



Questions Jesus asked (Part 5)
Shall I Not drink from the Cup?
Pastor Ted Cunningham

We are continuing, on this Palm Sunday, in our series called *Questions Jesus Asked*. On the way to church today, I had to pull over three times for emergency vehicles. On the second time I pulled over, I got honked at by somebody frustrated that I pulled over. I didn't think things have changed, but I still thought we were supposed to pull over for first responders and emergency vehicles. If you still pull over, would you raise your hand? I'm not going to ask the other question to start this message off in judgement. But I went to the source. I'm like is this even a thing anymore. So, I went to the source ChatGPT and

I asked it the question. Here is the exact question I asked- Does the law still require us to pull over for emergency vehicles? This is what it said. In most US states, "including Indiana..." that's not the first state I would have thought would succeed from the union. The law does require you to pull over for emergency vehicles. I just want to remind a few of us. When you see an emergency vehicles, police, fire, ambulance, flashing lights, sirens sounding, yield the right of way, pull over to the right side of the road, stop and remain stopped until the vehicle passes.

I always take these moments and maybe it was the way I was brought up. You pull over when you see a funeral procession, out of respect. I am shocked how many times I'm on 65 and I see an ambulance and I see people passing the ambulance. Has anybody else seen this. We still are to yield the right of way. They have to get somewhere. In those moments, I always think someone's life, right now, hangs in balance. This is like a life-or-death thing going on. And it

could go either way. I don't know what was happening in eastern Tanney County today, but I know there was something. It could have been a call to protect someone from an intruder, it could have been an accident, but it's a life-or-death moment.

That's what today's question brings us to that Jesus asked. There are people today, here on our campus, watching online, and let me tell you their life hangs in the balance, between life and death. And today, I hope it doesn't hang in balance when they leave. I hope they make the decision for life because, guess what? The sirens are sounding and the lights are flashing, and today is the day. Today is the day. This is the most important, significant week on the church calendar as we reflect on the most significant week, in all of human history. It begins today with triumphal entry. We call it Palm Sunday. The crowd welcoming Jesus with shouts of Hosanna to the son of David, *blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

And as the week goes on, only a few days, we get betrayal, we get denial, beatings, suffering, and the brutal crucifixion of our Lord and Savior. But wait, there's more. Sunday is coming. Between today, triumphal Sunday and the triumphal entry to next Sunday, resurrection Sunday, we have a lot to think about, all that Jesus went through for you and for me.

Today, we are going to look at the cup that Jesus drank. Starting in John 18. As we look at this today, I want you to go back and read the whole story, but here's the part we can pick up at. We know when Peter takes off the ear, and that's where we are going to pick it up.

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword drew it and struck the high priest servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus and this is when Jesus steps in and commands Peter, "Put your sword away"

Now, remember, we looked at these rhetorical questions and we are to answer a rhetorical question with a statement because the answer is in the question.

And Jesus says to Peter, "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

What is the cup? The cup is an Old Testament word picture for wrath. And Jesus was going to drink the cup of God's wrath and become a curse for sinful man.

He was going to drink the cup of God's wrath and become a curse for you and for me, suffering agony. And what most scholars say was the roughest part, the hardest part, the most intense part... Yes, there was going to be pain, there was going to be suffering, but it was the separation from his father that we hear the words of Jesus on the cross when he says, ***"My God, my God, why have you***

Most scholars believe that was the most intense part, the moment Jesus took on the sin for you and for me. ***"Why have you forsaken me?"*** Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane right before this. That this cup could be removed.

We read in Mathew 26: 36 -39 ***Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane.*** This is before Peter goes for the ear. This is after the last supper.

And he said to them, "sit here while I go over and pray". He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him and he began to be sorrow full and troubled for what was going to be happening in the next few hours.

Jesus said to them – "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ***"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.*** And this is so important. ***But not as I will, but as you will"*** Jesus was fully submitted to the Father, Jesus was fully submitted to the plan and the purpose of the father. And for us to understand the good news and what we are entering into this week, we have to talk about the bad news. We must understand and clearly teach the wrath of God because we don't want to lose the bad news. Without the bad news, there is no good news. Without the bad news and without proclaiming God's justice and wrath, we can't preserve the gospel. You hear me say this often. This is one reason I don't want you to be discipled by 30 second clips online. Because what happens is you begin to paint a picture of God that really fits what you are looking for, rather than the whole picture.

You know I've not held back on this. I've never been a huge fan of podcasts, being on them particularly because what happens is you go on and tell a 45 minute film, you record a 45-minute podcast and then they clip out 30 seconds for gotcha moment. And they post that because that the click to get people to

listen. But I hate to break it to you, ain't nobody listening to the 45 minutes. They are all forming their opinions on this 30 seconds

I was on a walk with Amy this week and I got a request to be on a podcast and I immediately, when I say it just... Why? Because people are *like I can't believe you said that! Is that really what you believe?* And I go, that is 30 seconds of what I proclaimed for 45 minutes. This is why you need to be plugged into a local church. This is why you need to hear the Bible taught with the whole counsel of God's word because we can't just give you one side of God or one side of Jesus that you are looking for. We have to proclaim the whole thing for us to truly understand it, get it, and be grateful for it.

I was at an event and an athlete many of you would know goes, "My problem with preaching today is I don't hear preachers saying blah, blay blah. I'm like "Bro, you do over 100 events a year. I don't even know how often you are in your local church, but every pastor I know preaches that what you say is missing. So, you can't just form like I want the loving God, the God that doesn't send anyone to hell... we have to understand the wrath of God, we have to understand hell to truly understand what we are heading into this week and what we've been saved from, and what we should be rejoicing over.

Timothy Keller put it this way: *If you get rid of the idea of Hell and wrath, you have a less loving God. If you get rid of a God who has wrath and Hell, you have a God who loves us in general, but that's not as loving as the God in the Bible.* the God of Jesus Christ who loves us with a costly love. And that's where we are headed today.

Charles Spurgeon... I love studying the old, English preachers. Some called him the prince of preachers. He was born in 1834 to 1892. As you study old preachers, you realize they didn't live to be very old, which always makes me shutter a little bit. But he had a great sense of humor. I think this is one of the reasons I love studying him. One lady came up to him one time and criticize him. She said "You use too much humor in your sermons, to which he responded, if you only knew how much I held back.

A pastor in London once criticized him saying, "There's too much laughter in your church, to which Spurgeon responded I prefer the laughter in my church

compared to the snoring in yours. Even in his rebuttal, he had a great sense of humor. And yet Charles Spurgeon regularly stood behind the pulpit, the prince of preachers, and proclaimed the bad news with the good news. He described the wrath of God as this deep abiding and eternal opposition to evil. A holy God cannot have sin in his presence.

I want to add to the sirens sounding and the lights flashing today for those of you that need to wake up and make a decision.

Charles Spurgeon put it this way, “Every unconverted man is hanging over the mouth of Hell by a single thread. And there are many today on this campus and watching online that are hanging over Hell by a thread.

And today is the day of decision. We don’t get many direct quotes. Spurgeon doesn’t quote Johnathan directly, but in the century before him, Johnathan Edwards, as many of you probably read bits and pieces maybe or maybe you’ve read the whole sermon called *Sinners in the hands of an angry God*. He preached it in 1741 in the northeast. Johnathan Edwards said, in that sermon, sinners in the hands of an angry God, you hang by a slender thread with the flames of divine wrath flashing about you.

This is all part of what we are understanding today of Jesus drinking of this cup. Humanity is sinful and deserving of God’s wrath. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Ephesians puts it this way: ***We are deserving, by nature deserving of wrath, we were dead in our transgressions, but it is by grace that we have been saved.*** And all God’s people said... Amen.

Today, I want to spend a little bit of time looking at the reality of Hell. I was going to title the sermon this, but I thought this right here would be a tough title for a Palm Sunday sermon.

Five lies from the pit of Hell about Hell. That would bring them in in droves. We wouldn’t need the Easter pavilion if I would have done this today. So, we are putting it in the middle of the message. These aren’t all the lies about Hell, but let me ask you, do you think Satan wants you to believe lies about hell? Of course. Do you think he wants to lighten the truth and the reality of Hell? Of course. He wants us to be duped into this. For those of you who are hanging over Hell this

very moment by a thread, he wants you to believe these lies. And this is not an exhaustive list, but it's a start.

Obviously, **lie number 1 would simply** be there is no Hell, it doesn't exist. You probably have seen in movies or award shows. People can joke about Hell as though it's some party where Satan is like the lead DJ. That if they do admit to Hell or acknowledge Hell, they make it no big deal. But Jesus said this in Matthew 28: ***Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Hell.***

What is Jesus saying? Man is not the final authority in these matters. He said God is.

Vance Havner was once approached by a lady, kind of the opposite of Spurgeon in this moment, but she confronted him and said, "You preach on Hell too much. I want the meek and lowly Jesus, to which he responded, "Where do you think I get all my information on Hell? I've learned this from him. And this is why we must speak on it.

The second lie is only really bad people go to Hell. Kind of the same thing we do with Heaven. People have their funeral and their obituary reads like a resume of all the good things they've done. Let me tell you. Your goodness doesn't get you into Heaven. Jesus is the way, the truth and the light and the only way, so I need you on the other end to stop comparing your life to the people in your family who are more wicked than you. We can all do it. we can point to someone with *at least I'm not as bad as that person. That person is damned to Hell for sure, but if that's who's going to be in Hell, I know I won't be there.*

You've heard it said that there are going to be people in Heaven that you are going to be surprised are there. At the same time, there are going to be people surprised you are there. But just like Amy tells me all the time when we are talking about physical health and she'll tell me to stop eating that or don't eat that... And I'll start pointing to other people. I'm at least healthier than that person. She's like *what a horrible way to live your life, Ted. Don't do that.*

What a horrible way to live your life as you pursue faith in Christ. Stop comparing yourself to others. *Only really bad people go to Hell...* what does Romans 3: 23 say, ***For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.***

Every single man, woman, boy.... This is very important, especially in Branson. Please understand this because I hear it on Branson stages all the time and I gently confront my friends when I hear this brought into their language when they basically proclaim that all veterans, those who die in service to their country, are in heaven. Your service to your country does not determine your eternal destiny. only Jesus does that. He is the one that ultimately determines. So, get that settled today.

Lie number 3 and lie number four – we need to spend some time with because I think this is a lot of the conversation you may be seeing today. **Lie number three** – everyone will eventually be saved. This is universalism. But Jesus, at the final judgment, we read this in Matthew 25. ***Jesus returns, he sits on the throne, the nations gather before him and he then begins to separate people one from another much like a shepherd would separate sheep and goats. And this is what you get at the end of Mathew 25 – Then they will go away to eternal punishment.*** What is eternal punishment? Jesus spoke about it earlier in the text. It's eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. They will go that direction, but the righteous, the ones who have received Christ, the ones who have his imputed righteous given to them, they to eternal life. There is not a moment coming where at the end, you're standing before a throne, asking for a final decision. No, your time for decision is today. Your time for decision is right now. ***It's appointed unto man once to die and after this, the judgment.*** It's not there will be a time that you lived your life however you wanted, you died, and now I'm going to ask you a question and you can make your decision.

That time is now. Another one that's getting a lot of attention is **lie number 4**, is annihilationism – the idea that the wicked are destroyed in Hell and their punishment will not last forever.

I believe this is a lie from the pit of Hell. Jesus describes a lot about hell. We don't know everything about it. we don't know about all the activities in Hell, but Jesus is very clear in Mark 9:48 – ***the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*** You understand the idea of worms and part of the decaying of the body process

that the worm does not die and the decay goes on for eternity. The fire is unquenchable, meaning the fire that torments will be there forever.

Spurgeon said, "In Hell, there is no intermission and no end. You will have no hope whatsoever in Hell. Absolutely no hope there. There is not even the hope of dying in Hell.

RC Sproul shares a great illustration on Hell and acts it out as well. He says, Jesus doesn't give us every activity in Hell, but he does give us two responses of people who wake up there. One response is weeping and the other is gnashing of teeth.

The weeping is the person who wakes up in Hell devastated that they are there. They are sobbing. The picture we have is almost the head in the hands just screaming and crying out 'No, no, I can't believe I'm here. That's going to be the case for those who are no longer hanging on by a thread, they are there, they wake up, and they are sobbing.

There is another response, it's the gnashing of teeth. Maybe you've gnashed your teeth. Gnashing of the teeth is a biblical word picture for the fury of man. It's the person that wakes up in Hell, not devastated, but mad that they are there. Maybe you've gnashed your teeth in anger at someone or maybe someone mad at you. Their teeth were grinding as they talked to you. That's the gnashing of teeth in Hell. A person waking up and looking and going how dare you! who do you think you are to put me here?! Where the fire is not quenched and the worm does not die.

This next one is probably the most common one people will ask. How could a loving God send anyone to hell. So, the lie is a loving God would never send anyone to Hell. It's a lie the word cast is pretty strong. I just want to remind you today that a loving father sent his son Jesus to drink from this cup so you could escape judgement and Hell and have eternal life. If we are asking what a loving father has done, a loving father sent his son to bare your sin so you could receive the free gift of God which is eternal life in Christ Jesus. And in probably the clearest, most succinct passage of the cup that Jesus would drink from of this imagery, of this metaphor. Probably the clearest, most distinct is what Isaiah prophesied of Jesus in Isaiah 53: 4 – 6 - Surely he, Jesus, took up our pain and bore our suffering yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and

afflicted. By the way, pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That's what a loving father did. He sent his one and only son, for God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son to die for you and for me. the wrath of God was poured out on him and again, separation from God at that moment that led him to say, *My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?* He was crushed under the weight of God's judgement.

This week, as we head toward Thursday and Friday, and you're like "What do I pray for?" I hope that you use the resources that many in our church have provided but I just want to encourage you. Thank him. Thank him for taking of this cup. Thank Jesus for saving your life and freeing you from the penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

I know a lot of messages are supposed to have three points... at least that's what we are taught. Today only one. It's an important one. And it answers this question for all of us. Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath, so you don't have to. If you are wondering what a loving God does and does not do. Jesus drank of this cup.

In what Martin Luther called ***the great exchange***. The believer's sin is transferred and Christ's perfect righteousness is credited, or the theological term we use is imputed. is credited to the believer.

Johnathan Edwards, in his sermon, he said, "Now you have an extraordinary opportunity. A day where Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open for you and for those here across our campus hanging on by a thread, today is your day. It's your day of salvation.

They say every pastor is supposed to have a pastor. I have a new pastor over the last couple of years. It means to me it's a budding relationship. We are getting to know one another better, but he is the greatest encourager, mentor.

I'm learning from him, being encouraged by him. His name is Bob Merit; he's a retired pastor of Eaglebrook church in Minnesota. Gem of a guy. preached a couple of weeks ago and had this illustration that ended with a question that's been in my mind and in my heart and I can't get rid of it. He was speaking on evangelism about his friendship with his buddy Kelly. Bob and his wife would go on vacation in Palm Desert every year. Bob is a hiker and he and his wife would hike around this golf course. He was able to see Stone eagle golf club. He said, I just wanted to play it so badly. The people we were staying with said, "We have a friend that owns a trucking company and he's a member of that club. He can get you on tomorrow if you want to go golf with him." Bob said, "Yes. Is he paying? Yes. He gets there and he meets Kelly. He said one of the first things you learn about Kelly is he's a big guy, he's fowl mouthed and bob says he played and he cussed and we got in the cart and off we went.

By the 5th hole, he asked him, So what do you do, assuming he was in trucking or something. He said what do you do and Bob said I just changed the subject. That's a skill we develop as pastors. When people ask me what I do for a living, I'm like I'm a teacher. What do you teach? I History and ethics. I try to avoid it as long as possible because it changes the whole conversation.

By the 12th hole, Kelly looked at Bob and said, "You still haven't told me what you do." Bob finally broke down and said, "I'm a pastor. To which Kelly said, 'You're a bleeping priest? And Bob said Kinda.

For years after that, every time Bob went back to California, they would play Stone eagle together. He said, one day he got a text from Kelly saying, "Hey I'm in the twin cities, let's golf." Bob was like "if you're paying, I'm in"

So, Bob said on the drive to meet with Kelly to golf, he says there was a Holy Spirit nudge ***saying you've developed a relationship with this guy, you've invested in him, you would truly consider him a friend and yet you have never shared with him the most impressive thing in your life. You've never shared your relationship with him with me your relationship with me.*** So, Bob, on the way there, said I'm going to do it. When they met, bob asked Kelly, at the end of the round today, do you mind if I share with you about the most important relationship in my life. I would like to share with you my faith. Kelly said, "Absolutely." They played a round, they go into the club house, they sit down and

Bob walks him through Romans 3: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. He gets in Romans 6: 23. He goes to Romans 10: 9-10 he's walking hm through it and then he asked Kelly for a decision. He says do you want to become a Christian, a follower of Jesus. Because if you do, I'm going to pray prayer and I'm going to just walk you through it and you just repeat the words after me. Pray this prayer. Again, it's what you are committing to in your heart, it's not just the words, but I want you to pray it.

So, Bob led him through all the scripture. He says when we were done praying, I look up and the tears were in Kelly's eyes. He reached over the shake his hand and this was the first question that Kelly asked him. This is what he asked Bob. Why did you wait so long.

I don't know how you listen to messages but when I'm listening to dear friends and this question came on the screen. What a lot of you just did right there, that's called conviction. That's what I felt the first time I heard it. I'm sharing a story with you today about another person who led someone to Christ rather than me telling you about someone I led to "Christ this week.

So, the question I'm going to ask of you today is you have people, you have family and friends, you have people at work, people in the golf cart, you've been golfing with the for years. People in the club house of Stone Bridge or wherever it is. People in your neighborhood. You've got people in your life hanging over Hell by a thread. Why are you waiting so long. And I want to rephrase it to be more direct to the person in here hanging on by a thread. Why are you waiting so long. Why are you waiting thinking you have time to make this decision.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Today is the day of Mercy. Tomorrow may be the day of judgment. Flee to Christ. Flee now. Delay is dangerous and procrastination is deadly. The sirens are sounding. The lights are flashing. You are handing over Hell by a thread. Today is the day of your salvation.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. I'm praying that many step forward today and deal with this and settle this right now that this will be settled in your heart. You have fallen for one or many of these lies, but today, the Bible has been clearly bought to me, clearly brought to you on the realities of hell. From Jesus. That today you would believe all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

and the wages of sin is death. You don't have to drink from this cup. Jesus drank from it for you so you can have everlasting life eternal life.

The Bible says If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead, you will be saved and that today will be the day of your salvation.

Father, for the believers in the room, asking ourselves the question right now why are we waiting so long? Why are we waiting to share the best news, the good news, the great news with those that we love and those that we care for and those that we spend time with and those that we build relationships with that today and this week, leading up to Sunday and maybe the invitation to join us on Easter Sunday . but this week would be a time of not just an invitation to a service or gathering, but an invitation to eternal life that we can have the bold conversation of someone that says, hey can I share with you what the most important thing in my life is?

Thank you for how you continue to use our church as we prepare this week and get our hearts prepared for Sunday and as we go through each day this week, that we would remember the cup that Jesus drank from and

we pray all of this in the authority of name of Jesus and everyone agreed and said... Amen