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Gethsemane - The Cups - Part 2

Readings

Matthew 26:39, 42

“And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. . . . He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

Introduction

In an ancient day when Moses saw the burning bush, curiosity prompted him to turn aside and see the great sight of the non consuming bush which burned with fire. Upon doing so, God spoke and said, among other things, “The place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:5). When we are privileged to “eavesdrop” into the holy communications between the Lord and His Father as He approached His darkest hours, it is holy ground. The recording of this experience was to cause us to stop and consider deeply the distraughtness that He experienced in approaching that cup at Calvary when He bore our sins penalty on the cross.

Our sin changed the experiences the Lord would face. From riches “he became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9); His peace to mental distress (Matt. 26:37), and yet in the Upper room He had spoken of His peace (Jn. 14:27). What a paradox, singing to sighing (Matt. 26:30, 39). These were experiences He had never known before.

- a) He had known what tears were before, but never like this (Jn. 11:35)
- b) He had known what it was to pray before, but never like this (Lk. 22:44)
- c) He had known what it was to suffer in His soul before, but never like this (Jn. 12:27).

The Dreaded Bitterness Of The “Cup” Of Calvary

- 1) In His prayer He cries to God that, “This cup pass (parechomai, go) from me” (Matt. 26:39); “take away this cup” (parechomai) from me” (Mk. 14:36); “Remove (papaphero, bear away) this cup” (Lk. 22:42). The words are spoken in such a tense that they are an entreaty for something that, if possible, to begin now, yet in it there is the feeling of complete dependence, leaving all to the will of the Father.
- 2) The Lord is not asking for a way out of drinking the cup. That was the reason He came, for through His drinking the cup humanity could be forgiven, the righteousness of God be manifested, and the value God puts on His holiness exhibited. That cup was filled with bitter dregs of man’s rebellion against God. The prayer of the Lord was not pseudo spirituality or theatrics, the drinking of that cup was the bitterest gall, filled with the wrath of God to the full measurement of man’s sin and the holiness of God.
- 3) To me the Lord was asking, “Is there any other way?”. Speaking reverently, He was asking God, as it were, “to look again, and see if there is any other way in which Thy perfect righteousness can be maintained, the guilty forgiven and reconciled to God, even at this late hour?” However, there was no other way. He must be forsaken by God, He must feel the rod of God in His unflinching, uncurtailing fury against sin, He must know the horror of the darkness of a silent God.
- 4) In the garden the Lord prays the same words. Let us not for a moment think that this was vain repetitions. This is the Lord in such an agonies that there were no other words to say, no other relationship to appeal on, and no deeper submission to bow in.
- 5) The aspect that causes wonder is that our Lord would say, “Not my will, but Thine be done” (Lk. 22:42). This was not out of constraint, it was His constraining love to God and man. There must be no coercion but glad obedience. There we stand in amazement, for since God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7), how could the Lord happily say these words? Was it because His joy came from knowing that this was the will of God; that He would fulfill the will of God; that by His fulfilling God’s will God would be glorified and humanity blessed; that Satan would be defeated and the pronounced promise (Gen. 3:15) would be fulfilled? Only God

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knows how He did this.

- 6) Throughout the Lord's life He manifested unflinching devotion to God, consequently, He did the will of God with unwavering consistency. Then the question arises, "How can we equate His devotion with His cries in Gethsemane?" In Gethsemane we have the expressions of His dread of that which lay ahead, but there was no wavering of devotion or of the fulfilling of the will of God.

The Pitiful Sights Of Gethsemane

The Lord comes to the disciples and after the third prayer there is a time lapse until Judas comes (Matt. 26:45-46). What a picture this is. The lovely Son of God sitting alone watching His sleeping disciples, as a parent watches their children sleep, totally unaware of that which is about to happen. What must He have thought in those moments of solitude?

The Practical Lessons Of Gethsemane

The backgrounds:

- a) Strife, Gethsemane is the answer to internal strife (Lk. 22:24).
- b) Human glorying and boastfulness, Gethsemane is the answer to these attitudes (Mk. 14:29-31).

The "Why's" Of Gethsemane

The Gethsemane experience of the Lord was part of His qualifying to be our High Priest (Heb. 5:7-9). It was there the Lord knew the need to be strengthened. How comforting this is for there are times when the burden of the pathway is so heavy upon us that we are greatly weakened physically, emotionally and spiritually, and we need One to strengthen us. That One is Christ. Thankfully the Lord did not use His deity to strengthen Himself, but was dependent on God to provide the strengthening. Blessed it is to know that at the incarnation the Lord came close to us physically, but at Gethsemane, He came close to us experientially.

The Kiss Of Judas

There are names in the scriptures that automatically cause distinct imagery to arise. One only has to say "Jezebel" and a notoriously evil woman comes to mind. Judas, and one visualizes:

- a) A double-faced person, one who could appear in truth to be zealous of the needs of the poor, a disciple who, in this way, was like the Lord.
- b) A man who, with the other disciples, walked with the Lord, did miracles, and preached the gospel. Yet, this man was diabolic in wickedness, void of any loyalty, seeing Christ as a commodity to be used for his own purposes.
- c) His greed for material gain had begun some time before. Having charge of the money, he took from it for his own purposes.
- d) It would seem that a turning point was reached in the home when the woman poured the expensive oil upon the Lord.
- e) This man watched the Lord, not in devotedness and love, but ultimately to make merchandise of Him.
- f) He went to the chief priests and planned the "how to" of the arrest, the "how much" in money, and the "when" in time. Having done all that in pious obnoxiousness, he sat at the table with the Lord and ate the Passover. Little did he know that his treachery would be the beginning of the means for to defeat the evil one?
- g) Now he comes with the band, and one of the most heartbreaking scenes in all of scripture unfolds before ones eyes. Judas kisses the very Door of Heaven, the very Way to eternal life, and goes out into eternal death and hell.

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Among my notes I found the following poem. There was no name given as to the author.

Not as I will, He said amidst the gloom of darkest night
Not as I will, assuring heavens ray of clearest light
Gethsemane, with all it meant of agony and grief
Thy will be done, assured Him swift relief.

Not as I will, unblemished Son unmarred by sin
Not as I will, the purest heart and life, without, within
Gethsemane, His attributes recoil in thought
To be made sin for us, brought such distraught.

Not as I will, then let this cup now pass from me
Not as I will, My plea is based on filial love from thee
Gethsemane, not by the law of yore
But now a sacrifice, which pleases more.

Not as I will, the call was loud and clear
Not as I will, the blood like sweat, an angel near
Gethsemane, acceptance of that will
I came to do Thy will, I now fulfill.

Not as I will, My love to Father shown
Not as I will, whatever griefs I mourn
Gethsemane, I ask thy will be done
Complete obedience from the perfect Son.

Not as I will, the crowd with staves appear
Not as I will, disciples gripped with fear
Gethsemane, let these now go their way
He stands alone, in love to be their prey.

Not as I will, now reached the Father's ear
Not as I will, His words suppressed all fear
Gethsemane, expresses deepest death
When from the cross, He yielded up His breath.

. . . Rowan Jennings