

TAKING THE CUP AND CALLING ON JESUS

by Carter Conlon

When life becomes difficult and overbearing, even Christians can doubt that God is good. People are often surprised when suffering or afflictions suddenly come their way. Instead of trusting in God, they begin to question Him, “How could you allow this dreadful situation to come into my life? I thought you were a loving and caring God.” At this point a wrong concept of God can lead you to believe you should be spared, or believe you should escape the difficult and trying times. In this message God is going to challenge you to follow Him all the way. He will never abandon you when He asks you to drink deeply from the cup of salvation and to call on His name. You may presently be in a hard place, being tempted to give up on your faith, but remember, Jesus promises He will never leave you nor forsake you.

It is in these times you will often hear the cruel voice of the devil whispering condemnation against you.

■ TERRIBLE AFFLICTION

The writer of Psalm 116 had experienced a season of terrible affliction and suffering, despairing even of life. “*Death had its hands around my throat; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow*” (Psalm 116:3, NLT).

We do not know what the cause of the anguish was, but it had brought him to a place of utter hopelessness. This despair led him to believe everything was a lie and everyone was a liar, “*In my anxiety I cried out to you, “These people are all liars!”*” (Psalm 116:11). In a sudden instant, in the midst of the trial, he called upon the name of the Lord for relief. With this cry for deliverance came an incredible understanding of God in his heart. In a moment of time he was flooded with fresh insight about the goodness of God, renewing his faith and hope. “*How kind the Lord is! How good He is! So merciful, this God of ours! The Lord protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and then He saved me*” (Psalm 116:5–6). Naturally, he now wanted to give something back, because of God’s faithfulness in bringing him through his crisis, “*What can I offer the Lord for all he has done for me?*” (Psalm 116:12). He knew there was only one thing he could do: “*I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord*” (Psalm 116:13, KJV).

■ DAVID’S VICTORY IN TRIALS

We see the same revelation in the life of King David. In times of great distress, he too cried out to God, “*Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty*” (Psalm 27:12). David was facing lies, slander, and felt deep anguish within his soul. Beloved, it is one thing when people tell lies about you, but it is all together another thing when you begin to believe those accusations.

It is in these times you will often hear the cruel voice of the devil whispering condemnation against you, which makes the conflict even more intense. David goes on to say, “*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*” (v. 13). If he had not put his faith in the Lord during this time, he would not have realized the goodness of God in his life. He would have lost all hope, instead new revelation bursts forth within him. In the last verse of this psalm, we hear his incredible wisdom for all who are in the midst of a difficult time, “*Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord*” (v.14).

■ PAUL’S VICTORY IN TRIALS

The apostle Paul endured great persecution and trials, but through it all he experienced the faithfulness of God. He wrote to Timothy, “*I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*” (2 Tim 1:11–12). Paul confirms with Timothy, there is nothing to be ashamed of in serving God. The word “ashamed” actually means, “I am not triumphed over.” Paul was saying he suffered harassment, because God had called him to share the gospel. Yet, he was not triumphed over in all of his afflictions, since he knew God was able to keep and sustain him.

What Paul said to Timothy is true for us today. If you trust God, even in the dreadful days, you will come through with renewed faith and spiritual authority. This is lacking in those who choose not to completely rely on God as they go through seasons of testing. When you have come out on the other side you can say with certainty, "I know in whom I have believed and He can be trusted with everything concerning my life." Folks, these are the people who have accepted the full cup of Christ's salvation, no matter the cost.

Under their breath they may even mutter, "I want to go to heaven, but do not ask me to make any personal sacrifice."

■ THE CUP OF SALVATION

Many Christians want to partake of the cup of salvation, and say, "Glory to God, my name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life!" But they do not want to partake of all that it means. Under their breath they may even mutter, "I want to go to heaven, but do not ask me to make any personal sacrifice. I do not want to go on the mission field or serve in any ministry; I am comfortable where I am." They know Jesus paid the price on Calvary and they want to be free from the power and penalty of sin, but they do not want to go deeper with the things of God. However, Matthew showed that going deeper in the things of God means laying down your life completely for others. *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it"* (Matthew 26:26–27).

God wants to heal you of the scars from sin acquired during the time of separation from Him.

■ THE CUP OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

There are some Christians who mistakenly believe that the cup of salvation is primarily a means to have power and authority. The two disciples, James and John, had a misconception about the kingdom of God. They came to Jesus privately, to ask for a place of position and honor. Saying to Him, *"Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory."* Jesus answered them, *"Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?"* They responded, *"We can."* (Mark 10:37–39). They felt confident in themselves that they could be good rulers with Christ. However, they did not fully understand the cost of drinking the full cup of salvation. Just like them, you too can become so focused on the ruling and reigning aspect of your walk with Christ that you lose the true meaning of drinking the cup. You may like the concept of having power over spiritual darkness; you may even like to go to prayer meetings and bind the devil; you could even like the notion of being able to call down fire on your enemies. Now, I am not making light of any of these things. They are all part of the kingdom of God, but you need to know there is more to taking up the cup of salvation than power and authority.

■ THE CUP OF HEALING

Then there are Christians, because of their wounds and bruises incurred before they met Christ, are drawn only to the healing power of Jesus. They cling to the promises He made when He said, *"The Spirit of the*

Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18).

God wants to heal you of the scars from sin acquired during the time of separation from Him. When you come to Christ He brings full restoration to your life. Just like when you buy an old house, one of the first things you typically do is make repairs. You examine the walls for dents and holes where pictures have been hung and fill up those places with compound. Afterwards you sand the areas to get rid of the marks and touch up with new paint.

This is exactly what God does with us! He heals those rough areas where our scars and wounds are exposed. He smoothes out those areas where people have damaged us; and takes the pain out of the hurtful words that have marked our lives. The Lord comes in and what a wonderful job He does. He sands, varnishes and changes everything until it looks new. It is so wonderful, because there is a new owner and from now on this "home" will reflect His nature. However, there is still more to the cup of salvation than healing power.

As you see there is a cost to following Him, but there will be new marks in your life which will be a testimony of the grace and keeping power of Christ.

■ THE CUP OF FELLOWSHIP

All the contents of the cup, so far, are good and most of us would be content to stop right here. Nevertheless, it is at this point you must realize you

have partaken of only half the cup. As you continue to drink of the cup of salvation you will soon come to a new depth of fellowship with Christ. The Apostle Paul calls it the fellowship of His sufferings. *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Philippians 3:10). As you see there is a cost to following Him, but there will be new marks in your life which will be a testimony of the grace and keeping power of Christ. Paul said it this way, *“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus”* (Galatians 6:17). Paul did not pull back from drinking the full cup of salvation. Because of it he bore marks, both physical and spiritual, from the things he had suffered. It was not always an easy life, but it was an incredible journey lived for God.

As with the Apostle Paul, I want to get to the end of my journey and be able to say, *“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”* How precious do you think the scars on Paul were to Christ? The times he took the lashes, the times he was left for dead. Let us think about Jesus and Paul having fellowship throughout eternity. Imagine Jesus turning to Paul, pointing to some of the scars and saying, *“Remember receiving these when you were in Iconium? Remember, how angry and violent the crowd was when you shared the gospel? Remember, when they left you for dead? And through all of this I was with you and you never lost your confidence in me. What an awesome journey it was! Those scars are trophies of victory.”*

At the end of my life I want it to be like Paul's, having the signs of a vibrant relationship with Jesus. For example, I was recently reminded of my relationship with my daughter. As I was sitting at the desk in my apartment I looked down at the wooden floor and saw pock marks

left by my daughter's high heeled shoes. These were mostly in front of the mirror beside the desk. I guess I'm getting older and more sentimental, but I do not want to fix the marks—they bring back memories of when she lived at home and would stand in front of the mirror getting ready for her day. Just as these marks on the floor reminded me of the special times we shared, so the marks that we bear as a result of the fellowship of suffering are precious mementos to Christ.

■ DRINKING THE FULL CUP OF SALVATION

Folks, we must get this truth into us and understand it: if we are going to be a people who make a difference in this generation, we must lift up the full cup and drink it to the final drop. Jesus knew what it meant to drink the full cup and the suffering that would follow. There was a moment when He uttered the words *“If it be possible, take this cup from Me”* But knowing the joy it would bring His Father, He continued, *“nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done”* (Reference). If you are willing to take the full cup of salvation, you will embark on an incredible journey ordained by God. You may often come to very difficult places in your life, where you will want to pray, *“If it is possible, God, I really do not want to go through this. Isn't there another way?”* Like Jesus, we can also make the choice to continue to pray, *“But if not I will submit to your will. If this is necessary, if this is the course I must take, then not my will but yours be done.”* This is when we take the cup, the full cup, and drink it down. You are never alone, Jesus is always with you and you can always call out to Him for strength.

■ GOD WILL SEE YOU THROUGH

Beloved, do not cast away your confidence in God, for there is a great reward if you will trust Him. *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath*

great recompense of reward” (Hebrews 10:35). You may be going through a rough season right now: hard times with your family, your children, your job; trouble in your mind or body. You may ask, *“Well then, what must I do?”*

Again, we see the answer back where we started, *“I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord”* (Psalm 116:13). This is the time when you simply pray, *“Jesus, only you can get me through this; only you can help me understand why this is happening to me. I know you will not fail me and you will not forsake me. Lord, I know you have a reason and I believe that all things will work together for good, to them that love God and are called by you.”*

One of the greatest errors in the Christian church of our generation is the teaching that there is no suffering, hardship, or difficulty in the Christian's life.

■ THE ABILITY TO COMFORT OTHERS

The reason you may have been through the trial, so you can look behind you at others following in your footsteps and tell them they can make it, too. The Apostle Paul encouraged others through his trials, by saying, *“The things you have seen in my life, God has allowed them to further your faith; to show you, the same Christ who saved you, will not forsake or fail you. He will bring you through the flood and through the fire. This is exactly what he wrote to the Corinthian church, “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more*

God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. So when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be an encouragement to you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer. We are confident that as you share in suffering, you will also share God's comfort"
(2 Corinthians 1:4-7, NLT).

■ YOU ARE A LIVING TESTAMENT

One of the greatest errors in the Christian church of our generation is the teaching that there is no suffering, hardship, or difficulty in the Christian's life. The teachers go on to say that when you come to Christ there should be no more suffering and if there is it must be a lack of faith. This is a tragedy and a very shallow cup that they preach, which brings no glory to God. You never know victory if there is not a battle.

Have you ever considered that sometimes the battles come into your life, because it is the only way God can speak to somebody around you? You may be the only "bible" your co-worker or neighbor is ever going to read. They are watching you as you go through these difficult times. As you choose to believe God, they will see you come through in victory with God's supernatural strength. They will have to acknowledge that there is a God. Hallelujah!

■ TODAY, TAKE UP THE WHOLE CUP

Remember, the psalmist said he was greatly afflicted and in haste called all men liars. But there was a moment when he called and God

gave him the victory. Then he said in gratitude for the goodness of the Lord, "What can I give back to Him for all of His benefits?" He had come through dark times and looked back with understanding. Now, he could say, "Oh, God, I see what you were doing. I understand that you were working in my life." In the same way, David also knew the victory of God in troubled times and placed his faith in God. He knew that only God could bring him through the impossible places to the other side.

Today, let us take courage from the psalmist, from David, from Paul and Jesus. They did not shrink from drinking the whole cup of salvation; therefore, I will also pray, "Lord, help me to take up the whole cup and by your grace drink it to the bottom. I will call upon your name, because I know I can not do this in my own strength. I know only you God can do this in my life. Amen!" Praise God! One day we are going to be with Him. He will not have failed us. He will not have forsaken us. It will be worth it all, folks, it will be worth it all. Hallelujah!

Carter Conlon
January 20, 2008
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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	