our ears in order to get an even further sense of who God is and how he loves and saves the world through Jesus.

This becomes an even more important exercise when we realize that not only is God's identity revealed at the cross, but that our own identity as disciples of Jesus is revealed there. And so quite a lot is at stake here.

This daily guide is designed to encourage you to slowly contemplate and respond personally to the meaning and implications of Jesus' sayings from the cross. Resources of scripture, reflective writing, a daily prayer and questions for deeper personal application and conversation are provided in order to support and guide your mediations.

Daily Readings/ Reflections:

Monday: Matthew 23:27-29

"Usually we think that reaching God is hard work. We must earn forgiveness; we must become good, otherwise he will disapprove of us. But this is wrong. God comes to us before we ever turned to him. God

thirsts for our love. He is racked with desire for us." ~ *Timothy Radcliffe*

Tuesday: Psalm 37:1-7; Psalm 42:1-3; Matthew 5:6

"If we are honest about our little desires, then they will lead us to Jesus too. We will learn to become thirsty for more, even to become thirsty for the God who thirsts for us." ~ *Timothy Radcliffe*

"The work of the Son, the thirst of the Son through the Spirit, is nothing less than the Father's thirst for us. God desires us to desire God." ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*

Wednesday: Matthew 20:20-28; John 6:55

"He has a cup to drink, but it is the cup of death. ... The cup cannot be removed if we are to be saved from the dryness that is our lives." ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*

Thursday: Psalm 69:1-9; 16-21

"Jesus knows the vinegar has nothing to do with Elijah. It has nothing to do with dulling his senses. It has nothing to do with what those who offer it think they are doing. It has nothing to do with making his death into something sensible beyond itself. Jesus sees into this moment of dereliction. He sees abandonment and silence, the double agony. But he also hears, inside the agony, confirmation, again from the Psalms... 'I looked for pity, but there was none; / and for comforters, but I found none. / They gave me poison for food, / and for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.' (Ps. 69:20-21)" ~ *Christopher R. Seitz*

"When that sponge came up, and he smelled the vinegar, he saw in the moment something no other psalmist had seen: the final accomplishment of God's plan for salvation, forever and ever and ever." ~ *Christopher R. Seitz*

Friday: Isaiah 49:10; John 7:37-44

"The One who is the one God, very God and very man, is the One who thirsts." ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*

"The One who gives the calm of lakes and pools, the freshness of brooks and streams, the majestic depths of seas and oceans, the glory of the pounding surf, the might of Niagara and the tinkle of the garden

fountain, the One from whose being flows the gift of the water of eternal life — this is the One who is dying of a terrible thirst on the Cross for the love of his lost sheep.” ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

Saturday: John 4:1-28, 34; Nehemiah 9:15

“The Crucifixion is not an accident, not a mistake, not an unfortunate slip-up. It is the deliberate self-offering of the Good Shepherd. And so when he says ‘I thirst,’ it is to show that he is fulfilling his purpose according to the plan of God from the beginning.” ~ *Fleming Rutledge*

Daily Prayer

Jesus, you are the living water, who gives life to the world,

but because of love,

you who are creation's refreshing became thirsty yourself,

so that I don't have to

constantly struggle to quench my own thirst.

Reveal to me the source of my thirsts,

and lead me to the place which makes you thirsty,

so that I can drink deeply with you there.

Amen.

Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Reflection:

1. What is your initial reaction to these words of Jesus from the cross?
2. What unique things does this word reveal to you about who God and what Jesus is doing on the cross?
3. What challenge to your thinking does this fifth word of Jesus from the cross pose?
4. "Why, out of all the physical abuse of the cross, is thirst singled out?" ~ *Stanley Hauerwas*
5. What is Jesus hungry and thirsty for? (John 4:34)
6. "Reflect now upon the saying from the Cross, *I thirst*, and compare it to the saying *Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give will never thirst, and to the saying If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink.*" ~ *Fleming Rutledge*
7. Discuss the following quote :

"If we are honest about our little desires, then they will lead us to Jesus too. We will learn to become thirsty for more, even to become thirsty for the God who thirsts for us." ~ *Timothy Radcliffe*
8. What are your motivating "thirsts and desires"? How do they need to be refreshed and redirected?
9. How do you feel called to respond to or live out this word today?
10. How might this conversation from the cross shape your prayers to God?