

To Seek

AND

To Save

A Series of Services for Lent



Week 4: The Cup That I Drink

TO SEEK AND TO SERVE: A Series of Services for Lent
Week 4: The Cup That I Drink
Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink."

Mark 10:39

GATHERING HYMN #330 ELW

"Seed That in Earth Is Dying"—All Verses

Text: Svein Ellingsen, b. 1929; tr. Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, b. 1929

- 1 Seed that in earth is dying
grows into ears of grain.
Grapes that are crushed in the vessel
turn into golden wine.
God, through this mystery grant us
faith in our deepest darkness,
life in our night and death.
- 2 We were baptized in Jesus,
into his death and grave,
to resurrection's promise:
praise and eternal life.
Heaven's own praises begin here
where you yourself are near us,
deep in our night and death.
- 3 Seed that in earth is dying
rises to bear much fruit.
Christ, as we meet at your table,
give us the bread of life.
Lord, we do thank and adore you!
Unceasing praise of the ages
rises from night and death.

INVOCATION / RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 6:1-5, 9

- P. In the name of the Father, and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C. **Amen.**
P. ¹O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath.
C. ²**Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;**
P. O LORD, heal me, for my bones are shaking with terror.
C. ³**My soul also is struck with terror, while you, O LORD — how long?**
P. ⁴Turn, O LORD, save my life;
C. **deliver me for the sake of your steadfast love.**
P. ⁵For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who can give you praise?
C. ⁹**The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD accepts my prayer.**

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

- P. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- C. **Almighty God, we have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Instead of serving others in love, as Jesus did, we seek to put our own good above the good of others. We do not truly love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Forgive us for Jesus' sake and help us to live as your humble servants.**
- P. God sent his Son to be our Savior. On the cross Jesus suffered the penalty of death in our place. Through his suffering, death and resurrection we have forgiveness for our sins and the gift of eternal life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- C. **The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD accepts my prayer.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- A. Let us pray...Almighty God,
- C. **Jesus our Lord came not to be served but to serve. He came to give his life as a ransom for us, to bring us into a right relationship with you. Obedient to your holy will, he drank the cup of suffering. To save us he drank the cup of your wrath against sin. If we are mocked or ridiculed for our faith, help us to bear that cross in confident faith. We ask you to be with your saints around the world who are persecuted for their faith. Help them to bear that suffering with patience, knowing that through Christ Jesus, the victory already belongs to them. Hear our prayer and accept our praise in the name of Jesus, who offered up his life for us. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 51:21-23

Assistant Minister

²¹Therefore hear this, you who are wounded,
who are drunk, but not with wine:
²²Thus says your Sovereign, the LORD,
your God who pleads the cause of his people:
See, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering;
you shall drink no more
from the bowl of my wrath.
²³And I will put it into the hand of your tormentors,
who have said to you,
"Bow down, that we may walk on you";
and you have made your back like the ground
and like the street for them to walk on.

- A. The Word of the Lord.
- C. **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11

⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

- A. The Word of the Lord.
- C. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Mark 10:35-45

Pastor

P. The Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark, the 10th chapter

- C. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" ³⁷And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

- P. The Gospel of the Lord.
- C. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON HYMN #655

“Son of God, Eternal Savior”—All Verses

Text: Somerset C. Lowry, 1855-1932

- 1 Son of God, eternal Savior,
source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
hallows all our human race,
you our head, who, throned in glory,
for your own will ever plead:
fill us with your love and pity,
heal our wrong, and help our need.
- 2 As you, Lord, have lived for others,
so may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted;
freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
yours the wealth of land and sea;
we but stewards of your bounty
held in solemn trust will be.
- 3 Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of peace;
hush the storm of strife and passion,
bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
by your silent hours of pain,
quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,
stem our selfish greed of gain.
- 4 Son of God, eternal Savior,
source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
hallows all our human race:
by your praying, by your willing
that your people should be one,
grant, oh, grant our hope's fruition:
here on earth your will be done.

In our Gospel reading today, James and John want to be two of Jesus' prized disciples. They seem to think they already are Jesus' prized disciples. They deserve special treatment, or so they imagine. Listen to the demand they make of their Teacher, the Son of God: "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." It seems that they did not recall Jesus' earlier lessons about humble service, but they had no trouble remembering the lessons on confident prayer: "We want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

Certain that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and confident that he will reign in glory over Israel, James and John ask for places of honor in the kingdom. They want to be seated at Jesus' side, reigning beside the King at his right and left, right next to the throne. Jesus doesn't grant their request, but he has a brief quiz for them. It seems that there are some job requirements for such exalted positions.

Jesus responds, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Jesus will soon drink a terrible cup of agony and death. He will be baptized, drowned, in a fiery river of suffering. The two disciples respond that yes, they are able to share the baptism and the cup. Jesus tells them that they will do just that. In the years to come the two disciples will share with their Lord the cup of suffering as they endure the earliest acts of persecution against Jesus' followers. James will be murdered by King Herod. While John may be the only disciple to escape martyrdom, he will be exiled because of his faith. Though they will suffer for their faith, Jesus does not grant their request. Only the heavenly Father can grant those places of honor in the throne room of heaven.

The other disciples are angry about the request of James and John. They don't want any teacher's pets within their ranks, and it is not the first time the disciples have argued about "who is the greatest." It is time for another lesson from the Teacher, a lesson in humble service, with Jesus himself as the object lesson, the illustration. The Gentiles, the unbelievers, like to lord it over each other, Jesus said. They like to throw their authority around. But it must not be that way among the children of God, among the followers of Jesus Christ. If you want to be great, Jesus said, be the servant. If you want to be first in line, you must be the slave of the others. It's not how the world works, but it is how things are done in the kingdom of God. There are no teacher's pets here. There are servants. That is how we are to live, humbly seeking ways to help and serve each other just as Jesus came to help and serve us. What would it look like to put others first, ahead of yourself, in your family, among your friends, in your workplace, in this congregation? What would it look like to think of what is good for others instead of what is good for yourself? We are called to follow in the servant footsteps of our humble King. Jesus is God in the flesh, the one for whom and by whom the universe was

created. Yet even the Ruler of all things did not come among us to be served. He came “to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

On the cross Jesus would drink the terrible cup of suffering. He would drink the cup of God’s wrath against human sin. The prophet Isaiah calls it the bowl of God’s wrath, the cup of staggering. Yet God also promises through his prophet that his people will not have to drink it. He will take the cup of wrath from their hands. He will give that cup to his own Son. In Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed, Jesus prayed and pleaded with his Father. In his distress, Jesus’ sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood as he begged, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). Jesus came to serve. He came to put our good ahead of his own. In humble obedience he submitted to his Father’s will and drank the full cup of God’s anger against our sin, against the sins of the world. Jesus drained the cup of wrath to the last drop, so there would be nothing left in it for us to drink.

Jesus our Servant-King offers us a cup to drink, but it is not the cup of suffering and wrath. It is the cup of salvation, the cup of wine that is his blood, with the bread that is his body. It is a cup that nourishes our faith for a life of service, for a life of putting the good of others ahead of our own good. It is a cup that nourishes our faith for eternal life. Jesus said, “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:54). Jesus offers us the cup of life. Drink up! Amen.

**OFFERING
OFFERTORY**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Assistant Minister

- P. Lord Jesus, you did not come among us to be served, but to serve and to give your life to ransom us. Help us to walk in your footsteps, serving others in your name and bringing to them the good news of salvation. Jesus, Servant-King,
- C. Hear our prayer.**
- P. Lord Jesus, there are many people who could benefit from our loving service. Help us to seek out opportunities to bring hope and comfort to those who are hurting, *especially Luke, Jamie, CJ, and Natalie Hannon; Dylan Becker, Lois Mae Helgason, Gloria Maisch, Clair Wilson, Bob Happold, Lorraine Jensen, Myrna Petzoldt, Bob Sperling, Michelle Lindsay, Joan Head, and Larry Mackin*, and all those we name in our hearts. Jesus, Servant-King,
- C. Hear our prayer.**
- P. Lord Jesus, you drained the cup of suffering and wrath so that we would never drink from it. Through faith in your name we have forgiveness for our sins. Feed us now with your body and blood in your holy Supper. Keep our faith strong until the day when we live in your presence forever. Jesus, Servant-King,
- C. Hear our prayer.**
- P. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- P. Gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.
- C. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION (from Mark 10:44-45; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)

- P. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant,
- C. And whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.**
- P. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve,
- C. And to give his life as a ransom for many.**
- P. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.
- C. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN #599 ELW

“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”—All Verses

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375-430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808-1896, alt.

- 1 Lord Jesus, think on me,
and purge away my sin;
from selfish passions set me free
and make me pure within.
- 2 Lord Jesus, think on me,
by anxious thoughts oppressed;
let me your loving servant be
and taste your promised rest.
- 3 Lord Jesus, think on me,
nor let me go astray;
through darkness and perplexity
point out your chosen way.
- 4 Lord Jesus, think on me,
that, when the flood is past,
I may the eternal brightness see
and share your joy at last.

CLOSING

- P. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
C. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE