

The Cup Christ Drank for Us  
(Rev. Dr. John Bartol)

“All the sin of the world on the Savior was hurled  
As He knelt in the garden alone;  
Hear His soul- burdened plea, let this cup pass from me.  
Even so, not my will, Thine be done.”  
B.B. McKinney

With the Passover supper in the upper room over, Jesus led his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane. What took place there gives us insight into the incomprehensible price paid for our salvation. Christ falls prostrate and prays, “My father, if it be possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet, not as I will but as you will” (Matthew 26:39). We must approach this sacred event with reverence, knowing that we cannot understand the full meaning of Christ’s agony.

What is this cup that he passionately prays that, if possible, be removed from him? Some have suggested that the physical sufferings of the Cross, together with the mental anguish of being deserted by his friends and abused by his enemies, caused him to shrink. Certainly, the excruciating pain of crucifixion, the most painful and shameful form of death ever devised, must not be underestimated.

But no, it was not the fear of physical suffering and death that made him cry to God. Christ recoiled from something far more devastating and sinister. He grappled over his willingness to face and taste Hell for the sin of Adam’s race. The future of humanity hung in the balance.

There on the cross, Jesus cried, “My God, why have you forsaken me”(Matthew 27:46)? In this cry we enter the Holy of Holies of Christ’s suffering. Imagine gathering all of humanity’s sin in one heap, crushing Christ on the cross. No wonder the holy face of God was hidden from His Son.

The thoughtful mind of Paul recalled, “For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then in exchange, he poured God’s goodness into us”(2 Corinthians 5:21 TLB). Then during the darkest hour when Christ hung on the cross, a holy God, who cannot look upon sin, turned his back while Christ drank the bitter dregs of the cup. John R Stott expressed it well, “He bore the judgment we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve.”

Jesus did not die as a criminal because no sin was found in him. In a very real sense, no one took his life because he laid it down willingly. At any moment, he could have called 10,000 Angels to deliver Him (Matthew 26:53). Instead, he died as our sinbearer, a substitute for all mankind. Not the nails, but his wondrous

love kept our Lord on the cross. Thank God, Jesus drank the deadly cup for us!  
And now, the pure cup of God's forgiveness overflows for all who will drink  
thereof, in humble faith.

*"Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."* Isaac Watts.