

Wendy's March Prayer Thoughts

A nearly fateful day in the life of the Applebee family from Western Australia was recorded worldwide this February 2026. It was the last day of their holidays at Geographe Bay in Perth, and they had hired 2 inflatable paddleboards and a small kayak, from their hotel. Conditions were ideal - the weather warm and sunny, and the sea calm and flat. By 11 a.m. they had donned their life jackets. 12 year old Beau was in the Kayak, Mum and 8 year old Grace on one paddleboard, and 13 year old Austin on the other. By midday all was not well. Austin lost his oar, and his mother's board flipped while trying to help him. Beau came to help in the Kayak, and then Mum lost her oar

They were drifting out to sea, with their paddleboard lashed together. Now their survival was key. It was decided that Beau should get onto the paddleboards and Austin into the Kayak. Thinking that it would only take one to one and a half hours, he was sent off to get help. Soon Austin realised that the boat had been damaged. It was taking on water. The waves were getting higher causing frequent flipping. Then he lost an oar, so he had to paddle with his arm. He tried to stay positive as he fought against the elements. When the kayak flipped for the last time, he was left clinging to it. Later, he said that he "saw something in the water," and it made him really scared. The day before a shark had been spotted a few kilometres away

Austin had been fighting the rough sea for two hours wondering whether he would make it. Taking off his life jacket, he decided to swim the last 300 metres, using a combination of back stroke, free stroke, and breast stroke. He filled his mind with the phrase, keep on swimming. Keep on swimming, and with happy things, especially his girl friend. He also drew on his Christian faith, praying and singing Christian songs. Incredibly, he made it to shore, but being so exhausted, his legs buckled under him, and he collapsed onto the sand. He'd still to get help for his family, so picking himself up he ran 2 Kilometres down the beach to their picnic rug. Grabbing Joanne's phone he dialled triple zero. "I need helicopters, I need planes, I need boats. My family's out there."

He was taken to Russell Heath Campus for medical assessment, where he was haunted by the fear that his Mother, and his sisters Beau and Grace, were dead. In fact they were rescued, some 9 miles from shore. They had been desperately clinging to each other for 10 hours on the water. Interviewed about his life saving swim Prisons Necraise Marine Officer called it "super human." Austin speaking of his heroic deed said, "I don't think it was actually me (swimming.) It was God the whole time. I kept on praying I said to God "I'm getting baptised. I'm getting baptised. I went to Church on Sunday." And he was back at school on the Monday with crutches, his legs still sore.

This is the time of year when we are remembering the LIFE SAVING ACT OF JESUS. As He made His last journey to the Cross. It was an ordeal he knew he must go through to enable us to have a joy filled relationship with God... This meant Him experiencing slow and agonising exhaustion while nailed to the Cross on Calvary's Hill. Let us take a look at His last fading hours. It was Friday noon, the time for prayer in the Temple. Jesus had been on the Cross for 3 hours in the searing heat.....

..... It is impossible to know the punishing pains He suffered, but medics have shared their thoughts. Dr Mark J Kumbala has dwelt on how exhaustion took its toll. Probably Jesus had vomited, as patients often do, from trauma. Pain and shock cause the stomach and intestines to cease functioning, so with a build up of fluid in the stomach, the vomit cannot go down. It comes up...

.....Fluid can then get into the trachea and the lungs. Fluid would have been gathering in the lungs from the scourging of the 39 lashes, and His many falls along the Via Dolorosa, causing lack of oxygen in the blood and faster breathing. (Trachypnea). Kubala also suggests that Jesus, because of the bruising in His chest, may have suffered pain and palpitations from inflammation of the sac around the heart. (Pericarditis). His tongue would stick to the roof of His mouth from no liquid intake. (Dehydration). With His throat muscles weak, and His chest congested, Jesus managed to speak 7 short phrases, the most human one being "I thirst," yet it also speaks of His spiritual agony. John 19:28.

John was keen to show that everything that happened in Jesus' last hours on earth were the fulfilment of Scripture and God's plan. When Jesus said "I thirst," He was recalling the prophecy from Psalm 22:15. "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". The Roman soldiers offered Him wine vinegar, their own rough wine. They soaked a sponge with it, then raised it to His lips on a hyssop stick. He drank, so fulfilling the words of Psalm 69:21. "They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst." With that, He was able to speak His final word, a victorious shout. *Telestai*. "It is finished." Jesus died thirsty for the full restoration of His Father's fellowship. He surrendered Himself to death in agony and darkness, as the Sacrificial Lamb, taking upon Himself our shame and guilt. Colossians 1:20-22.

This Lent take time in your prayers to meditate on Charles Wesley's well known words, and make them your own:-

Verse 1

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain—
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Verse 2

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!