

# The Cup the Father Has Given Me

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're continuing on this morning in the Gospel of John. You're welcome to turn there in your Bible if you have it with you, or else the words will be on the screen. It's the night before Jesus' crucifixion.

And we pick up the story in John chapter 18. When Jesus had finished praying, he left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley.

On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

So John, oh, one more verse, verse 3. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees.

They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons. So John sets the scene for us. After Jesus had finished praying in the presence of his disciples, he led his disciples out of the city, across the Kidron Valley to a garden.

[ 1 : 29 ] Now as we'll see in a moment, this is the same garden mentioned in all the other Gospels. John doesn't tell us the name, but Matthew and Mark tell us the name.

It's Gethsemane. Luke doesn't tell us the name either, but he tells us that this place was on the Mount of Olives. In fact, the name Gethsemane comes from the Aramaic word for oil press.

So this was an olive orchard. If we look carefully at the language used to describe it here, it was likely a private estate, a private orchard. Perhaps the owner had been a believer in Jesus and had offered him the use of his property.

It was probably enclosed by a wall or by trees, judging by John's description of how they went into it. And John tells us here in verse 2 that Judas knew this place because Jesus had often met there with his disciples.

Luke confirms in his Gospel that they were all familiar with this place because each evening of this week-long Passover, they've been going out to the Mount of Olives, probably to this garden.

[ 2 : 48 ] John tells us in verse 3 that Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, came to the garden that night. And with Judas, or more accurately, led by Judas, is this large group of men.

John tells us that there was a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the religious leaders, the Pharisees and the chief priests.

The word that John uses there to describe this detachment is specifically tied to the Roman cohorts. And so these are not Jewish soldiers. These are Roman soldiers.

Typically, one of these cohorts had about 600 men in it, but probably only a part of the cohort was present, I imagine, with the commanding officer.

In addition to the Roman soldiers, there were these officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. And the word for these officials here is usually used to describe the Jewish temple guard or temple police.

[ 3 : 57 ] John tells us that the men in this group were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

The torches and lanterns signal to us that it is now quite dark, late at night. The weapon signaled to us that force may be used, if necessary, to apprehend Jesus or to beat back any of his followers who might try to defend him.

This is the moment that the religious leaders have been plotting and scheming towards. And now John is about to tell us about how this large group met Jesus that night in the garden.

But before we go on, it's worth mentioning the other three gospel writers tell us that Jesus has already been in this garden for some time now. Mark tells us that Jesus has been deeply distressed.

The other gospel writers tell us that he has spent a fair bit of time in prayer. Meanwhile, his disciples have been keeping watch for a little bit and then falling asleep.

[ 5 : 17 ] And keeping watch and falling asleep. And keeping watch and falling asleep. While this has been going on, Jesus has been pouring out his soul to God the Father.

John skips over all of that in his account. I guess it's because at the time that John is writing, those other gospels are probably already widely read and circulated amongst the churches.

And so John cuts right to the moment where Jesus meets this large group of men and tells us a few of the details that some of the other gospel writers left out.

verse 4. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out or stepped forth and asked them, Who is it you want?

Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. I am he, Jesus said. And Judas, the traitor, was standing there with them.

[ 6 : 23 ] When Jesus said, I am he, they drew back and fell to the ground. So John tells us that it was Jesus who was first to speak.

He went out. He stepped forth. He broke the silence with the question, Who is it that you want?

Who are you looking for? And the crowd replies, Jesus of Nazareth.

And in response, Jesus says, I am he. And then something rather unexpected happens here. It says that they, referring to this large group, drew back and fell to the ground.

Now there's a couple important details here. First, let's talk about the way Jesus answers back to them. Every major English translation I'm aware of has Jesus saying, I am he, in response.

But you may notice, if some of you have a more literal one, like the New American Standard on the screen, that the he is in italics, because the word he is not there in the original language.

[ 7 : 36 ] Quite literally, Jesus says, I am. Now the reason why all the translations add he is somewhat warranted, because if you wanted to say, I am he, in Greek, back then, you wouldn't add the word he at the end, because it's implied.

But here's the significance of this. I am, by itself, is the divine name, the name of God. It's the name that God gave for himself to Moses, long ago at the burning bush.

And Jesus has already, in previous accounts, taken God's name for his own, and spoken it to the people. He did that back in John 8, verse 58.

Before Abraham was born, I am, he said to them. So it's quite possible that Jesus is not only identifying himself here as Jesus of Nazareth, but also as the Lord God himself.

The second important detail is this response of the large group to Jesus' reply.

[ 8 : 51 ] Jesus says, I am, and John tells us that they drew back and fell to the ground. What's going on here? I want to handle this carefully.

First of all, I'll ask you to answer me this question. Does John, here, in the text, say, why they drew back and fell to the ground?

The answer is no. He doesn't say, they drew back and fell to the ground because, fill in the blank.

So I want it to be absolutely clear up front that there's no authoritative, inspired by God answer to the question of why they drew back and fell to the ground. And the reason I say this is because quite a number of our Christian brothers have just kind of asserted it as fact, a well-established fact, that this is why they fell to the ground.

So what are the major ideas about what's happening here? According to some of our brothers in Christ, why did they draw back and fall to the ground in response to this?

[ 10 : 08 ] Well, some Christians speculate that Jesus startled them. Perhaps that he called out while he was still shrouded in the darkness, saying, I am he, stepping out into the light right at that moment from their perspective, coming out of nowhere, causing some in the front to kind of trip and fall back, and then the domino effect happened, and it knocked everybody over in the whole group.

That's one idea. Some Christians speculate that it had to do with Jesus' bearing or his manner.

Perhaps that he just had such a boldness in walking right up to them that just kind of stirred up some fear or awe in the hearts of some in the group, at least.

Again, maybe it was those in front that caused the stumbling back and tripping and the domino effect. Others suggest it was Jesus' moral supremacy that caused this reaction, that as he walked toward them closer and closer, perhaps a twinge of guilt and embarrassment rose up in the hearts of some of these men, causing them to stumble back and perhaps also trigger the domino effect.

Some Christians speculate that it was something about what Jesus said when he took the divine name on his lips, when he said, I am. Perhaps something he said there or the way he said it caused them to draw back and fall to the ground.

And within this category are those who perhaps give the explanation that some were just shocked that he would take up the name of God.

[ 11 : 57 ] You didn't speak the name of God. And that they fall back. because of that. Now that doesn't really explain why the Roman soldiers fell back because they didn't really care too much about that.

But maybe again the domino effect is needed here as well to get the whole group to fall back on the ground. Finally, some Christians speculate that this was a miracle or a sign that Jesus performed. That there was some sort of unleashing of God's power through his words that just sort of blew them all back causing them to fall to the ground. Some Christians go so far as to assert that this was a theophany which means an appearance of God the Father himself breaking into our world through the words that Jesus spoke with such power that it just knocked them all back and they fell down on their behinds.

Now, I understand why many decide to preach this final fourth view as fact because it's definitely worth asking the question. I mean, these are career soldiers, many of them.

What would cause them to recoil like this and fall down on the ground? And so the reasoning goes, there had to be something supernatural at work here.

[ 13 : 21 ] But then I think we should also consider what happened the last time that Jesus took up the name of God like this. It wasn't this.

The people didn't fall back. Instead, they picked up stones and they got ready to stone Jesus to try to kill him. We might also look at the overall trajectory of the story here.

Does Jesus performing a spectacular miracle like this really fit with the trajectory that he's on? The trajectory of surrender and yielding to the will of the Father?

Has there not been a sense of finality already to Jesus' public ministry and the works, the signs that he has done and given for them to see and believe? And so I would just encourage us not to be dogmatic about why they drew back and fell to the ground.

The truth is we don't know fully what happened in that moment. John doesn't say why. Let's carry on here. Verse 7.

[ 14 : 32 ] Again, Jesus asked them, who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth, they said. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he.

If you are looking for me, then let these men go. This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled. I have not lost one of those you gave me.

So whatever just happened between Jesus and this large group of men, it's Jesus who carries the conversation forward. And what is Jesus' primary concern in this moment?

It seems to be the safety of his disciples. He seems eager to establish a verbal understanding with his opponents that it's me that you are looking for.

And if it's me that you want, let these men go. Now we probably wouldn't have stopped to think too much about this, except that John draws our attention to it in verse 9.

[ 15 : 45 ] He says, this happened so that the words Jesus had spoken would be fulfilled. I have not lost one of those you gave me. Earlier in the evening, Jesus had been praying to the Father, back up in chapter 17, verse 12, and this is what he had prayed.

While I was with my disciples, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction.

So John, it seems, is drawing a line between what Jesus said earlier in his prayer and what's happening in the garden right now. Jesus hasn't lost any of them except Judas because he's been protecting them.

He's been keeping them safe. And now, John says, what's happening here and the way that Jesus is handling that, that's a further fulfillment of that.

He's continuing to do that. Now, I won't go so far as to say that Jesus barter or negotiates here, but he certainly takes charge of the conversation and turns it in a way that suggests to them that it's quite reasonable for you to take me and let them go because it's me that you're looking for, right?

[ 17 : 10 ] This is amazing to stop and think about. Jesus has been pouring out his heart and soul to the Father in prayer. He's been overwhelmed at the thought of what's about to happen to him, what

he's about to suffer and endure.

And the disciples have not been able to keep watch with him for even one hour, as Jesus asked. And yet here's Jesus in the middle of all this thinking about their safety rather than his own. This right here is the proof that all that Jesus has been saying about being the good shepherd is true. Let's go back for just a moment and reflect on those words back in John chapter 10. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he's a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

[ 18 : 22 ] I am the good shepherd. And I lay down my life for the sheep is what Jesus said.

So here the wolves have come and it's quite a pack. And does Jesus run away? No. In fact, it's the opposite.

He engages them directly. He steps forth and immediately diverts their attention away from the flock and onto himself. If it's me you're looking for, then let these men go.

You just get a sense here that Jesus is putting himself right in the gap, squarely between these armed men and his disciples. He's ready to offer himself willingly while asking for his followers to be spared.

this is the proof that he really is our good shepherd. That he really does watch out for us and will do all that is needed to protect us.

[ 19 : 35 ] Can you imagine this? We don't know exactly where everyone was standing there in the garden that night, but I imagine Jesus perhaps a little out in front of his disciples and them just behind.

He's doing the talking can you imagine if you were one of his disciples just kind of watching all this taking place? Like what's about to happen here?

And the way this conversation is going, I imagine Jesus just begins to walk forward and surrender himself to them. And if I'm one of the disciples, I'm thinking now what do we do?

Do we fight? should we run? John tells us that there was a brief struggle that took place. Peter, one of the disciples, had a sword and he pulls it out and strikes with it.

Verse 10, then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

[ 20 : 46 ] Now we can only guess at what Peter was thinking. Was it just gut instinct that led him to do this? Did he feel that he might be a traitor if he just let Jesus be captured and taken?

And you can just imagine that right in this moment as Peter is striking Malchus, every other man with their weapon is just ready to jump into the fray.

and this is going to be a bloodbath. Probably some if not all of the disciples would have lost their lives. But Jesus intervenes.

Verse 11, Jesus commanded Peter, put your sword away. Or as Luke has it also, no more of this. And the sense we get here is that everyone, the whole group, just stopped for a moment at Jesus' command. According to Matthew, Jesus followed up his command with a bit of a rebuke to Peter.

[ 22 : 01 ] Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. He follows it up with, do you think I cannot call on my father?

And he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels. In other words, Peter, I don't need you to defend me or to fight for me.

If this is just about us versus them, I could handle it myself, Peter, without even lifting a finger. Put your sword away.

Now, John doesn't tell us about this, but Luke tells us that in this moment, Jesus actually goes to Malchus, the servant of the high priest, and touches his ear and heals it on the spot, basically undoing the damage that Peter has just done.

and Jesus says, shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?

[ 23 : 21 ] Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? What a question. What a statement. verse 12.

Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bind him and they lead him away and we will hear what happens next, next Sunday.

this was the final outcome. Jesus was arrested and as one of the other gospel writers mentions, his disciples in this moment they scatter, they flee. As we come to the Lord's table this morning, I want to help us focus in on this last question or statement of Jesus.

Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? let's reflect on these words for a moment. At first we hear a question but then we notice that this question is really a statement.

He's not looking for reassurance about this from the disciples, he's making a statement, this is how it has to go. Fighting is not an option, running away from this is not an option.

[ 24 : 45 ] I must go through with this. The time has come. In these moments we think back to when Jesus on that earlier occasion spoke about how he was going to suffer and die.

And do you remember how Peter back then tried to rebuke Jesus? That's the whole get behind me Satan moment. And at that time Jesus rebuked Peter.

He said to him back then, you do not have in mind the things of God but the things of men. This is the moment that Jesus was speaking of.

And it comes down to this. Will Jesus cling to the things of God or the things of men? Will he cling to the concerns of man?

How to avoid personal discomfort and suffering? How to beat his opponents? or will he hold firmly to the will of God the things that God wants in these moments no matter the cost?

[ 25 : 53 ] Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? In the midst of all this tension and conflict with all these armed men staring him down ready to pounce on him, how does Jesus see the situation?

According to what he says, he sees it as coming to him from the Father, given to him by God, his Father.

This is amazing. Let's talk about the cup. Jesus uses this language of the cup. This cup that the Father is giving him to drink from.

What is that? What does that mean? There's some rich meaning to this. Long ago in the Old Testament times, language of cup was often used metaphorically or poetically to refer to a person's portion.

Like Psalm 16 verse 5, Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup. you make my lot secure. The cup had to do with a person's lot in life.

[ 27 : 11 ] What God had decided a person should receive. And metaphorically speaking, what's in the cup that you must drink from reflects what God has given for you.

It reflects your lot. So if there's something good in your cup, well, that often speaks of blessing. But if there's something bitter or poisonous, it speaks of hardship, grief, betrayal, and especially judgment.

Sometimes this language of cup was used to refer to good things, like the cup of salvation is mentioned, or the 23rd Psalm, which most of you know. My cup overflows.

Speaking of God's blessing coming so abundantly, more than I need. But most often in the Old Testament, this metaphor of cup was used to refer to judgment, like in Job 21 verse 20, where Job speaks about the wicked and says, let their own eyes see their destruction.

Let them drink the cup of the wrath of the Almighty. Or Psalm 75 verse 8, in the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine, mixed with spices.

[ 28 : 35 ] He pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs. Or Jeremiah 25 verse 15, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel said to me, take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it.

Now there's more of these, we won't go into all of them. Altogether this language of cup speaks mainly of judgment. It's a portion that God gives to the wicked.

The contents of the cup is his wrath, his punishment, and those who drink it are brought to ruin and destruction, sorrow and disgrace.

It comes as punishment for sins. But then we come to Jesus and this is so rich, I hope we don't miss this. All this that's happening to Jesus in this moment is not just a tragic accident.

There is a cup being given by the Father to the Son to drink. This is the portion assigned to Jesus in the plan of God.

[ 29 : 55 ] It is the cup of God's wrath. And Jesus has just been praying in the garden asking God to take the cup away from him.

Yet he said not my will but yours be done. So right here and now we see Jesus put action to his willingness.

He doesn't call on his father for those legions of angels. Instead he steps forward and surrenders himself to the armed men. This is the portion.

This is the lot. This is the assignment that has been given him by his father. In suffering as he's about to suffer, Jesus will receive wrath.

He will receive punishment. not for his own sins but for ours. And so this is Jesus saying I must do this.

[ 31 : 01 ] I must take this. This is my portion from the father. This is the plan. This is the only way for you to be saved from drinking it yourself. As the prophet Isaiah foretold, Isaiah 53, surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

For the transgression of my people he was punished says the Lord. Shall I not drink the cup the father has given me says Jesus.

And with that said he surrenders himself to these wicked and abusive men who will make him suffer and put him to death before the end of the following day.

[ 32 : 31 ] What do you think? do you think it's a coincidence that just hours earlier Jesus sat around the table with his disciples with his own cup and asked his disciples to pass it around the table and divide its contents among them.

What did Jesus say about that? He said this cup is the new covenant in my blood. My blood which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

And then he told his disciples to drink it in remembrance of him. The contents of Jesus cup at the Lord's supper represented his blood death.

Jesus drank from it himself that night. symbolizing that he was about to surrender his life to death. To drink the cup of wrath being given to him from the Father.

I don't think it's a coincidence. These things are tied together. Jesus drinks the cup and from his portion we all receive the benefit.

[ 33 : 53 ] Jesus willingly chooses to suffer and die for his people. And we who are his followers receive what his death brings. Forgiveness of our sins and a new relationship with God.

That's what this table represents. Both the bread and the cup represent Jesus' death but the cup very specially speaks of the kind of death he would die.

That wrath is about to fall on him for the salvation of others. So we're going to come now to the Lord's table and eat and drink again from it in remembrance of Jesus.

If you have not yet put your trust in Jesus and surrendered your heart to him let me encourage you to do that. do you see how worthy of your trust and your heart Jesus is?

Do you see how he is the good shepherd who loves his people and protects them? Do you see how willingly he embraces this suffering and anguish of the cross for your forgiveness forgiveness for the sins that we have committed to be forgiven to bring us back to God?

[ 35 : 22 ] He is absolutely worthy of your trust and your heart all of it and so I urge you if you haven't done this yet to surrender to him today to believe in him today for all of us who have done that we are going to partake together again of the bread and the cup and we do this to remember Jesus and his sacrifice for us so if you have put your trust in him and believe in him if you have made that profession that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead to save you then join with us partake with us this morning we are going to take a few minutes now just to quietly reflect and pray I encourage you talk to God in the quiet of these moments and then after a few minutes of that the bread and the cup will be passed out and if you don't wish to partake I would encourage you just to signal with your hand to those serving and Dave or Charles will just pass you by we'll wait until all have been served and then we'll partake together in an unexpected way in the

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