

SERMON: DRINKING FROM A BITTER CUP

Matthew 26:39

And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt.

Introduction

The earthly life of Jesus was now in the shadow of the cross. The purpose for which He came was now squarely before Him. He and the Father, each, had a decision to make. Jesus used the metaphor of a bitter cup to express this dilemma. If the Father had angels to swoop down and save Him, there would be no means of salvation for humankind. If the Father allowed the cup to remain and the Son refused to drink it, humankind would still be lost. This was a dilemma indeed, because in this cup was physical torture, spiritual and mental agony, and all of the sins of all the people of all the ages.

Thus far, Jesus had met every test and emerged victoriously. Satan had endeavored in vain to dissuade Him from His task, yet the biggest and most important test of all was immediately before Him.

It is impossible for us, as human beings, to understand the great “soul agony” of Jesus that night in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had no sin in Him, but as He prayed in the garden, He felt the pressure of all of the world’s sin upon Him. Because of His divine nature, Jesus could foresee all of the things that awaited Him on the cross. Yet because of His human nature, He sought an escape. Was there an escape? Was there any other way for God to redeem the world? If so, what was it? There was no alternative. There was no plan B. The divine plan for redeeming the world was formulated before the world was created. The implied answer to the Gethsemane prayer was that Jesus must fulfill God’s plan by going to the cross. Thank God! He did fulfill His mission to provide access to eternal life. Let us look at some of the lessons we can learn from this text.

Exposition

1. We All Will Be Faced With Difficult Decisions.

(Everybody Gets A Bitter Cup!)

(The Question: Will You Drink It?)

2. We Must Pray Difficult Prayers To Handle Difficult Times.

(Sometimes The Purpose Of Prayer Is Not To Get God To Do Our Will, But To Get God’s Will Done Through Us.)

3. We Must Think About More Than Just Ourselves.

(If Jesus Had Thought Only About Himself, He Would Have Abandoned The Mission.)

(If Jesus Had Abandoned The Mission, We Would Not Have Eternal Life.)

4. Jesus Drank His Bitter Cup!

(He Submitted To The Will Of The Father.)

(He Exhibited Total –Not Partial- Surrender To God’s Will.)

(He Was True To What He Taught The Disciples In The Model Prayer.)

“Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven.”)

(The Question Comes Again: Will You Drink Your Bitter Cup?)

Closing Thoughts

In this prayer of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, we are made aware of His great agony as He submitted Himself to the great plan of the Father for the salvation of lost humankind. As believers we need to continue on our knees in prayer until we have become completely submissive to the will of our heavenly Father. When we have come to this point, we will be able to sing with new meaning the second and third stanzas of the hymn, *Blessed Assurance*:

“Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest.
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.”

Give God Glory! Give God All the Glory!

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