



Good Friday: Jesus' Cup for Us | Matthew 26:30-27:66 (focus verses: Matthew 27:32-56)

Focus Statement:

Jesus drinks the cup of suffering once and for all. As Jesus drinks from this unrepeatable cup, we see our efforts to save ourselves fall short and we stand in awe and gratitude.

Call to Worship:

Crucified God, you loved the world so much that you came to die for our redemption. What kind of love is that?

It's the kind of love that endures betrayal and denial by beloved disciples.

It's the kind of love that boldly faces the evil powers of this world with a power that is humble, righteous, and true.

It's the kind of love that courageously faces mocking, beating, torture and death for the salvation of the world.

ALL: Crucified God, you died so the world would be transformed by your redemptive love! Help us choose you and your way every day so others can be redeemed by your love.

Song: UMH#622 *There Is A Fountain, Redeemed* (CCLI #6219086) or *The Cup Was Not Removed* (CCLI Song #7160964)

Prayer: This day, oh God, we gather in sincere worship, to remember Christ's journey to Calvary and his death on the cross. As we walk through this act of compassion, draw us closer to you. Shape us and mold us that we might grow in our compassion towards others, that as individuals, and as a community of faith, we would grow in our courage to be more like Christ. Help us to be more loving, more forgiving, more compassionate, and more willing to do your will. Breathe on us, Lord, and speak to our hearts. In Christ we pray, amen.

Song: UMH#402 *Lord I want to Be a Christian or Death Was Arrested* (CCLI #7046448)

Message: Reflecting on Holy Thursday's transition to today, set up by talking about the cup that Jesus prayed would pass from him in the garden of Gethsemane, and which now carries him to the cross (Matt 26:36-46). Jesus prays three times that God would let this cup pass. Yet, it does not, and Jesus understands that what is about to take place is the only possible way.

There may not be many gathered for this service, because this cup of suffering is hard to confront and watch. (You may want to reference the difficulty of even watching movies or plays that depict that crucifixion, like *The Passion of the Christ*.)

Simon of Cyrene was a tourist in Jerusalem, there for the holiday (Passover) and making his pilgrimage to the temple. And now Simon is called on to carry the cross of Jesus. Imagine standing beside this man so weak and beaten that he cannot carry his own piece of wood. Simon is now a part of this cup of Good Friday. In his forced selection by a Roman soldier, Simon is suddenly and forever bound in relationship with Jesus. He stands beside Jesus until the moment when the cross passes from Simon's shoulders and Jesus is nailed to it.



Such a powerful thing is happening here. Yet, Simon sees the soldiers make fun of Jesus and put the mockery of a sign “The King of Jews” over his head. We stand in awe and gratitude now, but the people present then and there were mocking Jesus. And let us be clear, that if Jesus’ killing was to take place our present day, these people could be us. It is so easy to forget this marvelous gift and become just like those religious leaders, ridiculing him by saying how crazy he seemed, that he couldn’t be real, that this could be fake (v. 39-40).

And even as Jesus is put on the cross and his suffering reach new heights, the people continue to mock saying, “If you really are the Son of God, come down from there and save yourself” (v. 40). But Jesus’ compassion and divine purpose outweigh the pressures from the crowd, and he endures this cup of suffering and sacrifice when he really could have just saved himself. Yet Jesus knew this was a cup that you and I would never be able to drink for ourselves. The only way for salvation’s work to take place, would be for him to endure this for us.

For three hours Jesus is hanging there in excruciating pain, enduring what is still today the worst form of capital punishment (created by the Romans). He is bleeding from his head with the crown of thorns, his back has been whipped and his hands and feet have been pierced with nails. After three hours, breathing is getting labored because of his position on the cross and the pain is overwhelming. In his final moments, Jesus shouts out to the God and his spirit is released. Something happens that day and the earth shakes, and rocks split apart.

To sit with Jesus and watch this cup he offers is to truly be amazed and changed. Verse 54 is not only the response of the centurion and others present that day. It is the fitting response to this unrepeatably event for all of us who come to worship this Good Friday. “This man truly was (is) the Son of God!”

Message Conclusion and Transition: Our response tonight is to sit and experience, to simply witness, this cup of Jesus. In this time, we can only take in Jesus’ vast gift and respond in faith, knowing that only because of the events of Good Friday will there be an empty tomb and resurrection. We are going to spend a few moments to enter into silent prayer. (Other options for the Silent Prayer would be to read selected verses as a type of petition prayer.) Then together we will pray this guided prayer.

Breathing in: I stand ...

Breathing out: ... beneath the cross.¹

¹ Rupp, Joyce. *The Cup of Our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth*. Pg. 122.



Closing Song: (*Consider shortening this song to stay in the mode of prayer*): UMH #424 Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone or *The Cup Was Not Removed* (CCLI Song #7160964)

Closing: Invite the congregation to leave in silence, ‘beneath the cross.’ Leave the altar or, if virtual, a meditative screen for people to continue praying at the foot of the cross.

Additional Components:

Alternate Call to Worship

Today we gather to remember an event that was dark and painful yet needed for all of us.

We remember, Lord, the pain you endured for us.

Such a powerful sacrifice, to give a life that had already changed the world through his healing and miraculous works.

Jesus, we gather to thank you for the life you gave, that we might have life.

Let us enter into this sacred and solemn time to remember the works of our Savior.

Lord, with heavy hearts of gratitude, we praise you for this costly gift you gave at Calvary.

Prayer of Confession:

For the times we have offered empty praise,
For the times we have turned away when the going gets rough,
For the times we have dropped your cup,
For the ways we have joined the angry crowd,
For the ways we have tried to save ourselves,
For the ways we have pierced you,
Forgive us, O Christ,
Forgive us.

Additional Music Suggestions:

UMH #504: The Old Rugged Cross / MVPC #142: En El Monte Calvario

Graves Into Gardens by Elevation Worship (CCLI Song # 7138219)

Tumbas a Jardines, Trad by Elevation Worship (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8315uaVEbFs>)