

Good Friday 2023

On good Friday we take time to reflect and look specifically at the cross. On Easter we remember the empty tomb, on Good Friday we look at what had to happen for there to be an empty tomb in the first place. Jesus' time in the garden of Gethsemane is crucial to the cross. As we read from Matthew Jesus has tremendous sorrow and is troubled while in the garden. As He went off to pray, He told His disciples:

Matthew 26:38 ESV

(38) Then He said to them, **“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with Me.”**

He has told them so many times about the cross and the sufferings He would go through. He knew what was coming. As He is in the garden with the events of the cross about to start, He is overwhelmed with sorrow. Scripture gives us a tremendous privilege to hear His prayers in this moment. This is an incredibly intimate time between the Father and Son.

Matthew 26:39; 42; 44 ESV

(39) And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, **“My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”**

(42) Again, for the second time, He went away and prayed, **“My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.”**

(44) So, leaving them again, **He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.**

Jesus pleads with the Father. In Mark 14:36 He calls the Father, Abba, this was the familiar term that children called their dads at home. It is Dad, Papa, Daddy. **He is crying out, Daddy, is there any other way!** We must see what was grieving Him so much. **He pleads for the cup to pass.** He does not talk about the physical pain He will experience. He does not mention the excruciatingly slow process of dying on a cross. He does not mention the mocking, and humiliation of the crowds. He mentions the cup. He is asking the Father if there is any other way to accomplish salvation without the cup.

As Christ calls out, He submits Himself to the Father's will. He is in anguish and sorrow thinking about this cup, and yet He wants what God wants. He prays three times and each time He finishes with wanting God's will above all else. **A tremendous battle and temptation were happening in these moments. It was excruciating.**

Luke 22:44 ESV

(44) And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and **His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**

He was sweating drops of blood. It is called Hematidrosis. His blood vessels around His sweat glands had ruptured, causing them to bleed. It can be caused by acute fear and extreme physical or emotional stress. He is in anguish. Listen to Hebrews 12 with this in mind.

Hebrews 12:2-4 ESV

- (2) **looking to Jesus**, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him **endured the cross, despising the shame**, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
- (3) Consider Him who endured from sinners **such hostility against Himself**, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.
- (4) In your struggle against sin you have not yet **resisted to the point of shedding your blood**.

He was willing to resist sin to the point of shedding His blood. This refers to His sacrifice on the cross. I believe it also references this bleeding in the garden. **The spiritual battle of temptation was taking place in the garden.** He resisted to the point of sweating blood. He was submitting Himself to the will of the Father. Listen to the resolve that has settled in His heart once Judas and the soldiers show up.

John 18:10-11 ESV

- (10) Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)
- (11) So Jesus said to Peter, **“Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given Me?”**

Peter was trying to give Jesus another option. Let's fight. Let's get You out of here. Jesus looks to Peter and says there is no other way. **His heart is resolved. He must drink the cup that the Father has given to Him.** So, we must ask what is this cup that gave Christ such agony?

Psalms 75:8 ESV

- (8) For **in the hand of the LORD there is a cup** with foaming wine, well mixed, and He pours out from it, and **all the wicked of the earth** shall drain it down to the dregs.

The cup that gave Jesus so much agony is a cup that the Father will give to all the wicked of the earth. It is a cup full of judgment and justice.

Isaiah 51:17 ESV

- (17) Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, **you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of His wrath**, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering.

The cup is full of the wrath of God. It is a cup that is full of His justice. It is full of the punishment for Sin. God is holy. Meaning He is perfect and is the definition of perfect. When we sin, meaning we do something that is not holy, it deserves punishment.

Romans 6:23a ESV

- (23) For the wages of sin is death...

Sin deserves death. It deserves a punishment and wrath. All this punishment has been collecting in a cup. This is the cup that was causing Christ so much anguish when He thought about having to drink it. He had never sinned. He is fully God, fully man, He is perfect. He never did wrong. **Nothing He ever did acquired punishment in that cup.** All of us have, we each have contributed to it. We were meant to drink it. We were meant to die.

Romans 6:23 ESV

(23) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our punishment of sin is in that cup and because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, we now can have the free gift of eternal life. You and I do not have to drink the cup. He did it for us. It is one of the most incredible moments of the cross. It was a moment that humanity is blocked out from viewing. We couldn't contribute or even see what Jesus had to do.

Matthew 27:45-46 ESV

(45) **Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.**

(46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "**My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?**"

While Jesus was hanging on the cross there are three hours of darkness. He cries out, My God (the Father) My God (The Holy Spirit), why have you forsaken Me? Jesus was separated from God. **He had drunk the cup.** He had taken on our sin. He had taken on the punishment for Sin. He was going to die.

Galatians 3:13 ESV

(13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law **by becoming a curse for us**—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

He became the curse. When Christ was in agony in the garden, He was thinking about what it would be like to become the curse. He was thinking about becoming sin and suffering the wrath it deserves.

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

(21) **For our** sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

He did this for our sake. Do you realize what this means. He was willing to drink the cup for our sake. He looked forward to the joy that was set before Him. He had to become sin. Everything wrong you and I have ever done. He became it all that day. He took every sin. He took the punishment that all our sin deserved.

Words fail to describe what this cost Jesus. Spend time thinking about what He had to do. What He had to become on the cross. The punishment and wrath in that cup had to be dealt with. Because of what He did, **we have been offered a very different cup.**

Matthew 26:26-28 ESV

(26) Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; **this is My body.**"

(27) **And He took a cup,** and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "**Drink of it, all of you,**

(28) for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

When Jesus has His final meal with the apostles, this would have been the same night He would go to the garden and agonize over the cup He had to drink. He tells His apostles about what He will accomplish. He offers them a cup which is the blood of the covenant. It is for the forgiveness of sins. **The cup of the wrath of God, will be emptied at the cross and replace by the blood of Jesus Christ.** He paid the perfect sacrifice. Himself. His blood saves us from the cup of wrath. We must accept what He has done for us.

John 3:36 ESV

(36) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

It is that simple. Believe in who Jesus was and what He did on the cross for you. He took your sin; He took my sin. He took sin's punishment and gave the perfect offering of His blood. If we believe in Him, there is no wrath waiting for us. We are given His perfect holiness, His righteousness. Tragically anyone who does not believe in Jesus is under wrath.

Romans 2:5-6 ESV

(5) But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

(6) He will render to each one according to his works:

Romans 5:8-9 NAS95

(8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(9) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.