

“The Cup”

The Sentence at the Bottom of Every Act of Genuine Service That Has Ever Been Performed

All Scriptures: New Living Translation (NLT)

Bible Study | Luke 22:39–42 · Isaiah 53:10–11 | September 14, Week 2

THIS WEEK'S TEXTS · NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

OLD TESTAMENT · NLT

Isaiah 53:10–11 (NLT)

Yet when his life is made an offering for sin... when he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous.

NEW TESTAMENT · NLT

Luke 22:41–42 (NLT)

He walked away, about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.'

THE GARDEN — WHERE GENUINE SERVICE IS BORN

Jesus did not serve because he felt like it. He served because his life was so completely organized around the Father's will and the world's need that when the cup arrived, choosing it was the only consistent thing to do.

Gethsemane is not a picture of serene submission. Mark 14 says he fell to the ground. Luke 22 says his sweat fell like drops of blood from the intensity of his prayer. He pressed the Father: 'Please, is there another way?' And then — in the very next breath — he surrendered the answer.

That is the sentence at the bottom of every genuine act of service ever performed: not my will. Yours.

YOUR CUP

The sermon opened by naming the cup every person knows. The conversation you dreaded. The person you had to forgive. The opportunity that required something you weren't sure you were willing to give. Every person in this room has stood at the edge of a cup they did not want to drink.

Father, if you are willing — please take this cup away from me.

1. Name your cup honestly before any theology. What is the specific cost that is sitting in front of you right now — the thing your life is currently asking you to give for the sake of someone else that you are struggling to choose?

My cup — named specifically, not generally:

1

THE CUP WAS REAL — AND JESUS ASKED FOR ANOTHER WAY

10 min

OLD TESTAMENT · NLT

Psalms 40:6–8 (NLT)

You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings... Then I said, 'Look, I have come... I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.'

NEW TESTAMENT · NLT

Mark 14:35–36 (NLT)

He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. 'Abba, Father... please take this cup of suffering away from me.'

Mark's version is the most visceral: he fell to the ground. This is not posed composure. He pressed the Father with his own theology — 'everything is possible for you' — and then asked him to use that power on his behalf. He was genuinely asking for another way. And yet Psalm 40 shows us what was underneath all of it: 'I take joy in doing your will. Your instructions are written on my heart.' The asking did not contradict the surrender. It was part of it.

Genuine service is not the absence of struggle. It is the choice made in spite of it. Jesus did not pretend the cup was light. He asked for another way. And then he drank it.

1. The church has sometimes presented Gethsemane as serene submission. But Jesus fell to the ground and sweated like blood. Why does the humanity of Jesus's struggle in the garden matter for how we understand the cost of service? What does it give us permission to feel?

2. Psalm 40:8 says 'I take joy in doing your will' — and yet Jesus still pressed the Father about another way. How do you hold those two things together in your own life? How can you genuinely desire God's will and still struggle with the specific cup he is asking you to drink?

3. The sermon said: real service does not pretend the cup is easy. It chooses it anyway. Where have you been pretending your cup is lighter than it actually is — performing willingness rather than exercising it?

The honest struggle I have been hiding about my cup — and what naming it honestly changes:

2

'YET NOT MY WILL' — THE SENTENCE UNDER EVERY ACT OF SERVICE

15 min

OLD TESTAMENT · NLT

Isaiah 53:10 (NLT)

But it was the Lord's good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin...

NEW TESTAMENT · NLT

Luke 22:42 (NLT)

Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

Four letters. Yet. That word carries the entire theology of Christian service. Not my will — what I would choose if I were choosing for myself: my comfort, my preference, my safety, my plan. But yours — the Father's will, the need of the world, the assignment that costs something. Isaiah uses the same word in the same way: yet when his life is made an offering. Yet. The cup was not chosen because it felt good. It was chosen because his life was organized around a will that was not his own.

'Not my will but yours' is not a prayer you pray in a crisis. It is the orientation of a life so completely surrendered to the Father that when the cup arrives, the only question is when you pick it up — not whether.

THE SENTENCE BENEATH EVERY GENUINE ACT OF SERVICE

The nurse who stayed past her shift because the patient needed her. The pastor who picked up the phone at midnight when he was exhausted. The mother who gave up the career for the family. The elder who showed up for the meeting when he had every reason to stay home.

None of them may have spoken the words 'not my will but yours.' But the decision they made in that moment was shaped by the same surrender Jesus made in the garden. A life organized around that sentence does not calculate the cost before deciding whether to serve. The calculation has already been made. The answer is already given.

This is the difference between service as addition and service as identity. The person who has made the surrender in advance does not wait to see whether the cup feels manageable before picking it up.

1. The sermon said: a life organized around ‘not my will but yours’ does not calculate the cost before deciding whether to serve. Honestly — are you calculating first, or is the surrender already settled? What does your actual decision-making process reveal about which orientation is governing you?
2. Think of someone in your life whose service clearly flows from a settled surrender rather than a situational calculation. What does that look like from the outside? How is it different from someone who serves occasionally when the cost is manageable?
3. Isaiah 53 says ‘yet’ and Luke 22 says ‘yet.’ The same word doing the same work across seven centuries. What does it say about the nature of genuine service that this word — yet, nevertheless, even so — keeps appearing at the decisive moment?

The specific area of my life where ‘not my will but yours’ needs to replace my current calculation:

3

THE CUP IS YOURS — AND IT HAS A SPECIFIC NAME

10 min

OLD TESTAMENT · NLT

Isaiah 53:11 (NLT)

When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied... my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.

NEW TESTAMENT · NLT

Luke 22:42 (NLT)

Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

Jesus’s cup had a specific name: the cross. The sins of the world. The ransom for many. Not a general willingness to suffer — a specific cost, in a specific garden, at a specific moment, requiring a specific surrender. Isaiah 53:11 tells us what the cup produced: many made righteous. The anguish accomplished something. Your cup has a specific name too.

Your cup is not service in general. It is the specific cost this season of your life is asking you to pay for the sake of someone else. Name it. Then choose it.

THE SPECIFIC CUPS THIS CONGREGATION IS HOLDING

The cup of staying in a difficult marriage when leaving would be easier — and what that faithfulness makes possible for your children.

The cup of forgiving the person who has not apologized and may never apologize — and what that release makes possible in you.

The cup of giving at a level that actually changes your lifestyle — and what that sacrifice makes possible for someone who has nothing.

The cup of crossing to the West or the East — of being present in a community that is not yours by comfort or convenience — and what that presence makes possible for someone who has never seen the church cross the street for them.

Every cup produces something. Isaiah says he will be satisfied when he sees what his anguish accomplished. The satisfaction is not in the suffering. It is in what the suffering made possible for others.

1. The sermon said: every cup this congregation chooses to drink is making something possible for someone else. Name your cup and then name what drinking it could make possible. Be specific about both.
2. Isaiah says the servant will be satisfied when he sees what his anguish accomplished — not rescued from the anguish, but satisfied by what it produced. Have you experienced that? A time when looking back at what a costly choice made possible produced a sense of rightness, even satisfaction?

3. The question is not whether your cup is as significant as the cross. The question is whether you are willing to drink yours. What is holding you back from choosing your specific cup right now?

What my cup could make possible for someone else — the specific thing my surrender is for:

THE GARDEN — AND THE CHOICE

The altar call gave the congregation ninety seconds of silence to be in their own version of the garden. Before the commitment table — take that time now. Name your cup to the Father. Press him, if you need to. Ask if there is another way. And then make the choice.

Father, if you are willing — please take this cup away from me.

Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

| Yet I want your will to be done, not mine. — Luke 22:42 (NLT)

●	Name It	My specific cup — the cost this season is asking me to pay for someone else’s sake, named without softening:
●	The Surrender	What ‘not my will but yours’ looks like in this specific situation — the specific thing I am releasing and the specific thing I am choosing instead:
●	What It Makes Possible	The specific thing my cup could accomplish for someone else — what my anguish is for:

SCRIPTURES FOR THIS STUDY (ALL NLT)

Luke 22:39–44 | Mark 14:32–36 | Isaiah 53:10–11 | Psalm 40:6–8 | Philippians 2:5–8

NEXT WEEK: ‘The Towel and the Basin’ | John 13:1–17 (NLT) | Church in the Park — Come prepared to kneel.