

Title: The inside of the cup.  
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The inside of the cup

Matt 23:25-26 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Earlier in the same chapter, Jesus accused them of hindering people from entering the kingdom of heaven, even though their office and position was intended for ushering people into the kingdom.

Churches often, unknowingly, hinder those who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven by propagating the same blindness that the Pharisees were suffering from.

Definitions:

- The inside of the cup refers to the heart of the person.
- The outside of the cup refers to the actions and behaviour of the person.

Many of us have grown up in churches or in religious homes and have thus been taught at length about what the outside of the cup should look like. Often the intention is good, but focussing our attention on the outside of the cup will keep us in bondage.

Gal 4:24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar—

The old covenant gives birth to bondage.

Romans 7:5 explains the mechanism – Our sinful passions are aroused by the law.

The law is sin's handle on mankind.

Apart from the law, sin is dead.

Look at Adam and Eve as an example; they had an untarnished relationship with God and they only had one commandment. It wasn't even a very difficult one. Yet they couldn't do it. It would thus make sense that none of us would be able to either. Whenever we subject ourselves to law or legalism, we are doomed to fail.

What would Jesus do?

Jesus made a plan for us to be free from sin

Romans 6:7 – He who has died has been freed from sin.

Romans 7:1,4 The law no longer applies to the dead.

As provision, Jesus' gives us our own "death certificate".

Earlier in the year, Andre spoke about sin as the terminator.

Imagine the Terminator showing up at Sarah Connor's house, being sent on a mission to destroy her because her seed was making things difficult for the machines in the future.

However, all he could find of Sarah Connor was a death certificate. He has no way of tracking her because the system only caters for people who are alive...

In the same way, as symbolised through baptism, we have died with Christ. The law no longer binds us. Therefore sin can no longer take opportunity by the law to arouse sinful passions inside of us. We are now free to live according to the desires of the new creation. The only way that sin can find us again is if we subject ourselves to laws and legalism again.

Mat 13:24-30 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "

- Tares resemble wheat until the time of harvest when it becomes apparent that it is just grass.
- God sows the good seed which will produce a harvest according to its kind.
- The enemy sowed tares in the same field.
- Until the harvest, there is no real way of telling them apart, even though they are different by DNA.

A godly life is a symptom of faith. In other words, the outside of the cup is clean because the inside of the cup has been cleansed. Similarly, a runny nose is a symptom of having a cold. You don't have to fake it.

Tares represents the enemy's attempt to

(a) hinder the Lord's harvest

(b) ensnare people in sin by keeping them focussed on the outside of the cup.

Genesis 4:7

sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.

Romans 6:12

do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Romans 6:14

Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Sin has the potential and the desire to destroy you and your loved ones.

We should resist sin with everything that we have.

However, if our strategy centres on external behaviour, we hand dominion back to sin.

Focus your attention on having the inside of the cup cleansed. God wants to place His desires inside of us so that it will flow to the outside.

Practical:

Think of typing. You don't fix mistakes with tip-ex on the screen

- Have you ever desired to do something purely because it was not allowed?
- Have you ever tried desperately hard to get rid of sinful behaviour, only to end up where you started?
- Have you ever experienced the law or rules as being sin's handle on you?
- Do you have an experience of God giving you a pure desire that, you know for a fact, would never have come from yourself?
- How do you normally respond if you become aware of a destructive / sinful habit?
- Are you willing to trust God to cleanse the inside of your cup, or are you so fearful of sinning again that you'd rather take control yourself?