

# Drinking Damnation Dry

Matthew 26:36-42

Over the past 9 weeks we have watched David on the run; running for his life – moving from one trial to the next – one dangerous scene to the next.

He seems to be moving further and further away from the throne, not closer toward it.

Only after years of running and rejection, is David about to be crowned, King of Israel.

I thought it would be the perfect time to reflect on the suffering and rejection of our Lord, on our behalf.

The Son of David was hounded and rejected and threatened his entire ministry life . . . unlike David, He will not be crowned while He's alive on earth, He will be crucified.

He was not accepted by His people, He was rejected.

He is the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief.

All of it, according to Divine plan, designed by God the Father, Son and Spirit, from eternity past.

While we focus on the communion ordinance, first instituted in the upper room, I want to play the DVD forward just a bit to the next scene.

Judas is about hurry up the hillside toward Gethsemane with 600 armed Roman soldiers, along with temple guards and a mob of others who had come in the night to arrest the Lord.

And there, in the Garden, you find the Lord ready and waiting for them - composed, submissive, even helpful to His would be captors . . . they ask, "Where is He?" and Jesus says, "Over here."

His composure is a result of His perspective . . . the cup that He would drink had come from the hand of His Father.

How do you drink your bitter cup?

And since Jesus is the model of our faith, what resource did He rely upon in the garden to handle the loneliest, most difficult and painful moments in His life.

**Hebrews 5:7 says it all, "In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save Him from death."**

That's a staggering revelation. That in those dark hours in the Garden, Jesus, fully man, yet fully God, in His human nature and with His human will struggled and then surrendered to the Divine will.

Through the lens of scripture we see the Son of David, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin – you look closely and marvel and then *worship* at this willing Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world.

I read some time ago how in one Middle Eastern conflict, soldiers dug 40,000 graves in the lonely desert sands; not for others, but for themselves. They became testimonials to their willingness to die.

Let's leave the upper room and go back to this lonely garden – Matthew's Gospel records the scene for us in chapter 26.

As you're turning, be aware that you are about to enter the place where, hours before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ effectively, dug His own grave, signifying His willingness to die.

**26:36. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."**

In the Lord's generation, inside the city proper, there were no gardens allowed. The city was crowded, space was a premium, and besides there were even laws that the city's sacred soil not be polluted with manure for gardens. I can imagine that inside these cramped quarters, people probably appreciated the anti-manure laws.

Some of the wealthier residents owned private gardens outside the city; they would build beautiful stone walls around their private acreage where they would rest.

This text implies that Jesus had a wealthy friend who had evidently offered Him a place to rest and pray just outside the city walls, on the Mount of Olives.

**37. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and troubled.**

Now why did He take these three and station them nearby? Why have Peter, James and John follow Him into the Garden?

Was it to **protect His privacy**? Trouble with that view is these men weren't very good protectors – in fact, you'll discover later on in the text that Peter wasn't very good with a sword either.

Did Jesus bring them in to the garden with Him to **provide companionship**? Well, that didn't work

either – notice *verse 40. And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour?”*

*Notice verse 43 – And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.*

Some companions.

Listen, while you’re experiencing your own struggle with God’s will – with God’s design – with God’s allowances and with God’s refusals . . . there isn’t anybody who can protect you from it, and there isn’t really anybody who can provide companionship . . . at the level you want or need.

I think it’s significant that Jesus specifically asked his three closest disciples – literally, His three closest friends to pray with Him . . . and for Him!

Two times He said, and you can almost hear Him say it, “Men, surely you will pray too?!”

Peter, James and John slept through most of the night.

It becomes a matter of struggle between you and your Lord.

I frankly believe the reason Jesus took these three leaders among the disciples with Him was not for protection or companionship, but for instruction.

Before nodding off to sleep three times would have seen and heard what would come back to remind them later when they encountered their own suffering.

This is how you handle Gethsemane’s! This is how you prepare to bear a cross. This is the only thing you can really do when surrounded by sorrow that makes any difference.

When your closest friends sleep through your crisis while you agonize with sorrow.

Let me show you two key words that reveal the emotion of the Son of David, the Man, Christ Jesus.

### Two key words

1. The first word is in verse *37b – He began to be sorrowful* – your translation may read, *grieved*.

It’s a word that implies shrinking from some deep trouble; it might even refer to a thought that is deeply troubling which you cannot escape.

Listen, as you walk to the edge of this Garden and look at the Lord through this text, don’t ever forget, Jesus Christ is not an actor trying to feel the part . . . trying to drum up the emotion of what it must be like to be a human being, rejected, ignored,

misunderstood, hounded, threatened . . . and about to die.

He was feeling what any human being would feel in this situation – He had a divine nature and a human nature; he was the God-Man. He was 100 % deity and 100% human in the mystery of His incarnation.

2. The second word in verse 37b is the word, *troubled, or distressed*. It means to be overwhelmed with distress. It could be translated, *surrounded by sorrow*.

Why all the agony? *Look at verse 38. Then He said to them “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”*

WHY such sorrow?

No doubt it included the hurt of betrayal – quite frankly, you and I would have been offended just to know we were being sold for the price of crippled slave

No doubt it included the knowledge of His disciples’ desertion – even the denial of Peter, in whom He’d invested so much time and energy

No doubt it included the rejection by His own nation Israel over whom He’d earlier wept bitter tears . . . how it must have torn His heart to know He will later hear them cry out before Pilate, “We have no king but Caesar.”

No doubt it included his distress over the injustice of it all. He was the perfect law-keeper . . . in fact, He was the law-giver – now falsely accused and falsely condemned.

No doubt it was the coming loss of fellowship and intimacy with the Father as He will cries out over being abandoned – as He becomes sin for us who knew no sin.

No doubt it included the horror of the cross – one of the cruelest ways to die.

The truth is, Jesus was surrounded with sorrow and distress and pain and suffering in the Garden over all these issue and a million more we can never begin to know.

It overwhelmed his humanity just as it would have crushed ours!

*Mark’s Gospel at chapter 14* informs us that Jesus went a little further beyond these three disciples and *then he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the cup – the hour, might pass Him by.*

The words “he fell to the ground and prayed” are in the imperfect tense which signifies action in progress.

I know you’ve all probably seen that famous painting of Jesus praying in the garden where He’s kneeling at a large stone, His hands folded in prayer and a halo around his head as He looks up to heaven.

Now of you have that picture hanging on a wall – that’s alright – the Lord may very well have prayed that way some other time.

But not here.

**Read 35. "He went a little beyond them and fell to the ground and began to pray" - imperfect tense - He fell to the ground and prayed; got up went a little further and fell down and prayed; picked Himself back up staggered a few more steps and fell again and prayed,**

**Hebrews chapter 5 refers to this same scene and it informs us that Jesus prayed with loud cries and tears.**

**Look at this Savior of ours struggling with the will of God He’d already designed . . . staggering, falling, crying, praying; staggering, falling, crying; praying.**

**Luke records in 22:44. "And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."**

The medical community calls this hematidriosis - the bursting of the capillaries underneath the surface of the skin - and the clotting bloods mixes with the sweat of the person under such intense distress that it emerges on the skin - blood red – and drips off.

Jesus shed His blood in the Garden too. Talk about agony.

And just what was Jesus praying?!

**All the Gospel accounts record the same prayer. Let's go back to Matthew 26**

. . . this is how you handle Gethsemane

### **1. I want you to notice Christ's intimacy with the Father:**

**Matthew 26:39 (get ready to underline a key phrase) And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."**

**skip to verse 42. He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."**

Now in the Aramaic, “My Father” is literally rendered, “Abba, Father” – in other words, through all of this lonely distress, Jesus never lost the truth of His utter dependence upon His Father.

Abba is an Aramaic term of possessive endearment.

Some have tried to translate it, or pray it, “Daddy” . . . which I find far short of its meaning. Daddy is an American expression for children. Go to France and other countries and it’s Pappa.

And Daddy isn’t necessarily an intimate term – your kids call you Daddy whether they’re feeling close to you or not.

When they get older they might call you Dad, not because they love you any less, but because it’s more fitting.

It’s interesting to me that girls tend to keep calling their fathers Daddy. I think that’s because they want your money.

All that to say, to refer to God the Father as Daddy is not necessarily intimacy, in fact it might trivialize Him.

The Aramaic expression is precious simply because it is possessive; literally translated, “MY Father!”

What is so potent for us to learn from this is the simple fact that Christ’s moments in the garden did not drive Him to ask, “Are You my Father.” “You must not be my Father.”

Our Gethsemane experiences tend to bring us to the wrong conclusion that God the Father left you alone . . . sorrow and suffering must mean that God is absent!

The mark of Christ-like maturity is, during a Gethsemane experience, being able to still cling to the truth of “My Father – I know you’re mine! I know you haven’t left me alone!”

### **2. Secondly, I want to point out not only Christ’s intimacy with the Father, but Christ’s honesty in the struggle**

**Look at verse 39. My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;**

Remember, this word for *cup* was the categorical term for Christ’s sufferings - his betrayal, crucifixion, death, bearing of sin, separation from fellowship with the Father. God the Father would

turn away from God the Son in such a way that intimacy would be severed – not essence of deity, but intimacy between the trinity –that would be lost.

As God the Son becomes sin – becomes filthy sin for us.

John the Apostle wrote that *Jesus Christ satisfied the penalty of not only ours sins – the sins of the believer – but the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).*

We cannot imagine the crushing weight of sin upon Christ – invisibly transacted between the holy verdict of God upon the body of this unblemished Lamb.

He wasn't dying just for little white lies and a tad of gossip now and then . . . no, He was crushed for the iniquities and gross injustices and vile thoughts and actions of the humanity, over the course of the past, present and future of the human race.

One author wrote of the world's sins that Christ bore with startling expressions;

Jesus will bear the sins of the Assyrians, who gloated over their captives they skinned alive; Jesus will bear the sins of SS troops, machine gunning women and children who ran from burning synagogues;

Jesus will bear the sins of Pharaohs, who sacrificed thousands of laborers' lives to build themselves a deifying tomb. Jesus took on all of this and more. He was tossed about in the endless storm of enraged fathers and mothers beating toddlers to death; pimps seducing runaways into lives of drugs and defilement; the cruelty of Canaanites burning their children to their god Moloch; and nice church ladies cannibalizing other nice church lades over coffee;

He will die for the sins of impoverished parents selling their children into slavery; He will bear the sins of church leaders praying long and loud, while their wives sit in back pew praying that heavy make-up will cover their bruises; he will bear the sins of embezzlers, gangsters, bullies, rapists, liars; the indifferent, the sadistic, and the self-righteous.

The cross is the scene of unbearable horror and unspeakable madness – of adultery and apathy; of civilizations decaying and wars ravaging. Jesus was not a bystander caught in some accident; He came deliberately. He will accept it, though it costs Him everything;

He will absorb the full force of wrath in His body and mind and heart and soul, until there is nothing left; but the storm will slacken and Jesus will lift

Himself on His nail pierced fee to snatch a gasp of air and force His swollen tongue to shout, "It is finished . . . as if to say, "For this I came . . . the penalty for sin is completely paid."

Whoever believes in Him discovers his or her sin has already been paid for and the record of sin washed away in the cleansing stream of the Lamb's blood.

Is it any wonder then that Jesus Christ staggered in this Garden and fell and prayed, "Oh My Father, is there another way?"

Jesus is modeling exactly what we also must do . . . intimacy . . . and honesty.

Intimacy . . . honesty . . .

### 3. One more: thirdly, notice Christ's humility

Go back to *verse 39; Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.* Verse 42 – ". . . your will be done."

Paul wrote, "*He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.*" (Philippians 2:8)

What a model of intimacy, honesty and humility.

A model for you and men . . . surrounded by the stone enclosure of our own suffering and sorrow.

The truth is, when you pray in your Garden, you are more likely to try and conform God's will to yours. Jesus, the model sufferer, surrendered His agonized will to the will of the Father.

Intimacy . . . honesty . . . humility.

He accepted the cup of suffering . . . Spurgeon wrote, He lifted the cup to his lips and with one draught, drank our damnation dry.

His cup of sorrow provides for us to drink a cup today that represents our salvation.

His cup of abandonment made possible our cup of acceptance.

His cup of rejection provides us with our cup of redemption

His cup which modeled humility and trust, represents our cup of trust in light of that coming day when we will drink it new with Him, in the coming kingdom.

Pray

Ask Deacons to come and pass out elements . . . as Daniel and Karen come and sing – the lyrics are words that could be spoken between God the Father and God the Son, in perfect harmony, surrender and trust.

But also between you, the child of Your  
Heavenly Father.

Make this your testimony of trust and surrender  
and humility today . . . the chorus includes these  
words,

*Lord of peace renew  
A steadfast spirit within me  
To rest in You alone.*

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 3/9/2014 by Stephen Davey.

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