



EST FONDS VITAE

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SERIES

John: *That You May Believe*

TITLE & PASSAGE

The Cup is Empty
John 18:1-14

OCCASION

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter on the Lord's Day to the congregation of First Baptist Church of Diana, TX.

INTRODUCTION

The first question of the Heidelberg catechism is, "What is your only comfort in life and death?" This is a good question, indeed! How would you answer? Well, the writers begin their answer, saying, "That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who, with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins..." In this message, we shall consider the "cup" which Christ consumed for His people at the cross. We shall marvel at the substitutionary work of Christ, and we shall praise Him that the cup is empty.

MAIN POINT

God the Father sent His Son into the world to drink the cup of God's wrath, so that He would be both just and the justifier of those who belong to Christ.

EMAIL QUESTIONS TO PASTOR@FBCDIANA.ORG

SCRIPTURE READING

John 18:1-14

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?"

5 They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one."

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?"

12 So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.

13 First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

14 It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

MAIN POINT

God the Father sent His Son into the world to drink the cup of God's wrath, so that He would be both just and the justifier of those who belong to Christ.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

- (1) UNDERSCORING JESUS' RESOLVE
- (2) JESUS CAME TO DRINK THE CUP
- (3) FOR CHRIST'S PEOPLE, THE CUP IS EMPTY
- (4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

MESSAGE

(1) UNDERSCORING JESUS' RESOLVE

- The general flow of timeline seems to go as follows.¹
 - Night **Arrest** (Jn. 18:1-12)
 - Questioned by **Annas**, the religious “mob boss” (Jn. 18:12-14, 19-23)
 - Questioned before **Caiaphas** and **Sanhedrin**, the official **Jewish trial** (Mt. 26:57-68; Mk. 14:53-65; Lk. 22:66-71; Jn. 18:24)
 - Brought to **Pilate**, the Governor or Procurator of Judea, the **first time**, starting the **Roman trial** (Mt. 27:11-14; Jn. 28-38)
 - Interrogated by **Herod**, the Tetrarch of Galilee (Lk. 23:6-12)
 - Interestingly, this Herod was the son of *Herod the Great*, who ordered the murder of every boy in Bethlehem 2-yrs and younger. And he happened to be in Jerusalem for the time of the Jewish Passover.
 - Brought to **Pilate** the **second time**, where Pilate reluctantly passes condemning **judgment** (Matt. 27:15-31; Jn. 18:38-19:16)
 - The **crucifixion** (Jn. 19:17-30)

¹ Carson, in his commentary (the Pillar New Testament Commentary), says, “There are several ways by which the diverse Gospel accounts of Jesus’ passion, especially his arrest and trials, can be brought into a single story-line. There were two trials, one Jewish and one Roman. The former began with informal examination by Annas (18:12–14, 19–23), possibly while members of the Sanhedrin were being hurriedly summoned. A session of the Sanhedrin (Mt. 26:57–68; Mk. 14:53–65) with frank consensus was followed by a formal decision at dawn and dispatch to Pilate (Mt. 27:1–2; Lk. 22:66–71). The Roman trial began with a first examination before Pilate (Mt. 27:11–14; Jn. 18:28–38a), which was followed by Herod’s interrogation (Lk. 23:6–12) and Jesus’ final appearance before Pilate (Mt. 27:15–31; Jn. 18:38b–19:16). Other reconstructions are possible, but this one usefully co-ordinates the biblical data.”

- **John and the Synoptics do not disagree, but John emphasizes Jesus' resolve.**
 - The Synoptic emphasis on Jesus' reluctance to "drink the cup"
 - "he [Jesus] fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, **let this cup pass from me**; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will'" (Matthew 26:39).
 - "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. **Remove this cup from me**. Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36).
 - "Father, if you are willing, **remove this cup from me**. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).
 - John's emphasis on Jesus' resolve to "drink the cup"
 - After Peter strikes out with his dagger, Jesus says, "Put your sword into its sheath; **shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?**" (v11)
 - Before we get to this "cup," let's see John's emphasis elsewhere:
 - Jesus went with His disciples to a garden, and we are told "Judas, who betrayed him, also **knew the place, for Jesus often met there** with his disciples" (v2)
 - "Jesus, **knowing all that would happen** to him, **came forward** and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?'" (v4)
 - Jesus is so resolved to accomplish the task on hand, He seems to give a flash of His glory when He answered the call of the arresting mob of official brutes – both Jewish and Roman.
 - John writes, "When Jesus said to them, '**I am he,**' they **drew back** and **fell** to the ground" (v6)
 - Now, whether this is a genuine glimpse of the brilliance of Christ's glory, I do not know.
 - Their physical recoil may have been an involuntary flinch at the reality that they were arresting such a notable popular figure, their nerves giving way to the weight of the moment.
 - But it may also have been the result of Christ's glory peeking through in a moment of clear resolve with a divine purpose.

- Once the mob arrested Jesus, He said, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, **let these men go**” (v8), and John tells us that this is a picture of the promise Jesus had made earlier “Of those whom you gave me **I have lost not one**” (v9).
 - And, this brings us back to that peculiar statement in verse 11, where Jesus says, “**shall I not drink the cup** that the Father has given me?”
- **John intends for his reader to see a resolved Jesus here...**
 - Jesus is resolved to “drink the cup.” But what cup is this?
 - This “cup” is “given Him from the Father.” But what does this mean?
 - Isn’t Jesus about to be crucified on a Roman cross?
 - How is this a “cup” from “the Father”?

(2) JESUS CAME TO DRINK THE CUP

- **Jesus was headed to the cross, and that is where He “drank the cup”**
 - In the Synoptics and in John, the “cup” refers to Jesus’ impending crucifixion.
 - The Synoptic writers emphasized Jesus’ aversion to it.
 - John emphasized Jesus’ resolve to meet it.
 - But, the imagery of the “cup” is no doubt referring to the cross.
- **In the Old Testament, the “cup” imagery often refers to God’s judgment**
 - The Psalmist speaks of God’s judgment, saying, “**Not from the East or from the West and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, but it is God who executes judgment... For in the hand of the LORD [Yahweh] 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**” (Ps. 75:6-8).
 - Ezekiel, the prophet, spoke the judgment of God against His own people, saying, “**Your shameful behavior and your unfaithfulness have brought this upon you, because you... defiled yourself... therefore I will give [the] cup into your hand. Thus says the Lord GOD [Yahweh]: ‘You shall drink [the] cup that is deep and large; you shall be laughed at**

and held in derision, for it contains much; you will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow. **A cup of horror and desolation... you shall drink it and drain it out...**” (Ezekiel 23:30–34).

- Why did God pour out His “cup of wrath” upon these two groups?
 - In the first passage, the “cup” comes to the “**wicked of the earth.**”
 - God’s “**curse is on... the wicked**” (Prov. 3:33).
 - “**The LORD is far from the wicked**” (Prov. 15:29).
 - The “**way,**” the “**thoughts,**” and even the “**sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD**” (Prov. 15:8, 9, 26).
 - “**The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble**” (Prov. 16:4).
 - “**Sin overthrows the wicked**” (Prov. 13:6), and “**the expectation of the wicked [ends] in wrath**” (Prov. 11:23).
 - In the second passage, the “cup” comes to the “**unfaithful, shameless, defiled** (morally impure)” people who are supposed to be “the people of God”
 - Note that their claim to a blessed ethnic heritage, and even their observances of ceremonial and religious routines did not keep them from being judged for their wickedness.
 - They were morally impure and unfaithful before God; therefore, God sent His cup of “**horror**” and to them, and His cup is “**deep and large**”
- The judgment of God is a terrible thing!
 - The prophet of God warns sinful people, “**The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers... The mountains quake before him; the hills melt; the earth heaves before him, the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger?**” (Nahum 1:2–6)

- Friends, do you know that God... the God of the Bible... the true and living God is a God who judges?
 - Do you know that God is morally pure and upright, and that He condemns all wickedness everywhere?
 - Do you know that God promises to judge all sin and disobedience?
 - Do you foolishly assume that God's judgment is not coming for you, just because the cup of His wrath has not met your lips as of yet?
 - Listen to God's own words of rebuke, "Do you suppose, O man... that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness... and patience? ...Because of your hard and [unrepentant] heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed." (Rom. 2:3-5).
 - Oh, if you can hear these words, isn't your heart crying out for reprieve?!
 - Don't you know that you are sinful and wicked before God?
 - Doesn't your own conscience condemn you?
 - Don't you feel the weight of your own guilt?
 - Don't you fear the righteous judge of the universe?
 - In the brilliance of His light, seeking out even the most secret sin, who can stand?!

- **So, how does this imagery of the “cup” of God’s wrath fit into the story of Christ’s arrest, trial, and crucifixion?**
 - Well, Jesus came to drink the cup!
 - The Apostle Paul declares, “it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.’ ...**Christ redeemed us** [that is ‘His people’] from the curse of the law **by becoming a curse for us...**” (Galatians 3:10–13)
 - And again, Paul says, “when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **to redeem those who were under the law**, so that we [those who believe, trust in, and follow Him] **might receive adoption as sons**” (Galatians 4:4–5)
 - Or, one of my favorite passage of all Scripture, says, “**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified** [that is ‘made righteous’ in the sight of God] **by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...**” (Romans 3:23–24)
 - But, what does it mean that Christ “redeemed”? How is it that “redemption” was made?
 - Ah! This is the beauty of the gospel! This is the marvelous gem! Here is the centerpiece of God’s glorious grace!
 - It is “**propitiation**”!
 - “What is this?” you say...
 - “**25 whom** [Jesus] God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith. **This was to show God’s righteousness...** **26 It was to show his righteousness** at the present time, **so that he might be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:25–26).
 - The Bible is **more concerned** for the “**righteousness of God**” than it is for the **wicked souls of men!**
 - The question we are confronted with here, is, “**How can God be righteous if He lets wicked sinners go free?**”
 - Proverbs 17:15 – “**He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.**”
 - Wasn’t Christ righteous?

- Aren't you wicked?
- How is it, then, that God can justify you and condemn Christ?

- **God imputed** to Christ (ascribed, charged, credited) the wickedness of those who belong to Christ; and **Jesus consumed the full cup** of God's wrath.
 - John even reminds us in verse 14 of our primary passage that Caiaphas, the High Priest that year, prophesied more than he intended by saying that it was "better for you that one man die for the people" (Jn. 18:14; cf. Jn. 11:50).

Summary: God the Father sent His Son into the world to drink the cup of God's wrath, so that He would be both just and the justifier of those who belong to Christ.

Segue: So, **what is the implication** for all those who trust in, believe in, have faith in, and belong to Christ?

(3) FOR CHRIST'S PEOPLE, THE CUP IS EMPTY

- **The Cup is Empty! Therefore, we should run to this Savior.**
 - If God does punish sin and sinners, then there is a cup, full of wrath, reserved for me and you.
 - But if Christ has drunk this cup, emptied it of its horrendous dregs, then we should forsake everything and run to Him!
 - “repent and believe” (Mk. 1:15)

- **The Cup is Empty! Therefore, we should be humble and grateful.**
 - Were it not for Christ, this cup would still be mine.
 - Were it not for Christ, my ultimate destiny would be the same as my worst enemy.
 - Were it not for Christ, the wrath of God would be aimed at my wretched soul.
 - But because of Christ, the cup is empty, and how shall I say “thank you” for such a precious thing?

- **The Cup is Empty! Therefore, we should tell others of this empty cup.**
 - Do you know a sinner who thinks little of God's wrath?
 - Tell him of this cup the Savior drank.
 - Do you know a sinner whose shame and guilt are overwhelming?
 - Tell her of the Savior who drank this awful cup.

God the Father sent His Son into the world to drink the cup of God's wrath, so that He would be both just and the justifier of those who belong to Christ

(4) SOME APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you fear God?

- a. Do you think about what God hates?
- b. Does it concern you that your sin is the focus of God's wrath?
- c. Is your attention and reverence pointed towards those things God cares about?

2. Do you believe Christ emptied the cup of God's wrath for you?

- a. Do you believe that God's wrath towards you was entirely spent upon Christ?
- b. I mean, do you really believe this?!

3. Will you run to, be humbled by, and be a witness of this astounding Savior?

- a. Will you forsake everything and run to Him?
- b. Will you let this truth crush your pride?
- c. Will you open your mouth, and share the news of this astounding Savior with those who still await the terrible cup of God's wrath?

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR THIS PASSAGE/TOPIC

A Savior Stepped Forward by Greg Morse

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-savior-stepped-forward>

The Betrayed Christ Protects His Own by John MacArthur

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-101/the-betrayed-christ-protects-his-own>

The 6 Ingredients of Jesus' Bitter Cup by Nicholas Batzig

<http://feedingonchrist.com/6-ingredients-jesus-bitter-cup/>

The Good News of the Empty Cup by Andrew Hebert

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-good-news-of-the-empty-cup/>