

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

THE BLESSED CUP

A Communion Message

By

Rev. Todd W. Allen

Villa Rica 7/4/04

Mark 14:22-42

As we come to the Lord's Table today we are grateful for the cup of blessing, which He has provided. But we ought to remember that for Christ it was...

I. A BITTER CUP

He came to that hour and prayed: Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

The cross was not a pleasant experience. It was a horrible cup of shame and agony. His sinless soul was made to be sin for us. He stood in the place of the wicked for our sakes and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. We can sit here this morning and remain untouched by his pain and shame. After all, we did not live during that time and we have never seen a man crucified. But I hope you will be able to let something of what it cost Christ to give us this cup of blessing come home to your heart today.

1. Christ was willing to suffer the pains of death for us but as the hour approached he knew only too well all that was involved. It was not just the physical suffering, it was the soul suffering, the weight of the responsibility of entering into the place of darkness and despair and separation from the Father in order to vanquish death.

Death is an enemy. It is the penalty for sin. We have seen death with many different faces. I think of the box office smash hit "JAWS". It was so successful that they made sequels. The great jaw of a Great White man-eating shark devouring a man is a fearful thing to behold. In the movie they made it as realistic as they could. Some people who saw the movie refused to go swimming in the ocean anymore. The vicious, chomping, tearing jaws of the killer shark etched an unforgettable memory on the minds of many. There is some thing morbidly fascinating about man being tracked and attacked by a brute monster whose only purpose for existence is to kill and devour prey.

Death is like that monster shark in the movie Jaws or the great white whale in Moby Dick. It is an enemy to be destroyed but who eludes destruction. In Jaws and Moby Dick the killer shark and whale destroy the ship and consume the hunters. Only one survivor remained in Moby Dick and just two in Jaws to tell the tale.

Christ goes into the jaws of death to destroy death. Like being devoured by a man eating shark in order to kill the shark and come forth alive and victorious, a truly superhuman undertaking without parallel in all of the history of mankind. Christ took our deserved punishment and arose victorious over death. But that does not mean it was a painless or easy thing for him to do. He laid everything on the line. He had only one thin line of light out of that pit of darkness and despair and that was his faith in his Father's promise that he would not leave his soul in hell, neither suffer his holy one to see corruption (psa. 16:10). He could die but not remain dead. Death could not keep Christ. The Giver of life and light could not be overcome by the darkness, but he did taste the darkness of death for you and me (See Psalm 16:8-10).

II. For Every Believer His Cup Of Death Is A Cup Of Blessing

He says in Mark's gospel, Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. (Mk. 14:25). This is a solemn and sacred assurance of the gathering together again of all who die in the Lord, of their forgiveness and acceptance because of the cup He drank and now offers to us. The cup of Christ's death is to the believer a cup of assurance and blessing. We drink the cup of communion to commemorate his marvelous work of love and mercy. He said: This do in remembrance of me, for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come.

But as we come to the table today let us remember also that this cup is a cup of victory. It is a victory that cost Christ a lot to give to us, and truly it was a cup of bitterness for him, but we can now celebrate his victory over death as well as remember his sufferings.

When Roman soldier and commanders conquered, they, like all soldiers of all times, celebrated the victory over their enemies. More often than not a victory banquet and a toast did this to the commander. The war is over and the enemy is defeated and victory is sweet.

In much the same way the Christian recognizes in the communion cup the sweetness and joy of Christ's victory.

It is a victory over evil and Satan and sin, a victory over death and the grave. Thus it is the greatest of all victories.

We lift the communion cup in reverent hands to lips that praise and honor and bless the name of the conquering and victorious Savior King. We can say with John Bakewell these lines he wrote in 1757:

Hail, Thou once despised Jesus,
Crowned in mockery a King!
Thou didst suffer to release us;
Thou didst free salvation bring.

Hail, Thou agonizing Savior,
Bearer of our sin and shame!
By Thy merits we find favor;
Life is given through Thy Name.

Jesus, hail! Enthroned in glory,
There forever to abide;
All the heavenly host adore Thee,
Seated at Thy Father's side:

There for sinners Thou art pleading;
There Thou dost our place prepare
Ever for us interceding,
Till in glory we appear.

Worship, honor, power and blessing
Thou art worthy to receive;
Loudest praises, without ceasing,
Meet it is for us to give.

Help, ye bright angelic spirits,
Bring your sweetest noblest lays;
Help to sing our Savior's merits
Help to chant Immanuel's praise.

The paper and sermon manuscripts from **Pastor Todd W. Allen** are made freely available for review and distribution. We only request that proper web page attribution be provided if distributed for any reason.

Please be gracious to forgive typos and errors of expression. These notes are faithful approximations of what has been preached. May God be glorified in the preaching of His Word.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA
519 MAIN STREET
VILLA RICA, GA. 30180
770-459-5276

Developed and Maintained by: eAirCommunications