

Sermon 2010 Lent Midweek 6

Text: 1 Peter 4:1-6

Theme: ALL I NEED IS...

Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. ³The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

“I thirst.” Continuing our Lenten meditations, we come to these words of Jesus from the cross. “Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I thirst.’ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of a hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips” (John 19:28-29).

What do you thirst for? We know what we are not supposed to thirst for. We are not supposed to thirst for material things or things of this world or things that belong to another, but rather than focus on what we shouldn’t thirst for, I want to know what you really do thirst for.

Peter says in our text, “Since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result he does not live the rest of his

earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God." I hear Peter calling us to "arm" ourselves with the same thinking of Christ. I hear Peter saying we're done with sin but I know we still struggle with sin. So tonight let's think about ourselves as that body of Christ, as sinners but saved sinners who are armed with the same manner of thinking as Christ. With this in mind, what do we thirst for?

Do we thirst for justice, for healing, for an end to suffering? Do we thirst for a stronger economy, for more jobs? Do we thirst for safety? We thirst, but often, armed with Christ's thinking or not, there is just no relief for our thirst. Jesus got sour wine and sometimes we don't even seem to get that. Sometimes there is no cure for disease. Sometimes no new job comes. Sometimes the house is foreclosed upon. Sometimes our thirst is simply not quenched.

What do we say then? We church people have countless phrases to call upon in these situations, phrases we use so often they can even become meaningless in our own ears. Our "Gospel clichés," in the face of personal horror seem impotent. I'm supposed to point to a man suffering on a cross? That doesn't make sense. Foolishness! This is supposed to quench the thirst of a hungry person or a person who is

brokenhearted? How? "arm yourselves also with the same attitude."

The famous Lenten hymn "Go to Dark Gethsemane" says,

Follow to the judgment hall, View the Lord of life arraigned; Oh,
the wormwood and the gall! Oh, the pangs His soul sustained! Shun
not suff'ring, shame, or loss; Learn from Him to bear the cross.

Calv'ry's mournful mountain climb; There, adoring at His feet,
Mark that miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete. "It is
finished!" hear Him cry; Learn from Jesus Christ to die.

We all thirst...and as cliché as it might seem, this is still true, the
only thing that will quench our thirst is Jesus. This is a thirsty world
and living in it is thirsty business and nothing will quench that thirst
but knowing that Jesus lives. We know how to bear the cross because
he bore the cross. We know how to die because he died and we know
we will live because he lives. We say time heals all wounds, but that is
not true. Time passing does not heal, only Christ heals on the last
day. When Dänya and I lost two kids in an adoption nightmare a
woman came up to me, hugged me and said, "Well Pastor, at least you
didn't have them very long." I know she did not mean to hurt, but
think about it – if your baby dies after 9 weeks, is that somehow

easier? Time has not healed that wound. The only thing that has helped quench our thirst was the certainty that we will be with those children again. We will win in the end. The day will come when their mentally ill, alcoholic family will be healed and all idiotic state governments are ended and we are together with them and with Christ who lives. I know that for a fact.

This is good news—this is the Gospel. If it doesn't seem like enough, then we don't understand what we really need and what we really don't need. All too often we just live in the moment as though there were no future and no past. We live in the midst of whatever suffering we are currently in, and can't see what we really need. We focus all our attention on alleviating the suffering right now.

But an end to suffering is not enough. Even if the pain is numbed, the wound remains. What we need is healing. And that is the promise we see in Christ's resurrection. Jesus lives! And because he lives, we too shall live. With his resurrection Jesus brings more than an end to our suffering. He brings us the reality of the day where all will be put right. All will be healed. All will be made whole. All the things that hurt us and make us something less than God created us to be will be no

more. Death will be swallowed up and God himself will wipe every tear. An end of suffering. That is what we truly need. Not just for the pain to end, but to be healed, to be made whole.

This is what keeps us going in the midst of suffering. This is the certainty which arms us, as Peter says in our text, with the "same way of thinking as Christ." Each and every time we face suffering, as Christ rose so too do we. The last verse of "Go to Dark Gethsemane.

Early hasten to the tomb Where they laid His breathless clay; All is solitude and gloom. Who has taken Him away? Christ is ris'n! He meets our eyes. Savior, teach us so to rise. AMEN.