

Joke: A woman was at work when she received a phone call that her daughter was sick with a fever. She left her work and stopped by the pharmacy to get some medication. She got back to her car and found that she had locked her keys in the car.

She didn't know what to do, so she called home and told the baby sitter what had happened. The baby sitter told her that her the fever was getting worse. She said, "You might find a coat hanger and use that to open the door."

The woman looked around and found an old rusty coat hanger that had been thrown down on the ground, possibly by someone else who at some time or other had locked their keys in their car. Then she looked at the hanger and said, "I don't know how to use this."

So she bowed her head and asked God to send her some help. Within five minutes an old rusty car pulled up, with a dirty, greasy, bearded man who was wearing an old biker skull cap. The woman thought, "This is what you sent to help me?" But, she was desperate, so she was also very thankful.

The man got out of his car and asked her if he could help. She said, "My daughter is very sick. I stopped to get her some medication and I locked my keys in my car. I must get home to her. Please, can you use this hanger to unlock my car?"

He said, "Sure". He walked over to the car, and in less than a minute the car was opened. She hugged the man and through her tears she said, "Thank You So Much! You are a very nice man."

The man replied, "Lady, I am not a nice man. I just got out of prison today. I was in prison for car theft and have only been out for about an hour."

The woman hugged the man again and with sobbing tears cried out loud, "Oh, Thank you God! You even sent me a Professional!"

The Fifth Word From The Cross: Matthew

Brief moments in time with small things can make a large impact in a person's life. When Jesus had the memorable moment over a cup of cold water with Matthew the tax

collector and the other disciples, they never forgot it. Matthew recorded the moment in the tenth chapter of his gospel as Jesus spoke these words.

Matthew 10:42 (NIV): And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

A small word around a small act of kindness with a small cup of cold water for a small child stuck in a big way within Matthew’s mind on that day.

Likewise, the fifth word Jesus spoke from the cross may not look big and significant at first glance, but it was a magnificent word.

It was just one single word in the Greek language: dipsao; two words when translated to English: “I thirst.” This word was small yet had huge significance.

In God's Story, what seems small and insignificant at first glance may become quite significant in the end.

Consider the young boy who sacrificed his lunch and with it the Lord was able to feed a multitude. Or how about David who with a little stone slew Goliath. Little is much when God is in it. Moses was asked what's that in your hand, and with a rod he parted the waters.

Something that may seem small and insignificant at first glance, but is hugely significant during many evening routines in homes where small children reside, includes a simple Dixie Cup.

Sometimes this small, paper cup becomes the last "stall tactic" in many a child's routine every night before bed.

After a nightly ritual and routine of baths, putting on PJ's, brushing teeth, reading of stories, saying of prayers, getting all the stuffed animals situated and tucked in for the night, last hugs and kisses, then the remaining "stall tactic" happens just before we turn out the lights as a final

phrase gets offered up: "A DRINK?"

At this time the Dixie Cup of water is presented in a concluding act of parental kindness. The little drink gets consumed as the lights go out. The drink of water seems small and insignificant at first glance but has become significant in the end of the day's routine.

At different times and seasons of life, the little things are sometimes big thing to others.

A seemingly small and insignificant moment on the day Jesus died on the cross that turns out to be quite significant is described in John 19.

John 19:28-29 (NIV): Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 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.

It is not hard to pass over the fifth word Jesus spoke from the cross. Did you notice it?

“I thirst.”

After hanging on the cross from 9am-3pm, Jesus communicates that He's thirsty. After six bad hours on what has become known as Good Friday, the Son of God needed something to drink. God with skin and bones and muscle that was working the final moments of His mission got thirsty and wanted a drink to quench His thirst and to clear His throat.

What does it say about our Savior that it's not until six hours into the crucifixion that He then expresses His own need?

The first word: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” That was a word to His Father in Heaven.

The second word: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” That was a word to the thief on the

cross.

The third word: “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” Those were words to His family.

The fourth word: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Those were words to His Father that were from a song He had memorized right out of Psalm 22.

But the fifth word: “I thirst.” is when Jesus finally talks about His own physical needs.

What a great model for us to follow when it comes to our needs. What would marriages, families, and friendships look like if before we express our own needs, we took time to become aware of the needs of others?

Show video - Matthew (www.skitguys.com).

Jesus’ life challenges His followers to change and become more like Him when they see the God-Man suffering

and not ignoring His needs yet waiting patiently to consider the needs of others before pushing His own to the front of the line. It helps make verses like Philippians 2:3-5 come to life in light of the cross when Paul wrote:

Philippians 2:3–5 (NIV): 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Jesus didn't play the "God-card" at Calvary and divinely not experience any of the pain and physical suffering that went with the cross. Instead, God in a human body got thirsty, just like we get thirsty at times.

Hebrews 4:15 says it like this:

Hebrews 4:15 (NIV): 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we

are—yet he did not sin.

There is a dualistic nature of our God in Jesus. That means there is a divine side of Jesus and a human side of Jesus that cannot be separated. They are two sides of the same coin which cannot be separated one from the other. They are morphed together and are of the same substance. On the cross, there was never a time when Jesus was less divine and never a time when He was less human.

The reason it is important we never lose sight of the fact that Jesus was both fully God and fully man at the same time is because some people suggest Jesus did not feel the full pain of the crucifixion when He was on the cross.

Some suggest Jesus let His human part slip away in the moment as He went into full divinity mode.

NOPE! Jesus felt every bit of the cross. We do not need to help Jesus minimize His pain. He experienced it all. Paul goes on to say in that Philippians 2 passage:

Philippians 2:6–8 (NIV): 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

From a physical standpoint, thirst was one of the most excruciating parts of a crucifixion. The crucifixion process caused a person to become dehydrated to the extreme due to the loss of blood and bodily fluids through the perspiration that took place. When Jesus said those fifth last words from the cross: “I’m thirsty,” it was the truth. He was so thirsty and His throat so parched.

Jesus became obedient to death, even death on a cross while He remained both fully God and fully man.

It is astounding to me that we serve a God who gets thirsty sometimes just like we get thirsty. Jesus can relate to our physical pain. At the same time, it also is encouraging to

remember that Jesus offers the solution to our thirsty lives. Part of the nature and character of our God is that He is the thirst-quenching God. Look what Jesus said about this in John 7.

John 7:37–38 (NIV): 37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

Jesus is the great thirst quencher for all who are thirsty today on the inside of their lives. When was the last time you took a deep drink emotionally, intellectually, relationally and spiritually? A deep drink of what Jesus offers through His words in quiet moments alone with Him in prayer is where we let the Spirit of God quench our thirsty soul.

That’s why Jesus could look at the Samaritan women and say in John 4.

John 4:13–14 (NIV): Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

It’s why Matthews gospel records Jesus saying. . .

Matthew 5:6 (NIV): 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

It’s why David mentioned in the Psalm. . .

Psalms 107:8–9 (NIV): Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, 9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Look again at verse 28 and let’s walk through the words that we read a moment ago.

John 19:28 (NIV): 28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

“After everything...” After what? After Jesus just took care of His family and made sure His mom was taken care of and that His dear friend, John, knew what to do, the Scripture goes on to say Jesus knew something. He was aware of something. Jesus was cognizant of the fact that something had taken place. Verse 28 told us. . .

Knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

Jesus was “knowing” that all that had made Him so thirsty now was finished; He just had one more prophecy from Scripture to fulfill until it was over. He needed to voice His physical need to fulfill the Scripture by proclaiming, “I’m thirsty.”

We read concerning the fourth word of the cross last week how when Jesus said the words recorded in Matthew 27:46, those words were a direct quote from Psalm 22:1.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Jesus not only was quoting the lyrics to that Psalm of lament, but also He was fulfilling the prophecies of that song in verse 15 when the Psalmist writes:

Psalm 22:15 (NIV): My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

Jesus was fulfilling the Scripture.

Psalm 69:21 is another place in Scripture where a prophecy of Jesus concerning His thirst is fulfilled while on the cross.

Psalm 69:21 (NIV): They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

When Jesus said the little word: "I thirst," it was a small word with a big meaning that fulfilled a prophecy which had been said long ago and put in motion centuries before, yet with this moment on the cross in mind.

Yes, God knew the story He had been writing through the ages that led to the cross.

Oh church and by the way He has been writing your story as well.

Ephesians 1:3–6 (NIV): Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Look back at the prophecy from Psalm 69:21 again and notice what they gave the Psalmist to drink.

They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst, they gave me sour wine to drink.”

Remember what the Roman soldiers gave Jesus to drink

at the cross when he said, “I’m thirsty.” Look back in John 19.

John 19:29 (NIV): 29 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.

A jar full of sour wine was part of the details in which God writes His own story. Sour wine was present at the cross.

Sour wine was cheap wine that soldiers commonly had with them. It was like cheap “box wine” that is for sale at the convenience store.

This sour wine mentioned at the cross that Jesus is about to drink is different from the wine mentioned in Mark 15 that says,

Mark 15:23 (NIV): Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.

These are two different kinds of wine. Sour wine vs. wine

mixed with myrrh are different. The wine mixed with myrrh that Jesus refused was a pain killer that helped deaden the pain when people were being nailed to the cross. Jesus refused that drink because He was willing to experience the full pain from the cup of wrath He was about to drink.

However, Jesus took the sour wine because it was a thirst quencher that would allow Him to clear His throat.

The reason that the Roman soldiers were quick to give sour wine to those being crucified is that it delayed the dying process and caused people to suffer longer.

However, Jesus was not pulling a bedtime “stall tactic” moment here on the cross and saying: “A DRINK?”

This was not a “stall tactic” to delay the dying. Jesus was asking for a drink not only to fulfill Scripture as we just looked at together but also to clear His throat for the final two words that we will look at in the coming weeks as we move toward Easter together.

Jesus wanted to make sure His throat was clear because the Lamb on the cross was about to roar like the Lion that He was. He wanted everybody to hear the words that were about to come out of his mouth. And He took a drink to do so.

Notice a small detail concerning what was used to give Jesus a drink. Look again in John 19:29.

“A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.”

They put a sponge on a hyssop branch. What’s the big deal about a hyssop branch? God, why did You inspire John to go into detail about it being a hyssop branch that was used to give the Son of God a drink at the cross?

In 1 Kings 4 it talks about how great King Solomon was and mentions hyssop when it says:

1 Kings 4:29–33 (NIV): 29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon’s wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish.

Cedar trees in Lebanon are big and magnificent. Hyssop that grows out of the walls in Jerusalem are small and seemingly insignificant; but not in God’s story. God has more to say about hyssop in Exodus 12 after He gave some incredibly important instructions to Moses.

Exodus 12:21–24 (NIV): 21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select

the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. 23 When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. 24 “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.

Hyssop was used to spread the blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts of the Israelites so that death would pass over those inside. At the cross, hyssop was used to give the Passover Lamb a drink so that He could clear His throat and soon declare: “IT IS FINISHED!”

A hyssop bush is something as seemingly insignificant as a Dixie Cup in the bedtime routine of life; yet, both have a huge part in God’s story.

May we always remember what Jesus said in Matthew 10:42.

Matthew 10:42 (NIV): 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

Jesus has a special place in His heart and the story He is writing for even the Dixie Cup amount of faith. In God’s Story, what seems small and insignificant at first glance may become quite significant in the end. Your little Dixie Cup kind of life may be like hyssop in the hands of God. It may have huge ramifications in the story God is writing.

It may be like your mustard seed. That seed starts at about 1 or 2 millimeters in size, that is about .039 to .079 inches. But in about 90 days that seed becomes a bush that is around 6 feet tall. With a 20 foot spread.

You keep being faithful with who you are and what you have.

You keep being obedient to God.

You keep your vows.

You keep doing what you are supposed to do.

You keep choosing not to cheat on your tests.

You keep visiting your aging parents in the Alzheimer's home and talking to them and re-introducing yourself to them each time.

You keep praying for your kids that are wandering far from God.

You keep writing the "thank you" cards.

Even though you may be a seventh grader and not yet a senior, God wants to use your life in His story to have a huge impact.

You keep doing what God wants you to do and not what

the crowd wants you to do.

Your life is about bringing Jesus great glory and living for His name and His fame.

The goal of our lives is to make Jesus famous!

Never underestimate how your life may be used to make Jesus famous even in the little things you say and do. A little kind gesture such as giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty person still goes a long way in the eyes of God. Little things are still big things to God.

It's why Zechariah told us not to despise the days of small beginnings.

Zerubbabel had despised the days of beginning. He was been discouraged by the enemy. He felt insignificant in his rebuilding of the temple.

But the prophet encouraged him and the temple was rebuilt. Maybe because the word that came forth was. . .

Zechariah 4:6 (NIV): So he said to me, “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.

I love the next verse. . . ,

Zechariah 4:7 (NIV): “What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground.

What small things have you despised?

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (NIV): Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.

Let me read that once more from The Passion Translation

1 Corinthians 1:26–29 (TPT): Brothers and sisters, consider who you were when God called you to salvation. Not many of you were wise scholars by human standards, nor were many of you in positions of power. Not many of you were considered the elite when you answered God's call. 27 But God chose those whom the world considers foolish to shame those who think they are wise, and God chose the puny and powerless to shame the high and mighty. 28 He chose the lowly, the laughable in the world's eyes—nobodies—so that he would shame the somebodies. For he chose what is regarded as insignificant in order to supersede what is regarded as prominent, 29 so that there would be no place for prideful boasting in God's presence.