

The Gospel of the Kingdom: Jesus and the Father
Matthew 26:36-46

Here we come to the Holy of Holies of our Lord's life on earth.... No man can rightly expound such a passage as this; it is a subject for prayerful, heart-broken meditation, more than for human language. (Charles Spurgeon)

Jesus Dreaded the Judgment of the Father

- Jesus prayed the prayer of the Psalmist (see Psalm 42-43)

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? (Psalm 42:5)

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:2-3)

I say to God, my rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I walk about mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?" ¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?" (Psalm 42:9-10)

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me! (Psalm 43:1)

- Throughout the Old Testament, the "cup" is repeatedly associated with God's wrath and judgment against sin.

What is this cup? Is it physical suffering from which he shrinks, the torture of the scourge and the cross, together perhaps with the mental anguish of betrayal, denial and desertion by his friends, and the mockery and abuse of his enemies? Nothing could ever make me believe that the cup that Jesus dreaded was any of these things (grievous as they were) or all of them together. His physical and moral courage throughout his public ministry had been indomitable. To me it is ludicrous to suppose that he is now afraid of pain, insult, and death. Socrates in the prison cell in Athens, according to Plato's account, took his cup of hemlock "without trembling or changing color or expression." He then "raised the cup to his lips and very cheerfully and quietly drained it." When his friends burst into tears, he rebuked them for their "absurd" behavior and urged them to "keep quiet and be brave." He died without fear, sorrow, or protest. So was Socrates braver than Jesus? Or were their cups filled with different poisons? (John Stott)

For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up; ⁷ but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another. ⁸ For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup with foaming wine, well mixed; he will pour a draught from it, and all the wicked of the earth shall drain it down to the dregs. (Psalm 75:6-8)

Therefore hear this, you who are wounded, who are drunk, but not with wine: ²² Thus says your Sovereign, the Lord, your God who pleads the cause of his people: See, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; you shall drink no more from the bowl of my wrath. (Isa. 51:21-22)

- Application:
 - Consider soberly the judgment you face apart from Christ.

Outside of Christ, God is terrible. (Richard Sibbes)

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:31)

- Consider joyfully the depth of Christ's love for you.

[Gethsemane] was as it were proposing to Christ's last consideration what he would do.... "Will you take this cup, and drink it for them, or not? There is the furnace into which you are to be cast, if they are to be saved; either they must perish, or you must endure this for them. There you see how terrible the heat of the furnace is; you see what pain and anguish you must endure on the morrow, unless you give up the cause of sinners. What will you do? Is your love such that you will go on? Will you cast yourself into this dreadful furnace of wrath?" Christ's soul was overwhelmed with the thought; his feeble human nature shrunk at the dismal sight. It put him into this dreadful agony which you have heard described; but his love to sinners held out. (Jonathan Edwards)

Jesus Submitted to the Will of His Father

- Marvel at the obedience of Jesus and thank God that it's credited to you.

In the first garden, "not your will but mine" changed paradise to desert and brought man from Eden to Gethsemane. Now, "not my will but yours" brings anguish to the man who prays it but transforms the desert into the kingdom and brings man from Gethsemane to the gates of glory. (D.A. Carson)

- Consider the humility and obedience of Jesus and ask yourself if those mark your life.

Jesus Was Heard by His Father

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. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:7-10)

- God answered Jesus by giving Him the strength to obey.
- God answered Jesus by raising Him from the dead.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help ⁶ and my God. (Psalm 42:5-6)