

10-9-24 – What's in Your Cup?

Cups. We collect them. Places . . . seasons . . . gifts. Metaphor. Grail.

- **Alumni story** - a group of alumni, very successful in their careers, got together @ Homecoming to visit their old professor. As they visit, the conversation soon turned into complaints about work, relationships and life's problems.
- Want coffee? Professor comes from kitchen with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups – porcelain, plastic, etc. – help yourselves.
- When they all had a cup of coffee in hand, Professor said: "Notice that all the nice looking, expensive cups have been taken, only the plain, cheap ones are left. It's normal for people to want the best for themselves, but it's also the source of much dissatisfaction, stress, and problems."
- The cup itself adds nothing to the taste of coffee. What you really wanted was the coffee, not the cup, but you unconsciously went for the best cups. . . those perceived to be special or expensive. Some of you were even eyeing each other's cups to see if yours was nice enough.
- Consider: **Life is like the cup of coffee** - jobs, money, house, possessions and position are the cups. They're **tools** to aid us in life – not life.
- The **type of cup** we have doesn't **define** or change the quality of life we live.

① Jesus said: "**Life does not consist of an abundance of possessions.**" **Luke 12:15.** NLT puts it this way: "*Life is not measured by how much you own.*"

- Jesus reminded His followers that we can't take our stuff with us.
- **Hurricanes** remind us – possessions are just **stuff**... stuff doesn't matter.
- **Luke 12:21** - "**a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.**"
 - **Q tonight** - concentrating on your cup, not enjoying what's in it?
 - Focused on conquering? Accumulating? Achieving? Has the cup become more important than what's in the cup?
 - If focus is on having the best cup - the most important thing is neglected – the heart. Love. Relationships.
 - **The Heart** determines the quality of our lives. . . feeling love, being together . . . it's the moments, not the stuff.

Matt. 23:25-26 - “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”

- Jesus said that everything the Pharisees did was for show.
 - He warned that sorrow awaits those who spend time worrying about the **trappings of life**, but ignore the most important thing – heart right /God.
 - He described them as “**whitewashed tombs**” – beautiful on the inside, but dead bones on the inside. Greed. Hypocrisy. Not Love.
- ② What’s missing? Heart. Not in right place; unconnected to God, others. More concerned w/ respect/reputation rather than loving God/others.
- **Can’t pour out what you don’t have.**

We know something’s missing ... try to fill our own cups. Bless ourselves.

- ③ **The best blessings in life are not what we do for ourselves.** The greatest blessings happen when God fills our cup – His blessings run over.
- **Psalm 23:5** – “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”
 - **We want cups to overflow – to run over w/blessings.** But too often we ignore the very source of goodness, love, & blessings - God.
 - “Every good and perfect gift is from above” – **James 1:17**

Psalm 16 – “Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. ² I said to the LORD, “You are my Master! Every good thing I have comes from you.” ⁵ LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing.”

- David knew God as Lord... source of goodness. He’d provide, protect.
- His inheritance will come from God, not people.
 - Too often, we’re trying to build our own inheritance, fill own cups.
 - But when we trust God to fill our cups – amazing! **EX: Water floats**
 - He turns our world upside down. The bad becomes good.
- We make it hard for God to fill our cups / don’t spend time w/Him.
- **Parable of the Empty Cup:** There was a wise Zen master. People traveled from far away to seek his help. He would teach them and show them the way to enlightenment.

- One day, a scholar came to visit the master for advice. But soon, it was obvious that the scholar was full of his own opinions and knowledge. He interrupted the master repeatedly with his own ideas and failed to listen to what the master had to say.
- The master calmly suggested they should have tea. The master poured . . . the cup was filled but he kept pouring until the cup overflowed. The scholar cried, "Stop! The cup is full already. Can't you see?" "Exactly," the Zen master replied. "You're like this cup — so full of ideas that nothing more will fit in. Come back to me with an empty cup."

Any room in your cup? **Empty the bitterness**, so God can fill it up. Anger.

Seeking wisdom in all wrong places? Trying to answer unanswerable Qs?

Some "whys" not known here. World can't give answers . . . found in Jesus.

- **Jer. 8:9** – "The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what wisdom do they really have?"

4 We can **know** so much . . . yet **not know** the most important thing – the quality of our time on this earth depends on the time we spend w/ God.

- **It's how we go thru challenges, come out blessed.** Can't learn other way
 - o Give God your cup; make room/time for Him fill it.

5 - **What comes out** of the cup is directly related to **what goes in** the cup.

- Scripture is clear – **we reap what we sow.** (**Gal. 6:7**)
- If you're holding your cup and you get bumped, what spills out?
- It depends on what's inside. **EX.** – **Pour it out.**
 - o Can't put in chaos and expect calmness. . . sow discord/unity
 - o Can't speak hateful rhetoric/ expect love to flow. Drama/peace
 - o Can't isolate/connected. . . ignore relationship w/ God & expect ...
- **What's in your cup?** What are you putting in it?

6 - Understand that our cups may run dry at times, but are **refillable**.

- God restores what/taken. He returns what/lost. Restores better/before
 - o **Job 42:12**- God "blessed Job's latter days more than his beginning."
 - o **Joel 2:25** - "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—"
 - o **Pharoah's cup-bearer** . . . in prison w/Joseph. Dream.

Gen. 40:13 – "Within 3 days Pharaoh will lift you up & restore you to your position as his chief cup-bearer."

- Some of us have faced locust . . . job. Home. Family. Hurricanes. 10/10
- God is in the restoration business. All can be restored. **Cup Re-Filled!**
- **Let God do it.** You'll be able to say – "My Cup runneth over!"