

A Tale of Two Cups

(Matthew 26:36-44)

Introduction: A remarkable scene in Jesus's life...

⇒ Matthew 26:36-42 – What is Jesus trying to avoid? A CUP.
But why call it that?

The First Cup

- ⇒ The "Cup" was a very common OT image.
- Psalm 75:1-8 – The cup is a JUDGMENT for the WICKED.
 - Isaiah 51:17-20 –
 - It is a cup of God's WRATH. (51:17)
 - It involves ABANDONMENT. (51:18-19a)
 - It ended in DESTRUCTION. (51:19b-20)
 - John 3:16-20, 36 – our sin has earned us God's WRATH.
- ⇒ Jesus experienced the ABANDONMENT and DESTRUCTION we had earned by our sinful choices. (Matthew 27:46 & 50)

The Second Cup

- ⇒ Jesus commanded his disciples to drink a cup of FELLOWSHIP and FORGIVENESS regularly in His memory. (Matthew 26:26-28)
- ⇒ Jesus drank every drop of the cup of God's WRATH so that you could drink every drop of the cup of his FORGIVENESS.

Concluding Questions:

- ⇒ Which cup would you prefer to drink from?
- ⇒ What kind of gratitude, love, and loyalty do we owe the One who drank the cup of God's wrath in our place?

Icebreakers:

1. When you are really upset, do you tend to want to be alone or to process the experience with someone else? Why?
2. What is your favorite "remarkable scene" from Jesus's life?

Sermon Summary: In Gethsemane Jesus dreaded drinking from the cup of God's wrath because He knew from the OT that it would mean abandonment and destruction. But he willingly drank that cup to the last drop so that he could offer us the cup of fellowship and forgiveness that we remember every time we take Communion together.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does it trouble you to see Jesus express sorrow and grief at the prospect of dying in the Garden? Why or why not?
 2. Apparently, even Jesus heard a "no" from God in his prayers from time to time. Does this encourage or discourage you and why?
- * The First Cup
3. The OT descriptions of the Cup of God's wrath are disturbing, to say the least. How should we process and understand expressions like these of God's judgment on the "boastful wicked"?
 4. John tells us that people love darkness, not the light. Why is this? How do you see this play out in the world around you? How about in your own life?
 5. Which do you think is worse – the abandonment or the destruction?
 6. Why do you think Jesus quoted Psalm 22 out loud from the Cross ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")? Why not just suffer in silence?

* The Second Cup

7. What do you normally think about while you participate in "Communion" each month? How can we use the "quiet" time associated with "Communion" to our benefit?
8. Why does Jesus expect us to repeat this communion meal regularly? Doesn't he realize how easy it is for repeated events to become ritualistic and rote and eventually meaningless?