

## Lent Course 2020 from Luke's Gospel

### Three Questions: Whose Cup? Whose Cross?... Whose Saviour?

What was Jesus so afraid of in the Garden of Gethsemane that, as he prayed alone, he sweated blood? The answer is the cup. It is the cup of God's wrath. This cup is full of God's perfect and holy hatred for sin. There is no mercy in the cup. God's wrath is not diluted.

God would not be God if he were not willing to punish sin and injustice. We just can't have a good God who does not hate sin and who will not do something about it some day.

That cup of wrath fits naturally into my hands, and the hands of every human being who has ever lived. Except one. Jesus is the only person in human history who does not deserve to drink that cup - but he does so. Why? So that we won't have to. He is taking our place.

Was there ever a greater act of obedience? Was there ever a greater act of love?

The walk from Pilate's court to Calvary is only a few hundred metres, but it must have seemed a lot further to Jesus. On the way, Simon of Cyrene, is forced to carry the cross. Jesus had previously told people that anyone who wished to be his disciple had to pick up his cross, and follow him. And here is Simon doing just that.

But whose cross was Simon carrying? The answer is not as obvious as it seems. You see, Simon was not just an innocent bystander, dragged into action by the Roman guards. He was a sinner too. Simon's need is greater than Jesus' need. In fact, Simon is not helping Jesus as much as Jesus is helping him. Yes, of course Jesus needed some physical help with carrying the large piece of wood after all that he had been through.

But it was not his cross. It was Simon's. It was ours.

Which leads to the final question: whose Saviour?

To all appearances, Jesus is a wretched man being murdered by a conspiracy of envious religious leaders and cruel, cowardly politicians. But far more than that is really going on. On that cross, Jesus is saving his people. By not saving himself, Jesus shows himself to be king. It is the king's job to save his people. He is not simply being murdered, he is choosing to lay down his life in order to drink the cup. He is dying so that we might live.

There is one person Jesus cannot save. He can either save you and me, or he can save himself. He can either die in our place so that we might go free, or he can save himself and leave us to perish. And he chooses to save us. Whose Saviour? Yours, if you want him.