

Now that's "Love."

May 31, 2021

LUKE 22:40-44 NKJV – (40) When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." (41) And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, (42) saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." (43) Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. (44) And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

As Jesus prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, his first request is for his father to "take this cup of suffering away from me" (22:42). The cup of Jesus will involve suffering, to be sure. Yet "cup of suffering" doesn't quite get what Jesus meant when he referred to a cup.

If we look in the Old Testament, we find that the metaphor of the cup stands for our lives, which can be filled with a variety of things. Our "cup" can be filled with blessing and salvation (**PSALM 23:5; 116:13**), or it can be filled with wrath and horror (**ISAIAH 51:17; EZEKIEL 23:33**). Frequently, the cup stands for God's judgment and wrath. Consider, for example, **ISAIAH 51:17**: "Wake up, wake up, O Jerusalem! You have drunk the cup of the LORD's fury. You have drunk the cup of terror, tipping out its last drops." Many other Old Testament passages use the metaphor of the cup as a reference to God's fierce judgment.

Thus, when Jesus prays about avoiding the cup, He is alluding to these images from the Scriptures. By going to the cross, he will drink the cup of God's wrath, all the way to the bottom. He will bear divine judgment, that which rightly falls upon Israel and, indeed, upon all humanity. In this process, he will suffer horribly, both in the physical realm and especially in the spiritual realm as He enters the Hell of separation from his Father. What I see in Jesus' prayer is a genuine human being, one who is fully human as well as fully divine. I catch a glimpse of the unspeakable horror that awaits Him. I see a Jesus to whom I can relate, one who is much more like me than the superman Jesus who goes to the cross without a second thought and tiny hesitation.

If Jesus had prophesied that He would suffer and die, why do you think He prayed for the cup to be taken from Him? What does this say about Jesus? What does this say about prayer? Nevertheless, He did it. He did it for you and me. Now that's "**Love.**"

SCRIPTURE READING

1 JOHN 3:1

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

If I know what love is, it is because of Jesus.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"