

Christ's Gethsemane Prayer 1

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[0 : 00] which is you expressing yourself in terms of your will is opposed to the will of God in our world and in your life.

So as the prayer book tells us in the order of evening prayer, that it's not inconceivable that God would be expected to desire the death of a sinner.

That if God was to act according to his nature, it would be rational to suppose that the person whose will was opposed to his will would die.

And therefore, sin, which is my will, comes up against God's will, and God's will triumphs.

And this, I think, this kind of thing is expressed in Mohammedanism quite clearly, that if you go against the will of God, you die. Period. Full stop.

[1 : 10] And that's why I think we have this story of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Sin, in effect, is the direction of my will.

Now, the direction of my will may lead to stealing, lying, adultery, murder, gambling, drugs, alcohol, but they are not in themselves sin.

They are only the demonstration of the sin, which is our will, personally, which leads to that. So a lot of you may not have achieved that level of sinning that you are noted for stealing, lying, adultery, murder, gambling, drugs, or alcohol.

But the direction of your will is that direction. And therefore, it is contrary to the will of God.

Sin is, I mean, in a sense, one of the characteristic pictures of the New Testament is that people caught in stealing, lying, adultery, murder, gambling, drugs, and alcohol, understand the gospel better than the people whose sins have been restrained and who haven't discovered how totally alien to God is the direction of their will.

[3 : 07] And that's the thing that I think you have to come up against in order to understand the passage which we're looking at tonight. To understand it, let me first tell you who Jesus is in this passage, how he is portrayed in one of the most deeply moving pictures of Christ anywhere in the Gospels.

He is described as greatly distressed and troubled. He is described as he speaks of himself as when he says my soul is sorrowful even unto death.

And in Luke, this moment in Christ's light makes this note that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

So the personal agony of Jesus Christ is deeply portrayed in this picture in the Garden of Gethsemane which was an olive orchard just outside the city of Jerusalem.

Greatly distressed and troubled sorrowful even unto death his sweat like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

[4 : 53] And in this agony and bloody sweat he prays. And the text gives sort of two descriptions.

It first says this is what he prayed about that if it were possible the hour might pass from him. But then you hear a direct quotation of Christ's prayer when he says Abba Father which is a very peculiar and intimate expression of a relationship to God the Father which we only begin to glimpse through the person of Jesus Christ.

He says Abba Father and the prayer goes on all things are possible to thee remove this cup from me yet not what I will but what thou will.

well that's a it's a very powerful picture.

It's powerful because of course almost all prayer begins that way doesn't it? When we find ourselves in a situation we say God or Abba Father all things are possible to thee circumstance in which I can I find myself trapped all things are possible to thee the disease which has just touched my body all things are possible to thee the impact on the life of my child whom I love beyond all

expression Lord for my child I know that all things are possible to thee so that it's almost a universal experience of the whole of humanity to turn to God as Jesus does and say to God all things are possible to thee and we say it from the agony of our hearts and from

[7 : 35] I think in our situation we say it from the reality of our own impotence to deal with the circumstances that have overcome us we turn to God and say all things are possible to thee and then Jesus goes on and says remove this cup from me and that's the thing that is most on his heart that the cup which he has been given the cup which he has known all along he must drink to the dregs that that cup is now virtually within his grasp and he says to the father it's the deepest desire of my heart that this cup should be removed from me and that

I should not have to drink it then he says yet not what I will but what thou wilt I will and thou wilt I will which is sin and God's will which is God's purpose now I tell you that because well this is the point I want you to see here that this is the most eloquent possible prayer that any one of us could ever say in precisely these same words

I don't know if it would be a help you if I did this this is the cup that belongs to us and this is the cup that Jesus had to drink from this one and God's will for for me is that I should give up my self will for his loving and life giving will and that's a cup I don't want to drink I want my own way I want to do my own thing in my own way

I want my will to dominate my life and God offers us his will and life which he alone can give and he says to us here is the cup drink this and we pray father all things are possible to you remove this cup from me so that I don't have to make that choice whether we ever go on to say yet not what I will but what thou wilt is a matter for your personal consideration think of this cup now this is the cup that Jesus is to drink up now the difference between you saying this prayer and Jesus saying this prayer is that

Jesus was already perfectly in the center of God's will that's where he was his will and God's will were one the longing and desire of his heart was the longing and desire of God's heart but what he had to drink was the very bitter cup of death not just physical death on the cross but spiritual death in separation from the father with whom he was one he had to drink to the dregs the bitter cup of death which didn't belong to him in the same way that this cup doesn't belong to us this cup didn't belong to him and so when he said all things are possible must

[13 : 02] I drink this cup not my will but thy will be done this cup would mean that Jesus would become sin for us who knew no sin he would be cut off forsaken and he would drink the cup of our sins and the consequences of our sins and he would drink it dry now that's the cup that Jesus prayed might be taken away so what you have then is God inviting us to deny our will in order to accept his will or

Christ doing the opposite the cup Jesus was invited to drink was the wrath of God the poisoned cup of death the cup by which he would become sin who knew no sin and he would grasp that cup and drink it and that was the battle he was fighting and that's where the great distress and trouble came from that's where his being of sorrow even unto death came from that's where his sweat like great drops of blood fell to the ground as he contemplated drinking that cup for which all his life had been lived and of course he won the victory here in the garden of

Gethsemane as he heard the mob coming up from the temple to arrest him he knew what he had to do he as it were there took the cup and drank it and then the details which followed through the long hours of that night of his arrest and trial his scourging and crucifixion were just in a sense the aftertaste of that bitter cup that he had drunk well that's why that's an important moment for all the disciples that they would be there with him which of course they couldn't be they couldn't understand and they slept because they didn't understand the issue but subsequently they did and that's why even tonight when we partake of this cup the cup of life which is offered us this is my blood of the new covenant which you shed for you and for many for the remission of your sins you see because Jesus has drunk this cup we can drink this cup we can we don't have to we can only drink it as we say to God not my will but thy will be done and God's will is that we should receive the cup of salvation the blood of Christ given for us and this is available to us because

Jesus chose and drank this cup well that's really all I want to tell you about this passage but it's it's a very powerful passage and I think it's powerful because we see in it Christ doing for us what we couldn't do we cannot deal with the consequences of our own sin God could rightly desire the death of a sinner person like you or me whose will is so unalterably opposed by nature to his we couldn't tolerate God's judgment on us and so

Christ took it for us in order that we by faith might take you see this cup did not belong to Christ by right he claimed it out of love and this cup does not belong to us by right we can only claim it out of love and that's and that's what that's what our whole life is based on and that's why in the course of the service we come to understand and to give expression to what Christ has done when we say that he there by himself gave made the one perfect and sufficient oblation and satisfaction and atonement for the sins of the whole world he drank that cup to the dregs in order that we might drink the cup of life which he offers us in his blood we accept what he has done as for us and we need to be profoundly aware that what

[19 : 52] Christ has done we could never do and in response to what he has done we can never repay him so as you come as you come to to receive the body and the blood of Christ have this Gethsemane story in mind and make it your prayer as you come to say Abba Father all things are possible to thee remove this cup from me no let me drink this cup because my heart's desire is not what I will but what you will for me

Amen let us pray we'll begin by praying for our relationship with God with a verse from Colossians so then just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord continue to live in him rooted and built up in him strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness thank you father for who you are a God who can be known thank you that out of your love for us you have taken the initiative and revealed yourself through your creation through your word and through your son who you sent into this world to lead a perfect life in obedience to you and then to die on the cross in order that we might be forgiven and rescued from the consequences of our sin to be able to enter into the relationship with you that you long for

Lord it cost you so much yet that is what you chose to do help us to see what that means for each one of us just have a moment of quiet prayer help us to see ourselves as you do and the ways in which we have been living in darkness and clinging to our own will forgive us we search for fulfillment for love and acceptance for wholeness but it is only in you that we will be satisfied Lord you came to give life and give it abundantly may we recognize our need for you and claim that which you freely give we pray father that more and more we would allow you into our lives to change us lovingly and carefully into who you want us to be particularly in those areas where there's fear or pain or stubbornness you desire to liberate us from those things which bind in order that we would love and serve you give us we ask a desire for your ways a hunger for your word an openness to your spirit a love for your people and your world equip us as we walk with you help us to live out a faith which is real in whatever our circumstances in Jesus name we pray amen we'll now pray for our relationships with others eternal

God we give you thanks for those who mean so much to us and without whom life could never be the same we thank you for those to whom we can go at any time and never feel a nuisance we thank you for those to whom we can go when we are tired knowing that they have for weary feet the gift of rest we thank you for those with whom we can talk and keep nothing back knowing that they will not laugh at our dreams or mock at our failures we thank you for those in whose presence it is easier to be good we thank you for those in whose company joys are doubly dear and sorrow's bitterness is soothed we thank you for those who by their warning their counsel and their rebuke have kept us from mistakes we might have made and sins we might have committed and above all we thank you for Jesus the savior of our souls accept our thanksgiving through Christ our Lord Amen Oh God our Father bless those who specially need your blessing bless those who are far from home and far from friends and who are lonely bless those who have made mistakes and who are sorry now bless those who are underpaid and overworked those who never have enough and who are always tired bless those who are always taken for granted and who are never thanked and praised and appreciated as they ought to be bless those who have been hurt by life those who have been wounded by the malice of their enemies or by the faithlessness of their friends bless those who have been disappointed in something on which they had set their heart bless those whom illness or weakness has handicapped or laid aside and for whom the night is slow and long bless all our friends and keep them true to us and us true to them bless our families and loved ones and let nothing come between us and them please take a moment to pray for those people those situations for whom you're particularly concerned you know the needs of each one of us and you know the secrets of our inmost hearts help us this night to cast all our burdens upon you certain that you care for us and sure that you will help in Jesus name Amen and in closing Oh God our Father grant that at the ending of this day you may be nearer and dearer to us send us back tomorrow to our duties and

tasks with a greater knowledge in our minds a greater love within our hearts and a firmer grip upon your hand help us not to forget the truth that we have learned today grant that the stirrings of our heart may not have been all to no purpose help us to go out and to live that to which we have listened and to practice that which we have professed grant that we may come to the end of this day with the sense of sins forgiven and with the cleansing power within us to enable us to live more nearly as we ought this day

again we have remembered how Jesus Christ died for us send us out tomorrow to live for him through Jesus Christ our Lord amen let's turn on our lilac booklets to page five and as we come to prepare for our participation in the communion service in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus and come to drink the cup that he offers us which Harry told us let's take a moment to reflect in preparation for that on the comfortable words which our Savior Christ says to all who truly turn to him come unto me all that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you

[29 : 33] God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish but have eternal life hear also what St.

Paul says and let us read these together say them to each other this is a true saying and worthy of all to be received that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners if anyone sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous and he is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world with that in mind let's just take a couple of moments of quiet to think over this past week and remember the things that make us shameful and ashamed to come before God and prepare to confess them to him let us humbly confess our sins to almighty God almighty God father of our Lord

Jesus Christ maker of all things and judge of all people we acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most grievously have committed by thought word and deed against thy divine majesty we do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings have mercy upon us most merciful father for thy son our Lord Jesus Christ sake forgive us all that is past and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life to the honor and glory of thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord amen almighty god our heavenly father who of his great mercy has promised forgiveness to all those that with hearty repentance will to help his ass will thrive to us