

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and God our Heavenly Father. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[**Introduction**] [☞]What a contrast

[☞]Two different ways of life, two opposing mindsets.

James and John VS. Jesus Christ!

Selfish ambition VS. self-sacrifice;

to lord over others VS. being Lord of all

and wanting to serve others.

Two different ways of life, two opposing mindsets.

[☞]

“Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” Jesus asked John and James (v 38).

Are You Sure You Want *This* Cup?

[**Jesus Does**]

[☞]Jesus will drink of that cup, the cup that John and James think they want. They don’t understand what their asking for.

Jesus will drink from the cup of suffering,

the cup of death,

the cup filled with the sin of the world,

not because he thought it would be tasty or fun,

not even because he wanted to,

but because it was the will of the Father.

[☞] “**Abba, Father,**” he prayed in the garden a few days later, “***All things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will***” (14:36).

[☞]For Jesus, the time was almost fulfilled, and the hour was at hand.

“***Jesus was walking ahead of them***” (v 32), setting the pace.

He was on a mission to Jerusalem—

[☞]Jesus “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Lk 9:51)—and those straggling behind him weren’t sure what the rush was about.

[☞]Why the determination? In reality, it’s a death march;

the disciples don’t get that yet,

but they follow their Lord on the journey nevertheless.

It's a march toward Calvary,
a march that started in Bethlehem and continued at the Jordan River.

It's a march

[☹] where he will be condemned and delivered up to the chief priests and the scribes,
where he will be mocked, spit upon, flogged, and killed,
where he will rise again.

Just as he said would happen. Just as he said three times in this Gospel.

[*We Don't*]

That wasn't what the disciples wanted to hear.
Success and glory don't look like a dead guy on a cross.

[☹] Even among the elect, it seemed to them that "who you know" is important.
James and John must have figured they were special already
—after all, they were invited to the transfiguration, along with Peter.
But since there's only a right hand and a left hand,
Peter would just have to fend for himself.

It seems so seedy and underhanded;
elbowing your way to the top is hardly loving your neighbor.
Like children shoving their brothers and sisters out the way,
we want the important people and the world to notice:
"Hey, Dad, look at me!"

[☹] Pastors and congregations are not immune to this.
Our selfish and sinful natures want the glory, the authority, the power
that we perceive comes from being the one in charge.

Or even if we don't want to be in charge, we want to have input,
and we definitely don't want to be ignored, treated as if we don't really matter.

Like the apostles, we get caught up in ourselves.
We stop looking at our neighbor as someone to serve,
and instead look inside and say, "What do *I* want?"
We focus on my will.

In this way,

the church becomes fractured, congregations split,
husbands and wives divorce,
children and parents stop talking to one another.

[☹] That's not how God created it to be.

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (v 45).

[☹] We certainly have our own bitter cups to drink from.

It's hard to choke down the dregs of illness and death, disappointment
and heartache that can come with this life.

It's hard, but not impossible.

Even unbelievers experience suffering in this life.

But you have something else.

You have a promise. You have a covenant, a *new* covenant.

The world has its gods

– gods of fairness and being nice and living life to its “fullest.”

But all that leads to is death.

All the good deeds in the world can't keep you alive.

All the fairness and equality in the world can't forgive your sins,
can't take away your guilt. You will still suffer. You will still die.

[☹] Jesus is different. Jesus is life. Jesus offers you the cup of salvation.

Jesus marches on to the cross in order to save you, in order to serve you.

Jesus enters into Jerusalem in order to be the High Priest

who offers up the once-for-all sacrifice for your sins and for the sins of the world.

Jesus was born into this world to be that sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood,
there is no forgiveness.

[*Jesus Helps*] And so Jesus asks...

[☹] Are you able to be baptized into the Baptism with which he is baptized? I hope so.

For that Baptism baptizes you into his death, killing your sinful flesh.

And that Baptism baptizes you also into his resurrection from the dead,
giving you new, bodily life in heaven.

[☹] Are you able to drink the cup that he drinks? I hope so.

Jesus has taken away the sin and the punishment from you so that the cup you drink at this altar is only his blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,
for your salvation and eternal life.

You are able to answer, “Yes,”
because there has never been the kind of love that Jesus loves,
and this is the place where you receive it
—in the cup, in the font, in the promise.

The world will never understand. Your flesh will fight you. Satan will rage at you.

But Jesus will serve you in perfect love,
to guide you through the suffering and temptations of this life,
to lead you to paths of righteousness and holiness,
so that you can face your own stingless death.

[Conclusion]

☞ Two different ways of life, two opposing mindsets.

— James and John VS.	Jesus Christ!
Selfish ambition VS.	self-sacrifice;
to lord over others VS.	being Lord of all and wanting to serve others.
My will VS.	Thy Will

☞ Drink from the cup of salvation
and pray for God’s will to be done in your lives. Amen.

So we... Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among the people. AMEN! (Psalm 96:3)
