

## What's In The Cup

Matthew 26:36-46

### Preface

Sometimes I am perplexed at the actions of people in church. People often say and do odd things in light of where they are and why they are supposed to be here.

I will admit that I sometimes get frustrated with the behavior of children and adults during worship. For example, why can't people go to the restroom before church begins? Why do people get up and leave during the invitation? Why do people get their feeling hurt if the wrong thing is said or someone fails to speak to them just right. Why do people carry on wide-open conversations during the offertory or music time?

Illus: When Pam and I attended a church in Mississippi, we had one elderly gentleman and his wife who would get up and walk out every Sunday when the invitation began. They would march right across the front of the church and leave. The only exception was about once every six weeks when he would go down during the invitation and tell the Pastor he wanted to say something to the congregation. It was a good thing everyone else did not follow his pattern or there would have been no one to listen to his ramblings every six weeks.

As you consider today's message, think about your motives and purpose when you are in church.

### Scripture

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

<sup>39</sup> Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

<sup>40</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. <sup>41</sup>

*"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*

<sup>42</sup> He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

<sup>43</sup> When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

<sup>45</sup> Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" *Matthew 26:36-46 NIV*

### Introduction

Someone once asked what seemed to be an odd question about today's text. They asked, "What was in the cup?"

Of course there was not literally a cup present at Gethsemane. The reference to a cup is an analogy used by Jesus in referencing the enormous task that lied before Him.

Jesus is in the garden and He realizes He is about to face betrayal and the cross. He very keenly understands what is before Him. Though the events of the coming days are by divine appointment, they are still going to hurt and be extremely difficult.

You and I need to understand that doing what God calls us to do is not always easy. There is often pain to be endured when we are serving God. I understand that isn't popular preaching but it is Biblical preaching.

Nowhere else do we see the humanity of Jesus more than in the garden of Gethsemane. Having endured temptation and having experienced the exuberance of performing miracles and teaching thousands, Jesus was now facing a lonely and painful road.

What was Jesus facing that burdened Him so greatly? What was so severe that it caused Him to sweat drops of blood? In other words, what was in the cup he was about drink from?

## 1. The Cup Contained Sin

Jesus looked into the cup of the Father's will and without a doubt He was confronted with sin. Not just some sin, but the sin of all the world.

Romans 5:12 tells us that *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* When Jesus looked into that cup He saw the sin of all the world from Adam to the last sinner that will ever be present on earth.

Jesus saw all sin, past, present and future. You may ask why this would cause anxiety in the Son of God. Jesus was familiar with sin, but He Himself was spotless and never had sinned. But now, He was about to take on the role of the ultimate sinner.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, *"<sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

Illus: I remember one time when I was a young person working for a construction company. I was fired from my job for something that I did not do. In fact the problem was completely the fault of the owner's drunken brother. It was not easy bearing the blame of someone else's misconduct. It was a very humiliating experience and a hard pill to swallow.

Jesus realized he was to bear the sins of the world on the cross. He looked in the cup and saw my sin and your sin.

## 2. The Cup Contained Suffering

I don't believe Jesus was caught by surprise by the suffering that was to come. However, one gets the impression it was at this point that it all became quite real because now the hour was at hand.

We will all face suffering in our lives. As much as we love life and cling to living on this earth, it always promises suffering.

We will all be betrayed by someone we considered a friend, we will all face death in some form. For some of us, death will bring a great deal of suffering and pain through disease or accident.

The point is this; just because we know that suffering is going to come, it doesn't make it any easier to handle when it actually happens.

Jesus knew He would suffer and die. But now that hour had come. He would face trumped up charges during trial, he would

be mocked, spat upon, slapped, beaten, and His flesh would be ripped beyond recognition.

Jesus looked in the cup and saw great suffering that was before Him.

## 3. The Cup Contained Sacrifice

Jesus looked beyond the Sin, beyond the suffering and recognized His role as the sacrifice. The Day of Atonement was not a pretty sight. It was an awful, awful bloody sight at the tabernacle on that day as the lambs would be slain at the altar.

Imagine the small lambs, white without blemish, being slain as they stood helplessly. Imagine the sight of the blood that must have overcome the altar as the lamb was stabbed and cut. At first the lamb would be numb, but then realizing the pain of sacrificial instrument the lamb would thrash about literally throwing its life blood all over the altar.

I know that it is an awful image to suggest... but such was the day of Calvary. There is no artistic rendition of Calvary that has done justice to what Jesus must have endured at the Cross. It must have been a bloody, bloody sight that day as Jesus lay down on that cross, already covered with blood from his scourging.

He was mocked again and again. A crown of thorns was pressed into his brow which would only add to the bloody scene as it flowed out of his head, down his face, out of his back and chest where he was ripped to pieces by the scourging. As if that wasn't enough, a spear was jabbed into His side to let the blood that remained, flow down from the cross.

All of this, Jesus saw in the cup! He would be the final, the once and for all sacrifice. It was necessary because His was the only blood that would satisfy the righteous demands of God's justice that the wages of sin be paid. And Jesus was that sacrifice.

*1 John 2:2 reads," <sup>2</sup> He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."*

It is because of that sacrifice that we are here. It is because of that painful experience on our behalf that you and I come to worship and have fellowship with God. We would do well to remember this.

#### 4. The Cup Contained Separation

Jesus knew the cup or experience before Him contained sin, suffering and sacrifice. But probably the most painful of the contents was Separation.

Separation from God the Father even if for a moment would surely be the most painful part of the experience.

Matthew 27:46 records that it was about the ninth hour when Jesus cried, "*Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?... My God, my god, why hast thou forsaken me?*"

For the first time ever, from eternity past, the Son had never known separation from His Father, but now the penalty of sin was bore upon His body and the Father lay the sin of the world upon His Only begotten Son. And, He was completely separated from the Father.

People say it was my sin and your sin that put Jesus on that cross. Some say that it was Rome or the religious establishment of the Jews. But, there is only one correct doctrine when it comes to Jesus dying on that Cross... He was put there by the Father!

Isaiah 53:10 reads, *"Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand."*

Yes Jesus died to make atonement for our sins. But, make no mistake about it, He went to the cross because it was the will of the Father.

You need to understand today that it has always been the plan of God the Father from the foundation of the world, to offer Jesus on that Cross. The Father does so because of His love for us.

And there on that cross, Jesus died; for my sin, for your sin, and for the sin of the world. For that moment the Son of God was completely separated from the presence of His father.

#### 5. The Cup Contained Salvation

One might ask, "If Jesus saw all of this that was before Him, why He would go through with it?" If the cup was full of sin, suffering, sacrifice and separation, why be submissive to such pain.

The answer is the final thing Jesus saw in the cup. Jesus saw something in the cup that turned all the bitterness into sweetness. Jesus saw Salvation in the cup.

Jesus was and is our only hope! First of all, Jesus loves the Father and it was His greatest desire to do God's will in God's timing.

Jesus prayed the same thing three times; "*Yet not as I will, but as you will.*"

Jesus understood that his brief time of separation and suffering would spare millions from eternal separation and suffering.

Jesus endured the cross for the reward of Salvation for all who accepted the gift from God.

Romans 5:8 says, *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

#### Conclusion

Jesus freely and willingly laid down His life at Calvary in obedience to the Father. It was all done for mine and your salvation.

In John 10:18, Jesus says, *"No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord..."*

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*  
*Hebrews 12:2 NIV*

Before His enemies came for Him, Jesus put himself into agony. This shows that He was a freewill offering; that His life was not forced from Him, but rather He freely laid it down.

With all Jesus was facing, He did not say to the disciples, rise and let us flee our trouble. Instead he said rise and let us face our enemies.

Jesus went to the cross willingly to please the Father. What will you do with the sacrifice that has been made for you? Will you accept it? Will you honor it?