



Matthew 26:29–30

29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Reflection

(Today's reflection is given by Justin Mof-fatt)

My passage today follows on from Jesus' words,

'Take and eat; this is my body.' And 'this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'

He goes on:

29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Let's deal with verse 30 first, partly because it's too easy to gloss over. Firstly, it's important to say that they sang. They

sang, even knowing what was about to happen. They sang, even knowing that Jesus' blood would be poured out. We don't know what they sung. Or how well they sung. We know nothing but that they sang before 'going out to the Mount of Olives.'

Singing is very important in the Kingdom of God, and for some reason, known only to God, singing can really carry us through a difficult time.

Charles Wesley once wrote: 'We need to rescue the holy pleasure of singing.' Isaac Watts said: 'Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God.' Paul Wester-meyer: 'A group who sings together becomes one and remembers it's story ... Congregational song is creedal, because

the words of familiar songs help shape a congregation's theology and music summons them in a time of need.'

And here is Jesus, with his disciples, singing a hymn which probably picked up on the Jewish themes of the kingdom of God coming, and of the hope and peace that was promised with the coming of that kingdom. Quite possibly, they sang a song of lament as in the Psalms, acknowledging that they do live in the kind of world that requires Christ to die.

Who knows, but they sang.

And presumably they sang the kind of song that would have been important to Jesus in that moment. Jesus sang knowing what was going to happen next. That's

implied in verse 29:

29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

I know when I am going away with some anticipation, I might mark it by a 'last.' So when travelling on a much anticipated trip, I might say on the morning of the flight after having woken up: 'The next time I wake up in a bed, I'll be in New York City.' That, of course, is good news. Jesus says here: 'the next time I drink wine, the kingdom will have come for me. I'm drinking it now with you in the last Supper. The next metaphoric drink will be the cup of God's wrath, which I will drink to the dregs. But, in my resurrection and ascension, I will

“drink” again of the fruit of the vine.’

In other words: ‘Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him.’(Heb 12:1) And it would be the next thing happening. Jesus knew that to secure the kingdom for all, he had to die. And that was next up.

29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Think

The temptation in making everything practical is to say: ‘Reflect on a time in the past that was difficult for you. Or perhaps on a hard moment that you have coming up. You, too, could mark it with a ‘last’.’

Then I might say: ‘Trust God in that moment.’ Like Jesus, express it with a song. That wouldn’t be a bad reflection. We need the songs to carry us. We need a song like the one Horatio Spafford wrote after losing his five daughters at sea. It is called ‘It is Well with my Soul.’”

Though Satan should buffet, though
trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless
estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my
soul.
It is well, it is well with my soul.

I already have that song lodged in my heart
for the next time I suffer.

But the truer and better reflection is this: to trust Jesus who endured a suffering I will never know. And he did it to secure the 'new wine' of the kingdom of God.

Wine is such a great metaphor of safety, plenty and joy. New wine is promised in the Old Testament for the renewal of all things and the ushering in of the kingdom of God. As a friend of mine says: 'The kingdom of God is a great outdoor banquet.' And we can look forward to it, because of the suffering of Jesus.

Reflect on that this. Reflect on him.

Pray

I guess there are three kinds of prayers that this passage could inspire:

The first would be a prayer of praise for the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thank him.

The second would be the prayer of rejoicing for those about to undergo some period of suffering. There are many things a person can do ahead of a period of suffering. But one thing to do is to gather the hymns that will help you. Find those hymns and sing them now. If you don't know any, contact Andy Bell at Church, and he can point you in the right direction!

The third prayer is the one that says 'Come Lord Jesus.' Or 'Maranatha!' Use the suffering in the world to fuel your prayers! And pray for the Father's kingdom to be fully realised.