

Fathers: A Cup in the Hand of God

Scripture Reading: II Timothy 2:19-21

It is a tradition, at Northland, to have a gift for Fathers on Father's Day. Mothers always get roses on Mother's Day. But Fathers get something different each year. The gift is used as an object lesson, usually illustrating some aspect of Fatherhood. This year it is a cup – the kind that you would use to drink coffee, hot tea, hot chocolate, or just water, if you choose. Our text refers to us as a vessel (i.e., a household utensil – such as a pitcher, cup, vase, or urinal). The Greek word for “vessel” was often used as a metaphor for our physical bodies (Acts 9:15; II Corinthians 4:7; I Thessalonians 4:4). We need to make right choices concerning what kind of vessel we want to be – an honorable vessel that is used for greater things, or a dishonorable vessel that is used for lower / common things.

Let's consider a few features of a cup:

- **A cup needs to be filled.** God desires to fill us (Romans 15:14; Ephesians 3:16-19; 5:18). Consider that Christ is God's vessel (pitcher) to fill us (cups) so that we can be of service to others (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- **A cup is a container** to hold something good, refreshing, comforting, or essential to a person's health. We should be vessels that provide good things, from God, to others.
- **A cup has a handle.** We should be available to others – offering ourselves to serve the needs of others.
- **A cup can be set down.** We sometimes have to wait, while others seek or use our help, incrementally. We don't want to choke people with everything we have to offer. It takes time for others to be ready to receive our ministry.

What we have just considered can be applied to all Christians. But now let's focus on a father. As he faces the responsibilities of being a father, he must be available first to God, so that he can be filled with the love, patience, wisdom, etc. that is needed to minister to his family. He must be approachable – ready for his wife and children when they need him and seek him. That means interruptions to our plans might actually be opportunities / open doors that we've been waiting for. A father must be patient – willing to sit back and let his family digest that which he gives them.

While we are on the subject of cups, let's look at a few cups mentioned in Scripture:

The cup of salvation – There is a cup to drink when we receive the salvation of God. His grace and mercy are freely given, but we must receive it (Psalm 116:12-14; Isaiah 12:2-3; 55:1-3,6 cp. II Corinthians 6:2; John 1:9-12; 4:10,14; Romans 10:9-13).

The memorial cup – There is a cup, the Lord gave us to drink, that is to bring us into remembrance of who we are only by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We drink this cup in remembrance of Him who gave everything for us. Without Him we would be lost in sin. Because of Him we are united together in love, peace, and purpose (Matthew 26:26-28; I Corinthians 11:23-32 cp. 10:14-33. See also Romans 5:1-11; 15:1-7).

The cup that overflows – There is a cup of refreshment that the Lord ministers to us. By it we are rejuvenated. We are filled with love, joy, and peace (Psalm 23:4-5; Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 4:4; I Peter 1:8).

The cup that supplies others – There is a cup that we can use to give of ourselves to the benefit of others. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41; Acts 20:31-35; II Corinthians 12:14-15; Philippians 2:17 – Note: Paul was willing to be “*offered*” or “*poured out as a drink offering*”).

The cup that is hard to drink – There is a cup which is offered to the followers of Christ. It is a cup of suffering, sacrifice, and service. There is a special reward for those who are willing to drink of this cup (Matthew 20:20-27; I Peter 4:12-19; James 1:12; II Timothy 4:6-8; Mark 10:28-31).