

The Cup that I Drink

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Date: 15 April 2018

Preacher: Jim Crooks

[0 : 00] Graeme, thank you very much and thank you everyone for the invitation to be with you. And the idea for this came as we remembered the Lord Jesus last Sunday evening in Teesside Christian Fellowship.

And I thought it would be appropriate to share with you. I did seek some guidance from Graeme during the week. And I understand that you've been spending not just quite a bit of time in Luke's Gospel, but in latter weeks, particularly around the cross and, of course, around the open grave at Easter time.

I was a widower. I have remarried. And my wife, Laura, has come with me today. And she gave me an idea about something.

And just to begin with, you'll see that there are three cups up there. The cup that I drink, I drink from all three of them. And they have, of course, associations. It's not that we're OCD, but when you're moving from one house to another, you end up doing things like counting the number of mugs you have.

And Laura has 135 mugs that she brought with her. And she likes to rotate the mugs. That's not get around to get a clean bit in the lip.

[1 : 24] But she uses some mugs at particular times. And, of course, it made me think, as I've never thought before, yes, I do like particular cups or mugs. And there's an association with them.

The one at the top left is my favourite mug, a Highland Stoneware mug, a nice plug. I'm on commission. And it's a lovely mug to drink, either coffee or tea.

The one on the right-hand side at the top, the mackerel one, was the first mug that Laura bought for me. It won't be the last, I'm sure.

So there's a nice association with that, particularly good for tea because it's porcelain. The Stoneware one is better for coffee. But porcelain, you've really got to have tea in a porcelain cup, don't you?

You see, I'm a bit OCD myself. But the one at the bottom is one that's got an association for me going away back to the forests of northern Sweden.

[2 : 24] And I was given that as a gift with a group of people that became very, very dear friends. And actually, I don't drink from it so often. It's an outdoor cup.

But there are lots of stories associated with that cup, including me being passed through webbing by very small people. I wasn't quite as large then, but it was a huge effort by them.

And I was just glad to get through this webbing on this course that we were on in northern Sweden. And the cup that I drink appears in the Lord Jesus' life.

And we're going to be thinking about the cup that he drank. First passage is in Mark and chapter 10. If you want to follow it in your own copy of the Word of God, please turn to that.

And if you can read the screen, then good and well. It's up there for us. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, said to him, Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.

[3 : 30] Jesus said to them, You do not know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?

And they said to him, We are able. And Jesus said to them, The cup that I drink, you will drink. And with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized.

But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared. Then go over to Mark and chapter 14.

You will get the association as we read that passage together, verses 22 through 25. And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to them, and said, Take, this is my body.

And he took a cup. And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

[4 : 40] Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And staying in Mark chapter 14, just down to verse 32.

And they went to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray. And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And he said to them, My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch. And going a little further, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation.

[5 : 52] The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. Matthew's account includes those words, in chapter 26 and 42.

My father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him.

And he came the third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It's enough. The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand. God will bless his word to us.

The word cup is used 86 times in the Bible. It's used literally, of course, to describe a cup. For instance, he took a cup.

[7 : 01] We read that in Martin chapter 14. But it's also used figuratively Remove this cup from me, said Jesus in the garden.

But yet, then he was not holding a physical, literal cup. And so we're going to be thinking about the transition between a literal cup and a figurative cup and what that meant for the Lord Jesus.

Figuratively, in the Bible, the term cup is used quite often. David uses it really quite often. And in Psalm 116, he says, I will lift up the cup of salvation.

Now, of course, that isn't literal. But he's thinking about the fullness of the deliverance God has given to him. And as the great king of Israel, he has a large cause to thank God for deliverance in personal salvation, but also in rescue from his enemies.

The great psalm that we sometimes repeat and even sing, Psalm 23, you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

[8 : 23] You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. And we get used to repeating the words, but without thinking of it as being literal.

And these things really do mean something to David and they mean something to us. As we think about the rod and the staff, they comfort me.

He makes us to lie down in green pastures, the quiet waters. And of course, it's not a literal experience, but figuratively, as we find spiritual solace in the one who cares for us, who looks over us as the shepherd.

The Lord is literal. The shepherd is a figure. We read of the cup of consolation, the cup of staggering.

Some might know that, perhaps filled with buckfast, I don't know. The cup of staggering, but there is also the cup of horror and desolation. And so we're going to be thinking primarily about a figurative use of the term cup.

[9 : 37] But first of all, in Mark and chapter 10, when James and John come and ask, or their mother asks, about where her sons, where these disciples will sit in the kingdom, and they want to get a reserved space right beside Jesus, and the Lord Jesus asks them, are you able to drink the cup that I drink?

Are you able to be baptized with the baptism I'm baptized with? And they say, we are able. We are able. Not quite sure what they understood by that, but they are affirming that they would want to experience everything that the Lord Jesus experiences.

Now, the reason I read the passage from Mark 14, and the communion, the Lord's Supper, or the Passover meal where the Lord's Supper was instituted, was that literally, they did take the cup that he drank from.

There are a number of cups that are drunk over the passage of a Passover meal, and I emphasized, at least in the reading, that they all drank from it.

The Lord Jesus drank of the cup and they all drank of the cup. And so, in one sense, it is literally fulfilled that the disciples, James and John, drank of the cup.

[11 : 17] Concerning the baptism with which the Lord Jesus was baptized, that might be a throwback to the beginning of his public ministry when he enters into the Jordan and asks his second cousin, John the Baptist, to baptize him.

And the Lord Jesus goes under the water of the Jordan, and when he comes up, you may remember that the spirit came down in bodily form like a dove and rested upon him, thereby signifying to everyone who was spectating that day that the Lord Jesus was being called into a particular mission and ministry, and he was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

And of course, that is exactly what happened to both James and John, when after the resurrection and in Jerusalem and in an upper room, they encounter the giving of the Holy Spirit as was promised to them.

And the Holy Spirit descends, not this time like a dove, but like fiery tongues, and rests upon them.

And so literally, they were baptized by the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus was on that day.

[12 : 45] But then, when we think of the figurative application of this, the Lord Jesus may have been meaning not just a literal drinking of the cup and a literal baptism by the Holy Spirit, but rather that he understood the figurative use of the term.

And the Lord Jesus is going to suffer tremendously just after this Lord's Supper, institution of this first communion.

And he is going to go to Calvary. He's already warned his disciples that they too are going to participate in his sufferings. As the world has hated me, so they will hate you.

So if we take James, who was one of the sons of Zebedee and whose mother asked the question, James was the first apostle to be martyred.

And we read of that very early on in Luke's account of the early church. John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, and there were various things which he suffered in his life, but exile was one that we definitely know of from the scriptures, from tradition and history.

[14 : 10] There were all kinds of suffering that he too faced, but he was exiled on the Isle of Patmos. Jesus has said to his disciples, if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

And the warning was given, and even to the early church, those who would count the cost before committing to following Jesus, Peter says to them, do not be surprised, at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you.

Paul, the great apostle of the early church, said all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

We do forget that we are inured from so much suffering here in Scotland, and as we think of the church in so many parts of our world.

If we think of what has happened in Syria, where prior to this awful war, there were numbered well over one million Christians, and now it's estimated only around 300,000 or so are left.

[15 : 33] We ask the Christian families who have had to flee about great tribulation. They would give accounts of terrible suffering. I'm not sure if you have Syrian refugees here coming to the church we have in TCF, and the stories that are told are just absolutely horrendous.

Mothers who don't know whether the father of their children still lives or not, or whether in the refugee camp or whatever it might be, but across our world, there is tremendous suffering for those who own the name of Christ.

And of course, we should be particularly sensitive to the suffering of others. We haven't faced what Jesus, what Peter, what Paul talked about, and what James and John and the others faced personally.

But of course, we are warned that we will face suffering. One of the issues that we do face in TCF is about sharing our faith personally.

And in the fairly innocuous environment of Costa, that's a wonderful place to be able to do that. Perhaps forming a habit so that it's not a Sunday night we do that, but it's also the Monday at lunchtime and the Thursday in the evening when we're just with our friends.

[17 : 13] Just to be brave enough to own the name of Christ and to tell of his love, of his suffering, of the difference he's made in our lives.

Oh, we have nothing to fear, but fear itself. How often will the devil keep us from just sharing simply and most straightforwardly?

The church that I was in before going to TCF was Hillbank in Dundee, Hillbank Evangelical Church. We had a special weekend there with an evangelist who just oozed the gospel, who found opportunities everywhere.

I picked him up from Edinburgh Airport, took him up to Arbroath and said we're going to have a chipped tea before we start our church weekend. He said well that's great, what will we get?

I said I don't know, but here in Arbroath they have a speciality in making fritters. Fritters? What are fritters? He didn't say it with a West-of-Scotland accent of course, but we stood in the queue and he ordered a bag of fritters and he said that's absolutely amazing.

[18 : 27] Do you think Jesus ever had fritters with fish? And it's just a simple question, he just spoke as he thought. And before long, not only was the guy frying the fish engaged in a conversation about Jesus and his eating habits, but the whole shop were involved and he said, you know, it's just easy, just do it.

And people were saying, but I find it so difficult to speak. And he said, well, what do you do when you meet your fellow parents at the school on a Monday morning with their children? Do you speak to them?

Oh, yeah, that's easy. Well, just do it. We are warned about persecution, but of course we don't really face that here.

But nonetheless we have the fear, or let me be honest, is it the shame? Is it the shame of being a Christian and of believing this wonderful message?

I wonder what it really is at our hearts. However, the Lord Jesus then went on to ask that the cup would be removed from him.

[19 : 44] and now we're beginning to get meat and the bone about the figurative use of the language. What was it a cup of?

Isaiah 51 says, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath. Jeremiah 25, take from my hand this cup of the wine of wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

And in the book of Revelation in the New Testament we're given this warning. He, that is the idolater, the one who would replace God with anything other than God, who will deliberately shun God and the gospel and his Christ, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger.

And when the Lord Jesus is going to take from the very hand of God a cup, it is a cup of wrath, a cup of wrath.

And as the Lord Jesus anticipates this, the hand of a holy God, he says, let this cup pass from me.

[21 : 17] Now I've become convinced and I hope to show you that this was not a request by the Lord Jesus to not die. That wasn't his request, but rather that as he faced the wrath of God against sin, of a holy God who for centuries had been offended by all of humanity and who was going to hold to account those sins done by others against other human beings, as he is the judge of all and as he is to exert justice, he is poised ready on that night in Gethsemane to pour all of his wrath, all of his offenses on his own son.

And Jesus' agony as he anticipates this is that only he can understand what this is about.

Because as God in the flesh, he too has that holy revulsion of sin and sinfulness.

And the beauty of his perfect and sinless life, of the one substance with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, he sees what it will cost.

He's about to feel the full weight and fury of his father's anger against sin. Only he in his holiness can fully anticipate and know what is to come.

[23 : 23] He knows the enormity of the judgment that must be. He is the one who is sinless. He didn't deserve to drink the cup of God's wrath, but he was willing and obedient.

He says previously, shall I not drink the cup my father has given me? And so we see on the one hand his holy soul and the revulsion for sin, dreading the judgment of God and all that that must mean.

And yet on the other hand, his obedience to the father and his love for you and for me.

To take that which we need not face if we come in faith and repentance and accepting the sacrifice of Christ, accepting the fullness of the life that he has lived and all his sinlessness, all his purity, all his righteousness.

and prophetically he understands what is going to happen because Isaiah had anticipated this night and he uses the words he was crushed for our iniquities, crushed for our iniquities and the weight of all the sin of the world throughout all of human history is placed upon him and the judgment of God against that and only he can fully appreciate all that that means.

[25 : 24] Matthew and Mark relate that Jesus prayed three times and Luke gives a single summary description and includes a detail that wasn't included by Matthew and Mark that after praying the first time there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him and being in agony he prayed more earnestly and after that first prayer as he anticipates the wrath the judgment of God he's praying don't save me from the death that I must die but save me from the wrath and all that that means I'll willingly die for all of humanity I'll pay the price in my death but that wasn't enough God says it's not enough for you to die you've got to be judged as if you yourself had committed all of those sins and I'm going to pour out all my wrath that's the death that he must die and so

Matthew's account of the second prayer and included that in the reading for the second time he went away and prayed my father if this cannot pass unless I drink it your will be done if this if this wrath if this judgment if this dreadful torture for sin and so many theologians reject the idea that someone could be personally made to pay the price for my sin that's so unfair of God well it isn't because God's son says I want it I want you to judge me father for their sin I'll bear it I'll face it and after that first prayer he has given that divine heavenly sustenance and God's answer is given in the strengthening by the angel and so as John

Piper says Jesus did not go on praying for the cup to pass he went on praying for success in drinking it if this may not pass away from me except I drink it your will be done your will be done the greatest prayer and the prayer life of the Lord Jesus is rich and I'm so glad you're going to be thinking about the Lord's prayer of course there is another prayer in John 17 where his heart of love and his concern for his disciples is just so evident as on the surface to see how much he loved but even this prayer brief though it is perhaps the greatest prayer that the Lord Jesus prayed your will be done it wasn't about us it's about him and his relationship with God and about this great work that God has given him to do

Hebrews 5 in the days of his flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his reverence then it goes on although he was a son he learned obedience through what he suffered being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him and the Lord Jesus the son of God in the flesh fully human had to learn what obedience to God the father was and he went to the utmost extremity the extremity to which others may have gone or approximated to give their life for the Lord Jesus give their lives for their faith whether it's

Syrian believers Pakistani believers presently or whether it's the martyrs of the early church they gave their lives because Jesus obedience is the model for our obedience for our obedience and we who would come to know Christ and God as our father to know the freedom of sins being forgiven it's on the basis of our own obedience to the word of God to come in faith believing and in repenting of the sin that caused us and to acknowledge that in Christ he has paid the debt fully and completely what a prayer and he did it for me and he did it for you and so we read these great words being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross therefore

[31 : 34] God has highly exalted him the one who could appreciate all that it cost his son that great burden that awful dread that unswerving obedience that great love for his father that abundant love for you and for me only God could appreciate it therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father is that the kind of obedience we're willing to give

God to find forgiveness for our sins to find a relationship that is beyond every relationship that can be offered upon earth and to be linked eternally with the very God of heaven and all of the work has been done except for us to bow the knee and to come to him some think it's an awful cost but I came across this quotation and it seemed to sum it up as we close when we are crushed like grapes we cannot think of the wine we will become and in the life of the Lord Jesus and his eternal glory and that we shall all see his glory my my how wonderful that will be and for you and

I today to come to an end of ourselves and our struggling and to come willingly and to thank Jesus for what he has done in bearing our sins on the cross and in coming to know him and in a life of absolute surrender and obedience to be crushed all our pride all our thinking we can do it our way just to be crushed so that God can pour us out like a beautiful wine let's pray father we thank you for this glimpse again into Gethsemane's garden we think of the cup that the Lord Jesus took at that communion service and we think of all that it meant and only he could fully understand and yet he gave us this to remember him by and we thank you that we regularly remember his body given for us and his blood poured out father we pray that we might be touched with the enormity of our sin but especially of the wonder of the obedience of your son and that we might come and give you thanks and praise for all that he has done and in going to

Calvary's cross and bearing the judgment for my sin that I can now come to him confessing as Lord trust in his sacrifice and trust in his redeeming grace and to know a life of fullness father we pray that each and every one of us might do that we pray our father we will hold the name of Jesus in such awe and reverence it will overcome our reluctance our fear our shame perhaps just to say to those who would abuse it please don't use it that way he's such a lovely man he's done a wonderful thing for me and I want to protect his name father help us to live for Jesus to bow the knee now in obedience coming to him in faith or in a renewed commitment to lift up his name father we pray that you would be glorified and only what remains of your word will remain in our hearts and our minds for we pray together in the name of

Jesus amen