

“A God Who Thirsts”

John 19:28-30

During His ministry, Jesus has some interesting interactions concerning that which we drink. First, Jesus said to this Samaritan woman—an outsider, who expected to have no interactions with any Jews—“Give Me a drink.” She responded not with water but with a question, “How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” Then comes this more peculiar response from Jesus, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” Then later, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:7–15).

Wait, what? Water that wells up to eternal life and slakes an eternal thirst? Yes, please. Sign me up. Later, Jesus told a crowd, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living

water” (John 7:37–38). If you are thirsty, Jesus says, come to Him. That is beautiful, inviting, and a bit odd.

Still later, the One who promised living water so that man might never be thirsty again hung on a cross, naked, bleeding, and dying. With nearly His last breath, He cries, “I thirst.” Behold the well of living water, the fount of water welling up to eternal life. Behold the very Rock who was cleft in the wilderness to give a wellspring of life-giving water to His thirsting, complaining people. Behold the One who created the waters that flow, rivers that run, oceans that surge, water tables that nourish, and springs that bubble. Behold the God who made six stone jars of water to be the choicest vintage of wine the wedding guests had ever tasted. Behold the man! He is thirsty. Dried up, parched, with His tongue sticking to the roof of His mouth, craving even a sip of sour wine from a sponge. Behold the man who thirsts.

Having taken human flesh, the Second Person of the Trinity now needs to drink water in order to survive. If this God does not drink, He will die. What can you make of this? The Creator relies on an element of creation to make it from day to day. His tongue is like sandpaper in His blister-dry mouth; He wants a drink.

And you? For what do you thirst? For what does your flesh ache and groan? Not a drink of water, probably. That is far too ordinary. For money, riches, power, influence, success, popularity,

comfort, security, perhaps. Maybe you thirst for more likes on your Instagram page, more reviews, more respect, or a better salary. You, like Jesus, are thirsty. But you all too often, unlike Jesus, are thirsty for self.

Jesus thirsts for you. God has taken human flesh, flesh that hungers and thirsts, flesh that needs sustenance, flesh that can be beaten, abused, mocked, nailed to a cross, and hung until it thirsts in peril for its life. But He's not thirsting so that He can live. He's thirsting because He can die. He's thirsting because He has flesh. He has flesh because He desires to save mankind. Behold the man who thirsts out of passion for you.

Behold the man who empties Himself so that you might be filled. Behold the man who is cut off so that you can be grafted in. Behold the man who thirsts so that you can be satisfied. Behold the man who thirsts so that men might drink and never be thirsty again. Behold the man who is parched and dried up so that you might find in Him a river of life. Behold the man who thirsts as He dies so that you might never die—not like this, not the big death, not this death separated from God, not death and hell. Behold the man who thirsts so that you might be satisfied.

In Him, your thirsts, your desires, your needs are quenched. Every thirst is primal, a hearkening back to the days in the Garden of

Eden. Every thirst is eschatological, hearkening forward to the new creation, to the river of life, to the renewed heavens and renewed earth.

Until then, as you wander in this wilderness between Eden and the New Eden, your thirst is still good. In the same way that hunger sharpens your desire for the bread of life, the body of Jesus, thirst chastens your taste buds to desire something more than water, wine, or temporary fulfillment. Thirst disciplines you to desire a heavenly draft. Until you can slake your thirst with the eternal water of life, there is a river from the Lord's altar that can soothe your parched throat. Here is the blood of Him who bled for you, who thirsted for your fulfillment, who died so that you might have life. From the chalice in the Holy Eucharist flows a river that gives you a foretaste of an eternal quenching, a stream that can fulfill your deepest thirst.

Behold the man whose blood still flows for you. Behold the man who was dried up with thirst so that your dry lips could be satisfied with the drink of His blood for true drink. Behold the man who thirsted. Behold the man who bids you thirst no more. Behold the man who was dried up with thirst so that you might be quenched with a water that flows to eternal life. Behold the man, the Son of God who thirsts for your salvation. Amen.