

# Christ's Gethsemane Prayer 2

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ] which is you expressing yourself in terms of your will, as 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 : 11 ] 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.

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 gospel.

[ 3 : 31 ] 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 life, makes this note, that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the drowning.

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.

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.

[ 5 : 38 ] 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 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 toward for my child, I know that all things are possible to thee.

[ 7 : 02 ] 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, 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.

[ 8 : 46 ] 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 say it. I don't know if it would be a help you if I could say it. I don't know if it would be a help this is the cup that belongs to us and this is the cup that Jesus had to drink from.

This one. God's will for me is that I should give up my self-will for his loving and life-giving will.

and that's the cup I don't want to drink. I want my own way. I want to do my own thing in my own way.

[ 10 : 32 ] I want my will to dominate my life. And God offers us his will 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 perfect 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.

[ 11 : 56 ] 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 says, all things are possible, must 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.

[ 13 : 13 ] 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.

[ 15 : 00 ] 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 it was such 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 is 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. [16:37] 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 a very powerful passage. 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, a 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. [18:16] 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 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 me 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 that we need to be profoundly aware that what Christ has done we could never do. And in response to what he has done we can never repay him. So as you come 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. [20:15] 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. Amen. Amen. Amen.