

Communion

"As Thou wilt"

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"God Would Not Let
His Son Off"

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Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Matthew 26:39. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Introduction:- The Lord had celebrated the Jewish Passover, and had instituted His last supper. Then he had taken the eleven disciples and gone to the garden of Gethsemane. At one point He left eight of the disciples, charging them, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray." Then He took the favored three, Peter, James and John with him, going a little farther, and falling down on his face, and praying that prayer in the text, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

This expression pictures the Savior begging to be let off. It appears that he shrank from the inevitable. The cross lay just beyond this moment of time. And he prayed, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

This was the Father's son. God loved him with an infinite love; He was the purest character; more holy than all the virtuous; more wise than all the philosophers, more mighty than all the great; yet God would not let him off. Yet, He, the Son of God closed his prayer with the words, "not as I will, but as thou wilt."

God had not let him off of the merest things. He was born in a manger; he was a mere babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes. As he became older God did not let him off from a life of suffering, and deprivation. He had no palatial home, no plentiful wardrobe, no position of prominence in society. He was weary, hungry, and thirsty. God did not let him off from betrayal, from false witnesses, loss of popular support and from the death on the cross. He went to the cross in spite of this earnest prayer. Yet he had closed

this prayer with these willing words, "not as I will, but as thou wilt".

I.

There are several elements shown here which depict his relationship to the human race.

1. there was the sensitiveness to peril. That is human. The divine cannot be sensitive to peril or danger. The humanity of our Savior realized the peril of the situation; one of his trusted ones betraying him; His clashes with the powers in open argument had revealed the deep-laid enmity and a determination to take his life. He realized it, and knew that without the intervention of God, He would be set upon and slain.

2. there was the shrinking at the approach of a crisis. That again is a human trait. We have experienced it. The stoutest hearts have misgivings, when a known crisis approaches. The Lord showed this when he said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." I find consolation in this fact, that my Master shrank at the approach of a crisis, when I find myself approaching something I dread. It makes me feel something of our mutual kinship.

3. there was reliance on a higher power. He sought the fellowship of a power beyond the limit of human capacity. He had reached the point where no human strength could bring him help. That happens in our lives. It may happen frequently, or just a few times, but it happens, but we know that if help comes, it must come from a higher power.

4. there was the appreciation of companionship in these vital issues. He had eleven faithful friends. He took them on this last visit to Gethsemane. He wanted them close to him and around him. Judas had gone to betray him; many who had been faithful supporters had become silent; all who had heard and seen his marvellous miracles had deserted him. He wanted companionship in his suffering. That is like humanity. We want the kind look, or token in suffering, for it cheers the heart.

5. There was appreciation for the inner circle. From the eleven he took three and went a little farther, as if to say, "Come Peter, James and John, I want you near me, closer up. I do not object to your hearing how I pray, the object of my prayer, I have faith in you; I can trust you. You will come more nearly understanding my situation, and be more able to sympathize with me than all the others, even though to the limit of their ability they too feel for me." We have that inner circle on which we rely, in whom we have confidence. This inner circle is trusted with our innermost secrets, and more readily leaned upon than the rest. That is a human trait.

6. There was the lowering of the spirit under pressure. Out yonder in the garden, praying to be let off, is the Man who lashed the money changers, and cleaned out the temple; who rebuked with scathing words, the hypocrites; who bade the raging sea to be calm; who called back the sleeping dead: whose curse withered the fig tree; who amazed his generation with his mighty works. But that spirit that characterized these wonders is now sinking. He is now depressed and blue. That is a human trait.

III.

The impartiality of God.

We see this in the fact that the cup was not removed; He had to drink it; He had to die, in spite of his fervent prayer. "Father, let me off, if possible. But God said, "I cannot let you off". The divine program places you on the cross. Many of the past faithful ones died in the expectancy of the faithful performance of their program. The integrity of my throne hinges on your paying the price. "I cannot let you off".

IV.

The Fruits of His Submission. He submitted. I am glad that he did. His wisdom was vindicated. Man's kind was redeemed, and Satan was defeated as a result of Jesus going to the cross. And now, He himself watches from heaven to see the firstfruits

of his submission. As he surveys development thru the ages, I am assured that he had no regrets that he was not let off. Thousands turned to him on the day of Pentecost; every age has furnished its quota of saved ones. The kingdoms of the world shall yet submit to his yoke, and eventually He shall be crowned Lord of all.

Conclusion:- What are you doing with your dilemmas: are you begging to be let off. Or are you learning to say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." I give you Jesus today, as a reliable source of help in life's darkest moments; as a pattern under heaviest afflictions, as a Savior from the blackest sins, because He endured the suffering and drank the bitter cup, so that we may say, "Thank God, He was not let off."

So as we today eat the bread and drink the cup, which announce his suffering and death, may we look into our own lives, and see if there be any wicked way in us.