

Gethsemane

Matthew 26:36-42, “*Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me. And He went a little further, 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. And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.*”

Jesus was a man’s Man. He appealed to the rough and tough fisherman along the waterfront. The rugged, wilderness man, John the Baptist, admired Him. He was man enough to single-handedly drive the moneychangers out of the Temple. We one considers the greatest and power of Jesus, he must realize that here was far more than just some ordinary, strong, courageous hero. Jesus stood head and shoulders above all human majesties. He never panicked nor ever reacted emotionally to trying situations. He was always calm. His masterful poise was one of His outstanding characteristics. He was a Man among men. His bravery and courage has never been equaled.

The Gospels present one situation after another of difficulties in which ordinary men would have exhausted their human resources, their courage would have failed them. Jesus, undisturbed, steps into each situation undaunted and unafraid. He is always in control.

Jesus’ majestic poise towers above all His accusers like mountaintops. On the cross, when He is mocked, riled and suffering such agonies, His self-control and courage overshadows everything else.

But, here in the Garden of Gethsemane we see Him bowed in dread agony. A fearful struggle is going on. He sweats “*as it were*” great drops of blood. Something more terrible than any foe He had ever met before pressed upon Him here.

When we realize the significance of the cup and analyze its contents, we will come to understand why He prayed as He did.

What was in the cup that made Jesus shrink, He had never recoiled before. Something pressed in upon Him now that was something he had never faced before. What was it? What could bring the mighty, majestic Son of God to such depths of sorrow and agony as it pictured here? What force or power could wring such anguish sweat from His brow?

Isaiah 53:6 gives the answer when it simply states. “*The Lord [God, the Father] laid on Him [Jesus Christ] the iniquity of us all.*” The “*cup*” was filled with the sin of the world. The guilt and pollution of all the world was there in that cup. Jesus saw the totality of sin – its length, its width, its depth – and He recoiled from it. You talk about the brutality of war – here was the

violence and cruelty of a thousand wars! We shrink when we hear of from some filthiness of a perverted wrongdoing – but it was here in this cup. Atheism, profanity, murder, adultery – these acts of shame were all here in the cup!

There are times; I'm sure when we are oppressed by the weight of even our own sin. But, think the weight of the sins of the whole world that pressed down upon Christ's soul, until He sinks lower and lower, and cries out, "*Oh, Father, is there any other way, must I drink this cup of iniquity?*"

2 Corinthians 5:21 states, "*He [God, the Father] hath made Him, who knew no sin [Jesus Christ] to be sin for us.*"

1 Peter 2:24, referring to Jesus Christ, teaches, "*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body*"

Jesus became sin for us!

One translation of Isaiah 53:5 states, "*It was our misdeeds that crushed Him.*"

Jesus was the infinitely holy Son of God. Is it any wonder that "*His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even to the point of death?*" – that He sweats great drops of blood – or that His body nearly breaks asunder unto the weight of it all? He recoils in horror, and cries wring out, "*Oh, God, is there no other way?*"

Jesus kneeling in the garden, shrinking with every fiber of His holy being to keep from coming in contact with sin; recoiling with horror as the first shadows of man's iniquity fell upon Him. His features draw in agony, as He contemplates the cup and what it contains. His holy hand trembles as He holds the cup and, with throbbing heart, cries out, "*Oh, God there must be some other way.*"

Isaiah 53:4-6, in the Living Bible says, "*It was our grief He bore, our sorrows that weighed Him down...He was wounded and bruised for our sins...We - every one of us - have strayed away like sheep! We, who left God's paths to follow our own. Yet God laid on Him the guilt and sins of every one of us!*" Verse 10 states, "*But it was the Lord's good plan to bruise Him and fill him with grief. However, when His soul has been made an offering for sin*"

Certainly Isaiah 53 takes on new meaning. That's what happened in Gethsemane – "*His souls was made an offering for sin!*"

Far better to suffer the awful physical pain of Calvary, than to feel His holy life drowned out by the floodtide of man's iniquity. The feel the murk and mire of man's sin being laid upon Him was the worse possible disaster that could happen to God's holy Son.

Horrible obscene wickedness of mankind poured in upon His soul in unceasing floods. Vile powers pour their unmentionable abominations in the cup. Christ's whole being shrinks in indescribable revulsion, His loathing passes beyond the point of agony. These horrible deeds of man, turned loose by Satan, fasten like slime to Him. He feels as if He has been drug through the sewers of hell – and, He cries out, "*Can't bear such filth, these devilish blasphemies, Oh, God is there some other way?*"

The story is told of a missionary whom the heathens were putting to death. They wanted, what they figured, would be the worse possible way to die. So, they put the missionary in a sack and tied in on a tree limb, underneath they had a pit filled with adders, boa constrictors, scorpions, poisonous snakes of every kind they could find. Then they dropped the Missionary head-first down into that pit. These venomous creatures wrapped their cold and slimy forms around his body, and struck him again and again, with their poisonous fangs, it was said that it wrong such a death, agonizing wail from the missionary, that the natives ran in every direction, holding their ears to keep from hear such a horrifying scream.

This agonizing shriek is something of what was in the Garden of Gethsemane that night as Jesus recoils from the cup of sin, as God “*laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*”

A sinner spews out blasphemy and it settles in the cup. Some rascal plucks the sweat flower of virtue, and watches it wither in the hot blast of his lust, the deed is stirred in the cup. A drunken son strangles a loving mother and it is spilled into the cup; a terrible murder is committed and it makes it way into the cup. A degenerate snatches away a wee baby and dashes it to death on the rocks and that deed finds its place in the cup. The blackest deeds of nameless shame spawned in the pit of hell are all in the cup. Every breach of every law, every stain of every sin; all the smear of corruption and stench of debauchery are mingled in the odious contents of the cup. All the impure, wicked – foul-obscene – loathsome acts of all humans who ever lived – all the black sins of the world descended upon Jesus there in the garden. They were there in that cup.

If we, who are sinful by nature, recoil from the impurities of the world; we who are accustomed to the presence of unwholesome desires; if we shrink back, think of the effect when the actual sins and degradation of the world was transferred to the sinless, holy, Son of God. Imagine plunging a chaste, virtues girl into an environment where nothing but vice and wickedness finds expression. Can we imagine the suffering that is unbearable?

The Illustration of blood

The blood provides food for the tissues of the body. It also draws off the waste, infection and corruption of the body. That what Christ was doing, providing *spiritual* food for His Body, the Church, and drawing into His own body the infection, curses, and corruption of the all mankind.

There was a time when scientists were in search for blood that had sufficient power and vitality to combat the scourge of diphtheria. They discovered that if they injected the germ of diphtheria into the blood of a certain kind of horse, though it would make the horse sick, the blood of the horse could meet, conquer and destroy the effect of the virus of diphtheria. Then, that blood that had met and conquered this terrible scourge was produced an antitoxin, that was the remedy for man’s disease. When the victorious blood was then injected into the human body, it provided immunity for mankind. The triumphant, conquering blood was transferred to man, giving him power to defeat diphtheria Today diphtheria has been conquered. This may be a crude illustration, but it pictures what Jesus Christ did for us.

Jesus Christ’s blood was pure and uncontaminated and He offered His body to be injected with the germ of man’s sin.

The only thing that could bring Jesus Christ to such straits of sorrow and anguish was sin. He feared nothing, shrinks from nothing, except sin! Sin fills Him with horror, overwhelms Him with sorrow. One sees here the expression of God's unspeakable loathing and anguish toward sin. Nothing is more repulsive to Him than sin!

Gethsemane says, "*God's hates sin!*" Jesus revealed God's horror of sin when we see His holy nature recoil in anguish and loathsomeness from the cup. God says, "*Sin is an awful thing!*" This thing that we sometimes welcome and enjoy, caused the Lord such deep anguish, and struggle and caused Him to sweat as it were "*great drops of blood.*" God help us to hate sin because of what it did to our Lord in Gethsemane, if for no other reason.

Gethsemane said something else; it reveals the cruelty and infinite power of sin. Gethsemane assures me that God never, never, never minimizes sin. He never treats the fall of man lightly. Sin was no weak foe that met Jesus that night.

Gethsemane also reveals that sin has met its match in Christ Jesus. Sin is an unspeakable, terrible, cruel foe of God and mankind, but Jesus Christ is sin's mighty Conqueror. Jesus "*destroyed the power of the Devil!*"

There's something else Gethsemane says to us. It reveals God's redeeming love for mankind.

The story is told of a father, whose young son fell victim to an incurable swift acting cancer. The father, beside the hospital bed, cried, "*I would give everything I have if I could take that cancer into my body, and you be healed.*" That's what Jesus Christ did, He took the disease of sin into His own body, so that we could be healed.

It was because of God's love that Jesus was willing to face the full horror of the "*cancer*" of sin. Jesus took your pride, dishonesty, unfaithfulness – He took all your sins and said, "*The cup which My Father gives Me, shall I not drink it?*" "*I'll drink this cup, though it is polluted and vile. I'll drink this cup, for poor perishing people everywhere. I'll drink this cup, that they might have a Savior. I'll drink this cup that they all may drink of the fountain of eternal life. Despite the shame, the curse and, even, being forsaken of My Father, I'll drink this cup.*"

Jesus takes the cup of sin from the trembling hand of His Father and, with a sob of mingled emotions – His great abhorrence of sin – and – His love for mankind – for He was torn between the two – but He drink it's bitter drug.

God manifested His absolute holiness in recoiling from the cup, He also revealed His great love for mankind by drinking it.

Since Jesus did so much for you, won't you receive Him as your Savior and Lord today?