

The Chalice

Symbols, Metaphors, Similes



“This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he comes.”

Mark 14:25-26

The Chalice as we know it represents the blood of Christ which He shed for us. But, it is not only a symbol for us as Christians; it transcends to be a symbol to all who see it as a symbol for Christians. It becomes a symbol for the vessel which Christ used for the Last Supper with His disciples.

In Matthew 26:27 we read: “And He took a cup and when He had given thanks He gave it to them saying 'Drink this, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.’” This verse holds a lot of meaning for us today. As far as we know, it was just an ordinary cup, not gold or silver, but it was special. We say that it contained the blood of Christ, but then it was just a wine. There have been some groups that claim to have the exact cup that Christ drank from that night. If they want to think that, it is fine. But, the most important thing is if we are willing to drink of that cup. What does it mean to drink of the same cup that Christ drank?

Christ made it a covenant with the disciples that is passed on to us today. We are told it has power to forgive our sins. We know that Christ came to forgive our sins and that He made that promise, that covenant, to each one of us. I think the disciples might have been a little confused. They didn't understand that Christ was going to leave them soon. It was just a dinner where He could talk with them and tell them more of what they wanted to hear about great things that were going to happen. But at the end of the verse Christ says “I tell you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.” I don't think they had any comprehension at that time of a

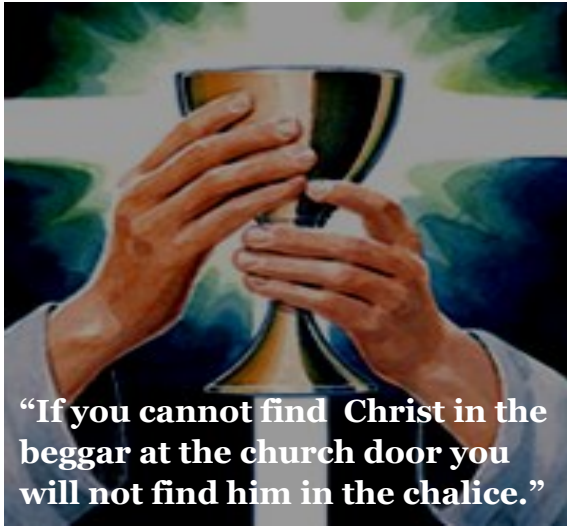
“I poured the wine into the chalice our church had given me. In the one-sixth gravity of the moon the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup. I was interesting to think that the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the first food eaten there, were communion elements.”

— Buzz Aldrin —



Heavenly Kingdom. They were all hoping for an earthly kingdom where Christ would reign and there would be love, peace, and justice. I don't think we can understand that Kingdom today. Many “authorities” have written about it, but we just have faith that we will someday be in that Kingdom and also drink with Christ.

The Chalice, also referred to sometimes as a cup, can represent many things. At another time, Christ was asked by the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, if they could sit in two places of honor next to him. Jesus answered “You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?” ‘Oh yes,’ they replied, ‘we are able!’”



“If you cannot find Christ in the beggar at the church door you will not find him in the chalice.”

But Christ told them that they would indeed taste the same bitter cup, but only God would say where people would sit in the kingdom. They still didn't understand. The other disciples were upset that James and John wanted the “best seats” but don't we all. The disciples all tasted that bitter cup of death, and someday we will also. But, that cup is also our salvation, our entrance to a Heavenly Kingdom.

Another time Christ refers to the cup when He is in the Garden praying before his crucifixion. In Matthew 26:39 we read *“And he went a little further, 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.”* What was the cup that Christ was referring to that time? I think it was the same cup that He refers to at all three of these times. The Chalice, or the cup, refers to the salvation that we have today, but

we must drink of that cup ourselves. Sometimes it is very lonely leading a life that we think Christ wants us to lead. But Christ knew that His death and His blood would have to be spilled in order for us to have eternal life with Him. The disciples didn't understand it at the time, anymore than we understand today. We have a hindsight that the disciples didn't have, and we know that Christ told them things they couldn't comprehend before it happened. But do we really comprehend it today. Are we willing to drink of the cup of salvation, or just sip when it is convenient?

Each of us has a chalice. What is in yours? What is in mine?

Put your sins in the chalice for the precious blood to wash away. One drop is capable of washing away the sins of the world.

— Mother Teresa —



Prayer: Dear Father, we know that You came to earth, and suffered and died for us. Yet, we don't fully comprehend that gift and sometimes we don't want to accept what You want us to do. We want things on our terms. Help us to be thankful for the wonderful sacrifice You made so that we someday may be able to drink with You in Your Kingdom. Amen

1. What is the significance of the Chalice to you today?
2. Is communion a time to remember the Chalice? Or is it an everyday remembrance?
3. Why do we take communion?
4. Is there significance in the particular items used for communion? Or is it the communing with Christ?
5. How often should we take communion?
6. How often should we commune with Christ? What is the difference?
7. What do you think was going through the thoughts of the mother of the two disciples when she asked for her sons to sit on the right and left sides of Christ?
8. Can you compare that to some of our prayers today?

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