

Let these go

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Date: 24 October 2015

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[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage of Scripture which we read in the Gospel of John, chapter 18, and I'd like to read again verses 8 to 11.

The Gospel of John, chapter 18, verses 8 to 11. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake. Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and smote the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear.

The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath.

[1 : 22] The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

At one level, at one level, this is a stinging rebuke from the Savior. Jesus Christ is actually on his way to atone for Simon Peter's sins.

And Simon Peter is trying to intervene. He's trying to interrupt the process. As I said, at one level. But at another level, at another level, surely these words are amongst the most reassuring words that exercised Christians can find in the Scriptures.

In the Bible, the term cup stands for a person's lot in life. A person's portion.

[2 : 46] A person's providence in life, if you like. But in the context of salvation, in the context of redemption, in the context of the gospel, there's two ways in which it is often, very often used.

It refers first to the cup of wrath. wrath. The cup of the fierceness of his wrath. The cup of fury. The cup of trembling. The cup of astonishment. But it also is used in another way.

The cup of salvation. salvation. Psalm 116 verse 13 often sung during communion seasons.

I love salvation. Take the cup. It has that two-fold meaning. Now, we can ask the question here, why is the Savior, why is Christ so determined to drink this cup?

[4 : 16] Well, as has already been hinted, so that we could drink the cup of salvation.

He drank the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath, so that you and I might drink the cup of salvation.

That's the essential reason as far as you and I are concerned. But you'll note what the Savior says, the cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?

He was determined to drink it because he knew it was the Father's cup. and he knew it was the Father's will.

And you remember in the garden shortly after this, he cried to his Father, is there any other way?

[5 : 24] But if not, if not, your will be done. He was determined to drink it because it was his Father's cup and it was his Father's will that he should drink it.

And is he not determined to drink the cup? Because it's the whole purpose of Christ becoming human. You see, the only atonement, the only substitutory atonement for our sin is the death of God.

But God can't die. God can't die. But if Christ takes on human nature, then the human nature of the second person of the Godhead can die.

And he knew that. and that was the whole purpose of him coming into the world. The whole purpose of him becoming human, that he might die. Can we not say he's absolutely determined to drink this cup because of the love he had for his people, the love he had for them.

He's prepared to suffer for his people. He loves them so much. If you're here tonight and you're a Christian, never question the love of Christ for you.

[7 : 12] When you read this, when you study this, never question the love of Christ for you. God will do it.

But there's something else I just want to say. Why he was so determined to carry on that with this work of drinking the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath.

death. It was the only way that the devil could be conquered. It was the only way Satan could be conquered.

Not just silenced. There are things that will silence Satan. But my friend, it is not enough. It was not enough that Satan be silenced.

He has to be conquered. He has to be defeated. Nothing else but Christ drinking the cup can conquer the power of Satan.

[8 : 21] You remember shortly after this when Christ faced with crucifixion and when he saw them coming for him, what did he say?

this is your hour and the power, the power of darkness. That power has to be broken.

And as I indicated earlier, there are ways that Satan can be silenced for a season. You remember when Christ was tempted 40 days and 40 nights?

It wasn't just three temptations in the wilderness. 40 days and 40 nights tempted. And what did the scriptures say? Then he left him for a season.

For a season only. Or as it could be translated, he left him until another suitable occasion arose.

[9 : 25] Another suitable occasion for tempting. And listen my friend, if Satan never left the Son of God alone, he's not going to leave you alone.

He sees us. He comes and goes. Do you remember how active Satan was in the first two chapters of Job?

Job? Do you remember when God gave license to Satan? Do you remember, do you remember what he did to poor Job?

Do you remember what he did to his body from the sole, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head? Do you remember what he did for his family and one day, seven sons and three daughters, one day?

Lost them all. Isn't it significant? How silent. It's interesting actually. You read of Satan in Job chapter 2 verse 7 and see how he deals with Job and then Satan has nothing else to say.

[10 : 43] He cannot understand why people would put up with suffering for Christ's sake. He can't get his head around it. He's a devil. That silences him and I find it significant.

When do you read of Satan next? He's mentioned in Job 2 7 and you don't hear of him again. His name's not in scripture until Zechariah at the end of the Old Testament.

Zechariah chapter 3 verse 1 and what's he doing? Taunting Joshua the high priest. He doesn't change. He can't change. He can be silenced for a season.

But he comes back. Be ready. He came back for Christ. But it's not enough to silence Satan.

He's to be conquered. Because you and I are in the kingdom of darkness. We're under the power of darkness and that power is to be broken.

[11 : 50] And it cannot be broken until Christ drinks that cup of wrath. And no one's going to stop him.

Praise his name. No one will stop Christ going to the cross to atone for his people's sins.

Well I actually want as God would help me to concentrate actually on verse 8. Jesus answered I have told you I have told you that I am he.

If therefore you seek me let these go their way. I have told you I am he.

If therefore you seek me let these go their way. Three things the three divisions of the verses God will help us.

[12 : 59] A word of sanction a word of submission a word of salvation. First of all then a word of sanction.

Then Jesus answered I have told you that I am he. Some people have entitled this passage of scripture the day they arrested God.

But wait a minute. Who's arresting who? Were they arresting Christ? Or was Christ really arresting them?

Isn't it amazing? Two monosyllables from Christ and a court of soldiers hundreds of soldiers are lying on their backs.

Just by a word. Two monosyllables. I am he. And the soldiers are on their backs. I'm sure you know.

[14:18] In the original it's I am. It refers to the term which Jehovah God spoke to Moses at the burning bush.

And isn't it salutary? Isn't it salutary? He spoke these words and the hundreds of soldiers are on their backs. And then he asks them again whom seek you?

And while they're lying on their backs they still say Jesus of Nazareth. How's that for being dead in sin? How's that as being having the power of darkness working in your life lying on their backs they still want to arrest Christ.

Salutary. You see the problem with unbelievers is not really lack of evidence it's the hardness of the human heart.

That's what's wrong with the human race. We need a new heart. heart. You see the fire which melts the wax hardens the clay.

[15:38] The same fire. The fire that melts the hearts of God's people hardens the hearts of God's enemies.

Same fire the word fear and calamity turns no one to God.

We need the melting power of the Holy Spirit to accompany the truth. There was Judas identifying Christ pointing them out third along from the left there.

He has no qualms about it. Betraying the Son of God. He can point them out. It's not enough to identify Christ.

We still worship them. The devils can identify Christ. God said to him. It's a heart.

[16:51] It's a state of the heart. Are we soft toward Jesus? Do we love him? Does our heart go out to him?

God a word of sanction. Two monosyllables and they're on the floor. They're on their backs. But it makes no difference.

It makes no difference. But secondly, a word of submission. Christ, first of all, submitted himself to the soldiers.

Now, the soldiers, they're simply, they're merely agents. That's all they are.

Agents. No one really took Jesus and led him away. Not really. There's no other way you could say it.

[17:54] But he surrendered himself. As we've already pointed out, one word and they can be on their backs. He surrendered himself.

He gave himself for our sins. Nobody took his life from him. He gave his life for us.

himself for the he submitted himself to the soldiers. Secondly, he submitted himself to the covenant made with his father before the world began.

He gave himself in exchange for the people given to him. in the previous chapter. The well-known intercessory prayer of Christ.

Do you notice a repeating phrase, a repeating term? Four times at least we have it in John 17. The men whom thou gavest me out of the world.

[19:09] He's praying for them. The men, the people you gave me before the world began. Verse 6. Verse 7. For them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.

Verse 11. Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. Those whom thou hast given me. That they may be one as we are.

And again in verse 12, at least four times in the previous chapter, he's praised to his father for those whom thou hast given me. I have kept them in thy name.

Those that thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition. He made a covenant with his father before the world began.

He promised his father he'd pay for their sins by going to Calvary and dying there. And the father said, I will give you them in exchange.

[20:16] If you go to the cross, if you drink the cup of wrath, I'll give them to you. My friend, if you believe in Jesus, you belong to him.

You belong to him. The father gave you to him. The father gave you to Christ.

If your faith's in Christ, you're given to him before the world began. And that's part of what made him determined to carry on going to the cross.

his love for his people. Do you ever wonder how the angel in the garden strengthened him?

How did the angel strengthen him? He couldn't say, well, I'll take part of the Lord. No, no, no, no. He alone must drink the cup alone.

[21 : 26] No one can drink part of it. The angel couldn't say, I'll take a few dregs. No, he has to go it alone. How can the angel strengthen him?

How does he encourage him? He can't say, now look, it'll be all right. It will not be all right. It will be absolutely terrible. It won't be all right.

He can't say that. It's a lie. How can the angel strengthen him? Well, we can only speculate.

Maybe he mentioned their names. You're doing this for Simon Peter. You're doing this for John.

Maybe he mentioned your name, if you believe. Maybe he showed them an image, a photo of them. And that would have encouraged him.

[22 : 29] Because, you know, it was love for his people that drove him to the cross. It was his love for his people. And if you trust him, you're one of his children.

And you're there. You're given to Christ by the Father. He submitted himself to the soldiers. He submitted himself to the covenant agreement he made with his father.

And of course, thirdly, he submitted himself to the cup of wrath. The cup of wrath and the justice of God.

You see that cup of wrath? It's terrible. It's awful. But listen, it's not unfair.

God's unfair. The cup of wrath was not unfair. God's never unfair. It's just judgment.

[23 : 34] Righteous judgment. It's justice. God didn't want more than what was necessary to atone for every sin that each one, every one of his people committed.

He gave himself up to whatever God's justice demanded as the equivalent of each one of them being in a lost eternity.

a word of submission, a word of sanction, a word of submission, and finally, a word of salvation.

That's what it's all about. Salvation, forgiveness, therefore, therefore, if, therefore, you seek me, let these go their way.

You've sought me. I'm going into your hands. You've got me. Therefore, let these people go.

[24 : 59] Let them go free. That's the gospel in a nutshell. That's what it's all about. And that's what the communion's all about.

That's what you're remembering. Was it? I'm sure most of you will have heard the story of the black man that appeared at a session asking to come to the table.

And they were interviewing and speaking to him, but there was huge language difficulties.

Eventually, they got a wee bit frustrated in the end and at last someone said, look, look, why do you want to come?

Why do you think you should be here? And he said, he die, me no die. That's the gospel. Christ died, I don't die.

I'm in Christ. I was at Calvary when he died. God, that's true of you, if your faith is in Christ, you are in him, you are there.

[26 : 12] He was doing that for you, if you love him, if you trust him, if you're depending on him for salvation. He died, me no die. God can't take payment twice because he's just, because he's fair.

see what he says in verse 9. Isn't it amazing? Verse 8, our text, I've told you that I am he, if therefore you seek me, let these go their way, that, or as it could be translated, in order that, the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake.

See, things are done because it's written. things aren't written because they were done. This is the word of God. Get our priorities right.

The word of God is first and foremost and things are done because it is written and in order that it might be fulfilled, which was written, we could say, of them which thou givest me, I have lost not one.

not one will be lost. Not one. But who are the these?

[27 : 40] If therefore you seek me, if therefore you're taking me, if therefore I'm drinking the cup of wrath, let these go.

Who are the these? Well, of course, we've already explained, those whom the Father has given with them. But who are these? Who are those whom the Father gave them?

How can we identify them? How can we know them? Well, in the parallel passage in Luke 22, Jesus says to them, you are they who stayed with me during my trials.

Luke 22, 28, let's just get it right. You are they which have continued with me in my temptations. Perseverance, stickability we'd probably call it today, staying with Christ, no matter what.

[28 : 56] Being in the boat with Christ is better than being on the shore with a crowd. You are these that have continued with me during my testing times.

well, we close. If Christ was so determined to take the cup of wrath, won't you take the cup of salvation?

is that asking too much? Really? He was determined to take the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath so that you could be forgiven in an instant.

Will you take the cup of salvation because he took the cup of wrath? is that asking too much? That's what this weekend is about.

Taking the cup of salvation and then join the cup of salvation. It's for sinners and the more unworthy you make yourself the more qualified you are for grace.

[30 : 32] If you're worthy of it then move over to the justice department. We're not talking about justice here. We're talking about unworthiness. It's because you're unworthy you apply for grace.

If you're worth it go to the justice department. I think it's Napoleon he was once he had ordered someone to be executed for I think it was treason and the mother of the young soldier was obviously very upset and she made a trip to speak to Napoleon himself and she came to him and she said I've come all this way to ask you to let my son off don't execute him and he said why should I he doesn't deserve it oh she said if he did deserve it I'd be asking for justice but I'm asking for mercy because he doesn't deserve it and we have to ask for mercy because we don't deserve it that's why

Christ died so my last word at the table on Lord's day at the table whatever you be at the table be free don't have anything binding you don't be in bondage to anything if the son makes you free you'll be free in it be free when you're at that table don't just be free be forgiven do not have one sin upon you ensure every sin is forgiven the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin be free be forgiven and at the table be at peace be at peace don't have a care don't have a concern roll them onto the burden bearer and be at peace because

Christ said peace I leave with you not as the world gives he's got a different kind of peace a peace you can enjoy during turmoil may God the Holy Spirit bless you abundantly with gospel favors as you remember him and as you drink the cup of salvation because he drank the cup of wrath may God the Holy Spirit make his word effectual to every one of us let's bow our heads in prayer