

February 21, 2016

# The Cup the Father Has Given Me

John 18:1-27

B.I. From the beginning Jesus was determined to stand in your place and suffer God's wrath so you could be saved.

LTS: Psalm 63

This morning we begin the portion of the Gospel of John to which all the previous chapters have been pointing. Contrary to the opinion of liberal scholars, Jesus' life was not meant to serve merely as an example of how to live and love as God loves. Rather, Jesus was sent by God to be the grace of God that rescues sinners from the wrath of God.

You see man's ultimate problem is not a health problem, a financial problem, a relationship problem, a political problem, or even an environmental problem. Man's ultimate problem is a Wrath Problem. You see God has fixed a day in which He will pour out the fury of His just and holy wrath upon sinners and how will anyone stand in that day? How will anyone NOT be consumed by the fire of His judgment? Unless God does something to save us from the condemnation we deserve we are all doomed. But God did do something, because He is not just holy. He is also gracious and compassionate.

The reason Jesus came was to stand between us and the fury of God's judgment to bear the just punishment for a world of sinners so that we could be reconciled to God. The term for this in the Bible is Atonement. Atonement carries the idea of reconciling sinners to God. It means to bring God and man together. William Tyndale coined the term as he translated the OT into English and wanted to use a word that communicated that by this action God and man would be restored to their original unity and fellowship. By the appropriate sacrifice the two (God and man) would be "at one", hence the word "At-one-ment." Theologians call it Penal Substitutionary Atonement. "Penal" because it addresses the penalty that is owed us because of our sin. "Substitutionary," because in order to bring about atonement between God and man Jesus had to stand in our place. He had to offer Himself as our substitute. This is why He came. He came to die, "For the wages of sin is death." And throughout His ministry He made it abundantly clear that He knew why He came and what lay ahead. He frequently made statements such as,

- Matt. 20:18-19 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death,<sup>19</sup> and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him and on the third day He will be raised up..."
- Mark 8:31 "...the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
- Mark 9:12 "[It is] written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be treated with contempt?"

- Even after the resurrection He needed to teach that the suffering of Messiah had always been God's plan. Luke 24:25–26 “And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”

YES, it WAS necessary for Jesus not only to live as a man but also to die as our substitute. The cross is why He came. And today we step into that portion of John's Gospel where Jesus' "hour" has come. His teaching ministry is over. His training of the disciples is complete. Now it is time for innocent Son to suffer as one who had committed the highest crimes against the thrice-holy God. And He would do it at the hands of evil men.

When we think of Jesus making atonement for sinners we naturally think of Him suffering and dying on the cross. But I would submit to you that his suffering began many hours before He was actually nailed to the cross. His cross-work would begin with the rejection of His people. Is not this what the prophet Isaiah predicted?

He was despised and forsake of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not esteem Him (Isa. 53:3).

The key verse in this passage is verse eleven (11). While rebuking Peter for His attempt to Sabotage Judas's treachery, Jesus says, “Put your sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” Now, if it's not immediately evident what Jesus means by “the cup which the Father has given,” we merely need to take a quick flurry into the O.T. to get some clarity. We wont take the time to turn there, but in both Isaiah and Jeremiah God sends His prophets to take the cup of his anger and wrath and make the nations of the world drink it. So consuming would be the wrath of God against His enemies that He compares it to being completely intoxicated so that every part of their being is overcome by it.

This is what Jesus was facing. He had come to drink the cup of God's wrath to the dregs so that we could spend eternity drinking from the cup of God's favor and blessing. This is a rather long passage to consider in one message, so I would like to break it down into only two sections. I will call them:

I. The Cup of Propitiation: (1-11)

II. The Cup of Substitution: (12-27)

First, in order to make atonement for us Jesus must make propitiation for our sins, and second He must do so as our substitute.

### **I. The Cup of Propitiation: (1-11)**

1. Propitiation is not a word we commonly use, but it is important. It refers “the act of appeasing another person’s anger by the offering of a gift.”<sup>1</sup> It is a term used in the NT 4 times (Rom 3, Heb. 2, and twice in 1 John). In each case the gift Jesus offers to satisfy God’s wrath is Himself. In the O.T. the high priest would offer a spotless lamb to make atonement. In Jesus’ case He is both the great High Priest who offers the sacrifice, and the Lamb of God who dies for the guilt of sinners. Here in John 18 we read of the beginnings of this sacrifice.

2. The most striking feature of this passage is the fact that Jesus is presented NOT as a passive sacrifice but as the one who has taken charge of the whole affair to make sure it is accomplished. We see this in the first two verses.

Read 1-2

3. Now if you were aware that this very night you were being betrayed to your bloodthirsty enemies by one of your own, where would you go? My guess is you would try to think of a safe place where no one would expect to find you? Not Jesus. He purposely takes His men to the place where He is most likely to be found, the garden of Gethsemane. Judas knew He would go there and Jesus knew that he knew. Going to Gethsemane was an intentional calculation. As Hendriksen observes, “The good shepherd is not going to be ‘caught.’ No, he is going to ‘lay down His life’ as a willing sacrifice.”<sup>2</sup>

4. You may be wondering why John does not record Jesus’ hours of agony in prayer in the Garden as the other Gospel writers do. Two good reasons come to mind. First, John probably assumes his readers were familiar with that account from the other Gospels (no need to repeat). Second (more significantly), he wants to emphasize the fact that Jesus is not simply being passively obedient, but that He is on a personal mission to make atonement for His people.

5. By this time (3), Judas has been given a Roman cohort. The ESV says, “band of soldiers,” but it was probably a cohort consisting of between 2-600 soldiers). Along with the cohort were members of the Temple police force and others. Together, they were commissioned to find and arrest Jesus. And notice they are carrying “lanterns, torches, and weapons.” They are expecting a full-on night pursuit of a fleeing fugitive. And who knows how many disciples there might be ready to engage in battle to protect their Master! The powers of darkness are closing in on Jesus. But notice what happens when they arrive at the garden in search of their prey.

Read 4

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<sup>1</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (p. 1087). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel according to John Vol. 2*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1953)

6. One might expect at this point that the fugitive would send some of his men out to cover their tracks so as to make a clean getaway, but not Jesus. Instead of hiding from His enemies He steps out of the garden alone to meet them – one man facing down upwards of 600 armed ruffians!

7. Notice too that there is no mention of Judas' kiss in John's narrative. Once again I attribute that to the fact that John is emphasizing Jesus' intentionality and sovereign control over the whole affair. Notice that it is Jesus who asks the first question, "Whom do you seek?" To which they responded with what was probably the official verbiage on the warrant (5), "Jesus the Nazarene."

8. Jesus answers very simply, "I am he." The response to His words is unexpected. John says (6) "When He said to them 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to the ground." Can you imagine! At Jesus' self disclosure hundreds of soldiers (and probably Judas) respond by falling to the ground. Some believe it was because Jesus used for Himself that powerful name of God, I am (ego emie) that these men fell to the ground. To be sure, that is what He said, but in the context it may be that Jesus was simply saying "I am He." That is, "I am the one you are looking for." On the other hand, perhaps it was the unexpected appearance of the one against whom they were prepared to do battle that made them fall to the ground. Or maybe, as D.A. Carson suggests, it was yet another instance of people responding better than they knew for reasons unknown to us. In either case, however, it seems evident that John is highlighting very specific examples of Jesus on the offensive and everyone else simply responding to His lead.

9. As this crowd of men lay on the ground, Jesus restates His question (7), "Whom do you seek?" and they repeat their answer "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus' reply to them this time is worthy of special note. He could have argued that He had done nothing worthy of arrest. He could have pointed out Judas' treachery in an attempt to discredit their informant. He could have simply "walked through their midst and escaped as He had done before, but NO. His concern was not self-preservation it was Propitiation. His hour had come. It was time to be arrested. It was time to suffer. It was time to be "mocked, scourged, and crucified" as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

10. The whole point of His "passion" was to save His disciples and those who would believe because of their testimony. His mission was to rescue and protect them. So he says to the cohort of soldiers (8), "If you seek Me, then let these go their way." And then, to make sure we don't miss the greater implications of this statement, John adds (9) "this was to fulfill the word which He spoke [in chapter 17] 'Of those whom You have given me, I lost nothing.'"

11. Perhaps Jesus knew that their faith was not yet strong enough to endure being arrested. That would come after His resurrection. For now He must protect them. But Peter almost ruined it!

Read v. 10

12. Clearly, impetuous Peter was trying to kill Malchus, but he being a fisherman rather than a soldier, missed his mark and only got the ear. In Matthew's account (Matt. 26:51) Jesus assures Peter that if He wanted to defend Himself He could have called down 12 legions of angels. That's at least 36,000 angels! But that's not why all of this was happening. Jesus explains (11) "The cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"

13. You see, beloved, this is what it's all about. But Peter didn't understand that. The other disciples were still in the dark. Certainly the 600 soldiers had no idea and neither did Judas, but Jesus knew why He came. He came to drink the cup of His Father's wrath to the dregs. He came to offer Himself as a sacrifice of atonement. Years later John would write (1 John 4:10) "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Jesus was showing Himself to be the Personification of God's love, and God's grace to sinners. Nothing would stop Him from drinking the cup of propitiation. Not Judas. Not the Roman soldiers. Not the Temple police force. Not the Jewish Sanhedrin. Not even Peter. God was placing the cup in His hands to save us as He promised, and Jesus would willingly drink it.

14. So we see the cup of propitiation, but John also shows that it was...

## II. The cup of Substitution:

1. We already see the idea of substitution hinted at in v. 8 where Jesus offers Himself in order to set His men free. Nevertheless, it becomes even more explicit here.

Read 12-14

2. Verse 14 is key to this section. There really was no need for John to explain who Caiaphas was. He already mentioned in chap. 11 that he had served as high priest, and two of the other gospels mention him by name at least three times. No, John introduces Caiaphas here to point us once again to the most important thing; namely, that Jesus came to die as a substitute for sinners. He came to be the Lamb of God who would die that we might live.

3. One such person who desperately needed Jesus to die in his place was the apostle Peter. His denial of Jesus is so important that it is recorded in all four Gospels. The remainder of this passage flips back and forth between Jesus' mistreatment on the one hand and Peter's denial on the other.

4. Once again we see that while the cross was the decisive payment of our debt in Jesus' blood, it was not the totality of Jesus' suffering as Messiah. His suffering seemed to come from every direction. We expect it to come from the Jews. We expect it to come from the Romans. We were surprised to learn that it would come from Judas, the disciple turned traitor, but Peter? That Jesus would suffer by the actions of Peter... now that's unexpected. That's surprising. But it happened.

Read 15-18

5. Do you get the picture here? While Jesus suffers to save Peter, Peter denies any association with Jesus to save Himself. This highlights the fact that what Jesus is saving us from is not simply a principle of sin or some kind of general sin that has stained humanity. No, Jesus died to save us from the active sin in our hearts that manifests itself through our personal desires, words, choices, and behavior. You see, I think the reason Peter's denial is in all four Gospels is because he represents us!

6. Oh how we like to think that if only we had been there we would have done everything in our power to free Jesus! But every time I read the story of Jesus' lawless arrest, illegal interrogation, and brutal abuse by a group of bloodthirsty religious hypocrites at the house of the high priest, I look across the courtyard and I see ME! It wasn't some wicked, incarcerated criminal whose only hope was Jesus. It's Me! No matter how highly I think of myself, or how holy others may think me to be, I am Peter! And I have denied him NOT three times, but 3,000 times! And yes, many of those denials took place AFTER I said "I believe."

- I deny Him every time I should have identified myself with Him before my friends but allowed myself to be ruled by fear instead.
- I deny every time I have a clear opportunity to share the gospel but keep my mouth shut anyway.
- I deny Him with every moral compromise, and whenever I assert my own will over His revealed will for me.
- Peter is in every Gospel because You Are Peter! And until you see yourself as Peter you will know nothing of Christ. So long as you downplay your sin as if it were nothing to make much of, you belittle Christ, and you deny that you have any association with Him.

7. You say, "Well pastor Dan, that's not very encouraging!" You're right. It's supposed to be convicting! Because it does you NO good to BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ if you don't also believe that you DESPERATELY need Him as your substitute. Perhaps we can come back to this in a minute but look at the next section.

Read 19-21

8. Once again, Jesus is the one in charge here. Yes, they are asking the questions but He responds by reminding them of the illegality of forcing the accused to testify against Himself. They were supposed to question others, and He exhorts them to do so. For that, he gets a punch in the mouth.

Read 22

9. But even in the face of police brutality, Jesus doesn't even flinch (read v. 23).

10. They are the kangaroo court pretending to be the defenders of legal justice, and Jesus keeps pointing out how they actually and repeatedly show themselves to be lawless imposters. According to verse 22, Annas sends Jesus across the courtyard to his son-in-

law, Caiaphas for further interrogation, but John does not want us to get Peter out of our minds.

Read 25-26

10. You have to get a sense of how fearful Peter must have been as he stood in that courtyard. After all, he did attempt to commit murder that night, and one of the relatives of the victim who lost his ear was in that very courtyard. What would happen to him if that fact became known?

11. You will remember that in John 13 after Peter had professed his willingness to die for his Lord, Jesus retorted that Peter would not even see the next sunrise before denying Him three times. In Jesus' words, "The rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times." Already, while standing in that courtyard, Peter had denied his Lord twice, and then someone said, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Verse 27 reads, "Then Peter denied it again..." Matthew tells us that on this third occasion he denied it with cursing and swearing! And John tells us, "Immediately a rooster crowed."

12. It's amazing, isn't it... that Jesus knew exactly the kind of sin you and I were were capable of even before we uttered our first word, but He loved us anyway. In fact, He loved us even after the worst of our sins, and like Peter – even while we were sinning. As Paul will later explain, "Where sin abounds, grace super-abounds!" Now let me be clear, this is NO indication that our sins are anything less than catastrophically wicked. Rather, it is an indication that Christ is incomprehensibly GLORIOUS!

13. Here is a snapshot of the relationship of Peter and Christ, and it is the perfect picture of the relationship between YOU and Christ. You want to know the difference between Judas and Christ? They both served as His disciples. They both performed miracles in His name. They both betrayed Him. But unlike Judas, Peter loved Jesus and it broke his heart when he saw how wicked he really was. Judas ran away and hung himself. Peter humbled himself and repented.

14. After the resurrection Peter got it. He understood! He came to see that His that Jesus died because He had to die if anyone was to be saved. He had to die under the wrath of God and He had to die in Peter's place. And this is exactly what Jesus did for all of the "given ones."

14. What does this narrative require of you today? How will you respond to the story of Jesus drinking the cup of His Father? It was the cup of propitiation, and it was the cup of substitution. It was the cup of the fullness of the terrible wrath of God, and He drank it all for you.

**B.I. From the beginning Jesus was determined to stand in your place and suffer God's wrath so you could be saved.**