
JESUS DRANK THE CUP OF WRATH FOR US**Sermon for the 5th Sunday in Lent, 2018****Mark 10:32-45**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is the Gospel read before, Mark 10:32-45:

³² **They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going ahead of them. The disciples were amazed, and the others who were following Him were afraid. Then He again took the Twelve aside and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to Him:**

³³ **“Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the Chief Priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ They will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him, and after three days He will rise.”**

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³⁶ **He asked them, “What do you want Me to do for you?”**

³⁷ **They told Him, “Grant that one of us may sit at Your right, and the other at Your left in Your glory!”**

³⁸ **Jesus told them, “You do not realise what you are requesting. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?”**

³⁹ **They said to Him, “We can.”**

Jesus told them, “You will drink the cup that I drink and be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised, ⁴⁰ but sitting at My right or at My left is not Mine to grant but is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹ **When the other ten heard about it, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² Then Jesus summoned them and told them, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over**

them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ⁴³ **However, it is not like that among you, but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,** ⁴⁴ **and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of all!** ⁴⁵ **For even the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Jesus' had previously prophesied His passion to the disciples¹ before once again raising the issue with them in our Gospel today. ³³ **“Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the Chief Priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.** ³⁴ **They will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him, and after three days He will rise.”**

When Jesus came down the mountain from His transfiguration, He again made reference² to His impending death and resurrection, and His words filled the hearts of the Twelve with amazement when they now saw Jesus lead the way to Jerusalem. Did He really intend to carry out what He had said? The others who followed Jesus were also filled with dread. They sensed that something momentous, mysterious, and tragic was about to happen.

It was then that Jesus took the Twelve aside and for the third time foretold His passion. This time His prediction was even more detailed. His passion would take place in **Jerusalem**. He would be **betrayed to the Chief Priests and the scribes**. They would **condemn Him to death and... hand Him over to the Gentiles**, that is, to the Roman governor. At the hands of the Roman soldiers, He would suffer many indignities. They would **mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him**. But there would be victory at the end; being put to death, **after three days He will rise**.

¹ Mark 8:31, 9:31

² Mark 9:9-12

In his Gospel, Luke reports that, “*the disciples understood none of these things,*” (Luke 18:34). Although our Lord had just described His coming passion in greater detail than before, His disciples still did not understand. They believed Him to be the Messiah but had ears only for the glory connected with being the Messiah, not for the suffering. What about you and me? Would we have understood all this before the fact, especially if our religious teachers had spoken of the Messiah as setting up an earthly kingdom?

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³⁸ Jesus told them, “You do not realise what you are requesting. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?”

It was surprising that James and John brought this request to Jesus. As part of the inner circle, they should have known better. But the human heart is by nature sinful. According to Matthew³, it was their ambitious mother who actually brought the request to Jesus. Mark put the words into the mouths of James and John and showed that they went along with her in their ambition.

Jesus asked, “**Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?**” By this cup Jesus was referring to the bitter contents of suffering⁴ and to drink means to accept and to endure this bitter suffering. Jesus will drink of that cup, the cup that John and James think they want. They don’t understand what they’ve asked for. Jesus will drink from the cup of suffering, the cup of death, the cup filled with the sin of the world, not because He thought it would be tasty or fun,

³ Matthew 20:20-21

⁴ John 18:11

not even because He wanted to, but because it was the will of the Father. As Jesus would pray a few days later in the Garden, “*Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. Nevertheless, not what I want, but what You want!*” (14:36).

For Jesus, the time was almost fulfilled, and the hour was at hand, in fact, He was setting the pace. “³² **They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going ahead of them.**” He was on a mission. Jesus “*set His face to go to Jerusalem,*” (Luke 9:51) - and those straggling behind Him weren’t sure what the rush was about. Why the determination? In reality, it’s a death march; the disciples don’t get that yet, but they follow their Lord on the journey nevertheless.

Jesus’ march was a march toward Calvary, a march that started in Bethlehem and continued at the Jordan River. Unavoidably, Jesus goes on the journey for which He had become incarnate - the road that leads to Jerusalem, where He **will be betrayed to the Chief Priests and the scribes. The Gentiles will mock Him and spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him, and after three days He will rise.**” Just as He said would happen. Just as He said three times in this Gospel.

That wasn’t what the disciples wanted to hear. Success and glory does not look like a dead person on a cross. How can humiliation and death have anything to do with God restoring His kingdom?

In reality, James and John - and all the disciples, were more interested in their future careers of presumed earthly glory. Even among the elect, it seemed to them that “who you know” is important. James and John must have figured they were special already - after all, they were invited to the transfiguration, along with Peter. But since there’s only a right hand and a left hand, Peter would just have to fend for himself.

It seems so seedy and underhanded; elbowing your way to the top is hardly loving your neighbour. ⁴¹ **When the other ten heard about it, they began to be angry with James and John.** They were probably annoyed that they hadn’t asked first! Like the rest of us sinners, they craved the

attention, the recognition for their own accomplishments. Like children shoving their brothers and sisters out the way, we want the important people and the world to notice: “Hey, Dad, look at me!”

Pastors and congregations are not immune to this. Our selfish and sinful natures want the glory, the authority, and the power that we perceive comes from being the one in charge. Or even if we don’t want to be in charge, we want to have input, and we definitely don’t want to be ignored, treated as if we don’t really matter.

Like the apostles, we get caught up in ourselves. We stop looking at our neighbour as someone to serve, and instead look inside and say, “What do I want?” In this way, the church becomes fractured, congregations split, husbands and wives divorce, children and parents stop talking to one another.

That’s not how God created it to be. **“⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.”**

Jesus dismissed their request. **“You will drink the cup that I drink and be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised, ⁴⁰ but sitting at My right or at My left is not Mine to grant but is for those for whom it has been prepared.”** It’s not His to grant, Jesus says, but the Father’s. They will drink the cup. They will all suffer for proclaiming Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins. According to tradition, most of the twelve were murdered. None of them had the celebrity life of a televangelist, the fast cars or the luxury houses; instead they were often hated and reviled, stoned, stabbed, and crucified. James was the first to go - beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in Acts 12, and legend says that the Emperor Domitian first tried to boil John in a cauldron of oil, then tried to kill him with a cup of poisoned wine. Both attempts failed. John was exiled to Patmos, where he wrote his book of Revelation before dying of old age.

“You do not realise what you are requesting,” Jesus said. **“Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptised with the baptism with which I am baptised?”**

³⁹ They said to Him, “We can.”

Did they know the hostility with which they would be received? Did they know that they and future followers of Jesus would be beheaded, burned alive, tortured, and drowned for taking up their cross?

Did you know that you would be mercilessly ridiculed and derided by the world when you were baptised? Did you know that when you were confirmed, when you made your confession to remain faithful to Jesus, that you would rather die than to fall away from the faith?

Did you know that your friends and family might believe differently, that they might call you narrow minded, just some Bible-bashing goodie two-shoes?

Did you know that your confession of faith would exclude you from a world of fleshly delight, from unbridled sex and “fun” and sleeping in on Sundays, your conscience unburdened of any guilty thoughts?

It’s not easy when the tide of world opinion turns against you, when the shouts of “*Hosanna!*” change to “*Crucify!*” It’s not easy when those around you pit you against “science” or “nature” or dare we say it, “equality.”

We certainly have our own bitter cups to drink from. It’s hard to choke down the dregs of illness and death, disappointment and heartache that can come with this life. It’s hard, but not impossible. Even unbelievers experience suffering in this life. But you have something else.

You, dear friends, have a promise. You have a covenant, a new covenant.

The world has its gods of equality and being nice and living life to its “fullest,” but all that leads to is death. All the good deeds in the world can’t keep you alive. All the fairness and equality in the world can’t forgive your sins, can’t take away your guilt. You will still suffer. You will still die.

Jesus is different. Jesus is life. Jesus offers you the cup of salvation; Jesus baptises you into His household. Our Father in heaven has given His only

Son, *that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life*, (John 3:16).

Jesus marches on to the cross to save you, to serve you. Jesus enters Jerusalem to be the High Priest who offers up the once-for-all sacrifice for your sins and for the sins of the whole world. Jesus was born into this world to be that sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.⁵

Our song is love unknown because we cannot fathom that kind of sacrifice. We cannot fathom the kind of love that loves to the point of suffering God's wrath for our sin - all the sin of the world, cosmically focused on one, poor, frail, broken human body. Mocked, spit upon, flogged; nailed to a cross; lifted up and gasping for breath. Unfairly, undeservedly, willingly.

Are you able to be baptised into the baptism with which He is baptised? I hope so. For that baptism baptises you into His death, killing your sinful flesh. And that baptism baptises you also into His resurrection from the dead, giving you new, bodily life in heaven.⁶

Are you able to drink the cup that He drinks? I hope so. For there is no wrath in that cup now; He has taken away the sin and the punishment from you so that the cup you drink at this altar is only His blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, for your salvation and eternal life.⁷

By grace, He comes to you by these means - not to lord it over you, but to serve you. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you are brought to faith and sustained in it - not to lord it over one another, but to serve.

“Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask,” they said. But Jesus has taught us to pray, *“May Your kingdom come! May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!”* (Matt. 6:10).

⁵ Hebrews 9:22

⁶ Romans 6:3-11

⁷ Matthew 26:16-28

Come to God's house. Sing your praises here, because there has never been the kind of love that Jesus loves, and this is the place where you receive it - in the cup, in the font, in the promise. The world will never understand. Your flesh will fight you. Satan will rage at you. But Jesus will serve you in perfect love, to guide you through the suffering and temptations of this life, to lead you to paths of righteousness and holiness, so that you can face your own stingless death. He has already accomplished it, just as He promised He would. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Almighty and ever-living King of all creation, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father, whom all the heavenly hosts praise and glorify, hear our prayer.

We thank You, heavenly Father, for Your limitless love in the gift of Christ Your Son, for the sacrifice of His life on the cross for us, for the promise of eternal life through His death and resurrection, and for the cleansing of our consciences from dead works by His obedience.

Increase our joy in Your rich blessings: the forgiveness of our sins, deliverance from death and the power of the devil, and the assurance of everlasting life, which Jesus' crucifixion have obtained for us.

We thank You that in Christ You have spoken to us the words of life. Inspire us to love and worship Him in spirit and in truth. Give us that faith that sees in Him the eternal Godhead, the everlasting I AM, the one who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Grant that we may always trust in His mercy, be faithful to His Word, and obey His commandments, and honour Him by losing our lives for His sake and for the Gospel's, as He lost His life to gain us.

In mercy, cleanse and strengthen Your Church, that it may be saved from all weakness and failure and be filled with power for holy service. Govern the nations on earth, that people everywhere may live in harmony with their fellowmen and serve one another's needs. Pour out Your grace on our

homes and on all schools, that the young may be trained for a useful life on earth and be made ready for the life to come. Bless all who work honestly with mind and hand to provide those things we need for this life. Give all people everywhere joy in doing their daily work and grant that they may do it as those who are accountable to You.

Help us to use our abilities and possessions faithfully, for everything belongs to You. Forgive us for being selfish and for misusing our gifts. Comfort the suffering, the deprived, the burdened, and the aged. Be the help of the needy, the protector of the helpless, and the Saviour of all people. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ “Look! The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I shall make a new Covenant with the family of Israel and with the family of Judah. ³² It will not be like the Covenant that I made with their fathers when I took them by their hands to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke My Covenant, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³ “However, this is the Covenant that I shall make with the family of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD: “I shall put My teaching inside them and write it on their hearts. I shall be their God, and they will be My people! ³⁴ Each one will

no longer teach his neighbour or his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD!’ For they will all know Me, from the least among them to the greatest among them,” declares the LORD. “For I shall for-give their wickedness and not remember their sin any longer.”

Hebrews 5:1-10

¹ Every High Priest is selected from human beings and is appointed to represent human beings in matters that are related to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can be gentle with ignorant and erring people, because he himself is subject to weakness. ³ For that reason, he is obliged to offer sacrifices for his own sins, just as he does for the sins of the people.

⁴ No one takes this honour for himself but is called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest but was glorified by the One who said to Him: “You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.” ⁶ As He also says in another place, “You are a Priest for ever, in the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷ During His days in the human nature, Jesus offered prayers and petitions, with loud cries and tears, to the One who could save Him from death; and, because He feared God, He was heard. ⁸ Although Jesus is the Son, He learned obedience from the things that He suffered. ⁹ When He was perfected, He also became the Source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him, ¹⁰ after He had been proclaimed by God to be the High Priest, “just like Melchizedek.”

Mark 10: 32-45

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were afraid. Then He again took the Twelve aside and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to Him: ³³ “Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the Chief Priests and the scribes. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles.

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