

It has been said that today parents are doing so much for their children that when it is necessary for these young people to go out on their own, they feel that they need all of the modern conveniences which their parents have struggled all of their lives to attain. As young people set out on their own, they do feel that they need many things that could really be classified as luxuries, such as large screen TV's, game systems, and so on. As I thought more about that, I began to take a closer look at myself to see how many times I felt that something was impossible for me to do simply because I did not have the modern tools to do it easily. If a tree blows over and needs to be cleaned up, we immediately think the only way to do it is with a chainsaw — not with a bow saw. To dig any hole without a backhoe is almost unthinkable. As a society, we are really becoming more and more unwilling to do many of the things which require manual labor. Because we have been blessed with enough money, most frequently we would rather pay someone else to do it for us, so that we do not have to do it ourselves. In other words, very frequently we look to find the easy way out of things. Most of the time, there is nothing wrong with that, as long as we can afford it. But in some instances, the easy way out is not the proper course which we ought to follow. That is exactly why Jesus asked this next question in our series: SHALL I NOT DRINK THE CUP THE FATHER HAS GIVEN ME? I. He could have refused to drink it, but II. only by drinking it would God's plan be fulfilled.

Last week we saw Judas leading an armed band of men out to the garden of Gethsemane to arrest Jesus. Instead of hiding or fleeing for His life, Jesus went out to meet them, even going so far as to tell them that He was the one whom they were looking for. When they finally did seize Jesus, Peter wanted to protect his teacher. **“Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear.”** (10) Earlier in that evening, as Jesus was trying to prepare His disciples for what was about to happen, they had misunderstood His words, so two of them grabbed swords. Peter must have been one of them. Peter thought that this would be a good time to use that sword to prevent them from arresting Jesus. He drew that sword and began swinging it, so that he cut off the right ear of one of the men who was in this band coming to arrest Jesus. What Peter thought he was going to be able to accomplish against this whole band of men is unclear, but he must have thought he was living up to the promise that he had made to Jesus that he would stand by Him no matter what happened to Him.

But Jesus wanted nothing of this type of violence. He ordered Peter to put that sword away, and then healed the ear that had been cut off. Though John does not record it for us, we are told that Jesus said that if He had wanted help, He could easily have twelve legions of angels standing by His side to protect Him. One angel would have been sufficient to protect Him from a whole army, so twelve legions, about 72,000, angels would have been more than enough. In fact, Jesus had already demonstrated that He had the power to keep Himself safe from this band of men when He had them fall backwards to the ground.

But He did not want any of this help to keep Him safe. He was not looking for an easy way out of what was happening to Him. He had just got done praying to His heavenly Father, asking that if it be possible that this cup of suffering could pass Him by without Him having to drink it. At the end of the prayer, He said, “Not my will, but thine be done.” In other words, He was saying that if He had the choice, He would prefer another way, so that He would not have to suffer and die on the cross to save all mankind from their sins. He was so filled with fear and dread about what He was going to have to go through that He needed God to send an angel down to strengthen Him for what He was going to have to endure. Jesus knew that there was a way that He could have easily escaped arrest and eventually death. He had prevented it from happening on several occasions before because it had not been the proper time. But now the time had come, so He did not look for any way out. He would drink the cup the Father had given Him because it was the Father's will to do so.

We can learn something from Jesus in this. There are occasions in our lives when we face difficult situations. We might prefer an easy way out so that we would not have to endure pain or hardship. In those instances, we need to look to see what our heavenly Father's will is for us, and then follow that, even if it means having to endure those sufferings in this life. To do as Peter did in the courtyard of

Caiaphas, we may face situations to deny that we even know who Jesus is. In an instance like that, when we might feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about our faith, we might seek the easy way out by denying Jesus. That definitely is a sin. Sinful beings get themselves into many different predicaments. Then, it may appear that the only way out of the bad situation is to do something that would be contrary to God's will. In all instances like that, we ought not to look for the easy way out, but struggle to follow God's will. What appears as an easy way out in the short run does not prove so simple in the end.

Just look at what Jesus did for us. He did not look for the easy way out of His predicament, but willingly drank the cup the Father had given to Him. He did not even consider the option of escape. He knew that His heavenly Father had only the best in mind for Him. No, it would not be easy for Him, for He was going to have to endure the agonies of hell itself. But He was willing to do it because it was the will of God the Father.

And the reason that God the Father sent Jesus into this world to suffer and die was so that all mankind would receive the benefit from it, and that benefit is the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. That was why God had Jesus drink the cup of sufferings, so that He would be the Savior of the world. That is why Jesus would have nothing to do with looking for an easy way out of those sufferings. He had the capability of taking the easy way out, but His love for His Father in heaven compelled Him to go through all of the sufferings that we deserved. Following God's will seemed to bring Jesus many more problems and pains, but the end result was our salvation. It showed us how much Jesus loved us to lay down His life for all of our sins.

Just as Jesus willingly drank the cup which the Father had given Him, so at times we need to drink the cup which is set before us. If the easy way out of our problem is according to God's will, there is nothing wrong with taking it. But if the course of action which we desire to get rid of the problem which we have caused by our own sinfulness is contrary to God's will, then it should not even be considered to be an option for us. God wants only the best for us in this life, and we can enjoy the best only when we follow His will for us.

The easy way out is not always the best. May we learn from Jesus that it is much more important for us to follow God's will for our lives than just to avoid problems and heartaches in this life. His blessings will follow our obedience, for He has given us that promise. We are being conditioned that we can escape a lot of things.