

THE TERRIBLE BURDEN

Matthew 26:39 ... "He went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.'"

It is vital that you think of Jesus as both God and man. Why? Because if you think of Jesus only as the Son of God, you might overlook his human relationship to you, and that could persuade you to minimize his importance in your life. Ignoring Jesus' humanity, might also cause you to minimize his suffering in your place.

We have spoken before about guilt. The topic bears revisiting because guilt can result in self-pity, which can become an obstacle between you and God. In fact, guilt and self-pity sometimes become idols in people's lives. They cherish those feelings and cling to them because they think they are forms of humility. A person who experiences guilt for doing something bad to another person, might hold on to the guilt all of their life as a reminder of how badly they behaved. They feel it is a form of remorse or penance, but it is really a very selfish act that stands in the way of healing of a broken relationship and a blest life. God forgives us and gives us the ability to forgive others to erase guilt from our lives. But some folks refuse the forgiveness of God and people because they feel they do not deserve it.

When Jesus came to earth, he left his spiritual powers in heaven. He came as a man, like you and I. The difference between Jesus and us, is that Jesus chose to obey the Father and refused to sin. When he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested and killed, Jesus invited the Father to "let this cup pass from me." What was that cup? I imagine that Jesus called the events that would follow during his torture and death a cup, because he knew that those events would contain many painful things, including the spilling of his own blood.

In the moments before Jesus finally died on the cross, he was carrying the burden of guilt owned by every person who ever lived or would live in the future. You cannot begin to imagine what that was like. When we experience the guilt from our own sins, it is a heavy, paralyzing feeling. Carrying the weight of guilt for the sins of all people who ever lived or will live in the future is unimaginable. All of the sins of literally billions of people were carried by Jesus to the cross.

If you have chosen to suffer guilt for your sins, that in itself is a sin. If you have chosen to bear the pain of your bad decisions as a well-deserved punishment, that is a sin. Jesus died to pay for your sins and to make you a new creature in him. It is a sin to refuse his sacrifice and love, and it will lead you to suffer needlessly all of your life.

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