

Good Friday – 4/14/2017
Scriptures and Thoughts
Pastor Joe Davis – Union Baptist Church

The Cup in the Garden - Matthew 26:36-46

36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." 37 And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." 39 And going a little farther he 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." 40 And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 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." 43 And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

The Betrayal in Fulfillment of Scripture - Matthew 26:47-56

47 While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; seize him." 49 And he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" And he kissed him. 50 Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. 51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" 55 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled.

The Scourging and Abuse - Matthew 27:24-31

24 So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."
25 And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"
26 Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.
27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.
28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,
29 and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
30 And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.
31 And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion – Matthew 27:32-44

32 As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. 36 Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. 37 And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." 38 Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. 39 And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

The Miraculous Signs at the Death of Son of God – Matthew 27:45-56

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?" 47 And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." 48 And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. 49 But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." 50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. 54 When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" 55 There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, 56 among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Drinking the Cup Application

Jesus drank the cup he'd been given, though it was unimaginably painful, humiliating, difficult, and not at all what anyone would ever want to endure or experience. But as he drank the cup and faced the realities of his life and the mission God the Father had called him to, the glories of what he accomplished for each of us and the rewards for his faithful obedience were worth it all.

Philippians 2:5-11

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hebrews 12:1-5

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;...

What cup have you been given to drink right now in life? What cross do you have to bear? Though we all wish life could be perfect and problem free, we know that it never is. Is your focus completely on trying to get rid of or dump out the cup you've been given, and you feel you can't be happy or fruitful until it's taken away, or are you willing to face the daily reality that's been allowed in your life right now, trusting that there's some purpose in it and not allowing it to derail your pursuit of God and your relationship with him? Are you trusting that though you may not be able to see it yet, God is accomplishing something good through what you're going through? Are you trusting that by bearing up underneath it and finding your strength in God you're sharing in the sufferings of your Savior and following in his footsteps?

As we reflect on Jesus in the garden, we notice that he did ask for the cup to be removed if the Father was willing, but he also accepted whatever the Father's decision was and was willing to drink whatever cup the Father determined was necessary. In the same way, we can ask for God to remove difficult cups in our life, but we also need to trust his decision and willingly drink the cup he allows to remain, refusing, by the power of His Spirit within us, to give in to bitterness, depression and attempts to escape from our reality...instead learning to moment-by-moment trust God to give us the strength to drink our cup, bear our cross, and experience his joy and fruitfulness through it all.

Jesus called us to a radical new way of living that's so different from the world around us and that we can only walk out through the power of the Spirit within us. In Luke 6, verses 27 to 36, Jesus tells us this:

27 "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

30 "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. 31 "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. 35 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

I want to close today by sharing a song by Sara Groves that puts to music this call to drink the cup that's been given to us, facing our reality boldly and confidently in the strength of God, rather than trying to escape and run away or wallow in bitterness over the cup we've been given. In doing so, we follow in the footsteps of our Savior, who endured so much on our behalf, and we like him experience the glories and joys and rewards of a life lived heavenward in faithful obedience to and joyful fellowship with our great God.

PLAY SONG WITH POWERPOINT: "This Cup" by Sara Groves

As we leave Jesus in the tomb tonight, reflecting on the cup he drank for us, the pain and suffering he endured on our behalf, and looking forward to the resurrection, new life and glories soon to follow, let's close with his words to those who would follow him:

Matthew 16:24-25

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. 25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

Let's find our true life as we drink the cup we've been given and take up whatever cross we have to bear right now in our lives. Let's trust God and draw near to him. Let's not live in fear or fantasy or take the bait of bitterness that Satan's dangling in front of us in the hard times. Instead, let's be still and know that God is carrying us, that he is good, and that he will provide us with everything we need as we look for it in him.