

Advent Devotional December 14, 2018

Scripture

Luke 22:14-30

¹⁴When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. ²²For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” ²³Then they began to ask one another, which one of them it could be who would do this. ²⁴A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵But he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. ²⁸You are those who have stood by me in my trials; ²⁹and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, ³⁰so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Devotional

Fr. Eric McIntosh '12, Priest-in-Charge, St. James' Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. / Alumnae/i Council

Given our current political climate, the racial divide, the increase of the non-religious in the U.S. and the Me Too movement, I cannot help but think the church is headed for greater persecution in America. Reflecting on the aforementioned realities, I am ever focused on these words of Christ: “Take this and divide it among yourselves” After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said this!

Given our current state, I cannot look at this cup and ignore the cup Christ mentions in the Garden of Gethsemane. He asked that this cup be taken away but succumbed to the will of God the Father. Neither can I ignore what Christ said on the cross: “I thirst!” I imagine that in those words, “I thirst,” he was saying to God and the world, “Give me the cup!” So how might that statement relate to the words here at the Passover table when Jesus refers to the cup: “divide it among yourselves”? I believe Jesus was inviting all of us to take, intentionally, the mantle of sacrifice he was offering—to share in his cup! Jesus said to the disciples at his resurrection, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Perhaps he was suggesting that we, too, have to face our cup of persecution and to follow his lead for how to do so.

During Advent we reflect on Jesus' coming. Is the cross why he came? Is that why we have come and been sent? I hope that persecution is not coming to the church in America, but if it is, such reflection is worth considering.

Prayer

Lord God Almighty, prepare us for tomorrow even though it is not promised. Equip the saints for what comes as we prepare once again for the coming of Christ. This Advent, make us fully aware of your call and sending of us into the world. Make us aware of your desire for our imitating Christ. Remind us that we all have a cup and we all have a cross to bear. Give us the courage and strength to pick it up and to say, intentionally and boldly, “Give it to me!” May we be your witnesses to the uttermost parts of the

earth! For the sake of Jesus Christ your son our Lord, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.