

# Synonyms of the Cross



Joel 2:12-17 Colossians 1:9-18 Mark 10:35-45

Pastor Dave Bolte

Trinity Lutheran Church, Litchfield Park, AZ

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When Jesus died on Good Friday, He cried out **“It is finished!”** Jesus knew that the work of salvation has been completed, His death paid the full debt of our sin, disobedience, rebellion, and immorality. It is not a stretch to say that Jesus was born in Bethlehem so that He could finally say these words at the very end of His life: **IT IS FINISHED!** This is why He came into the world, this is why God the Father sent His Son, the One who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

*Throughout His life,  
Jesus looked ahead to the cross;  
He referenced His cross  
in many and various ways.*

One way that Jesus referenced His cross in the Gospel of John is by referring to it as **“His hour.”** Here are some examples:

He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because **His hour** had not yet come. John 8:20

“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this **hour**’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.” John 12:27

This is a phrase that is unique in John, where He uses it 7 times to refer to Jesus’ death on the cross. When Jesus dies on a cross, then His hour has come, and His work will be complete. In this image, Jesus is patiently waiting for “His Hour” to arrive. He knows it is coming, and He is prepared to face it.

Another way that Jesus referenced His Cross, this time in the Gospel of Mark, is by calling it a **cup** that He must drink and a **baptism** that He must undergo. Here is how **Mark** records it:

Jesus said to them, “. . . Are you able to drink the **cup** that I drink, and be baptized with the **baptism** that I am baptized with?” Mark 10:38

The **cup** that Jesus must drink and the **baptism** that He must endure are His suffering and death on the cross for us and for our salvation. Jesus willingly drinks of the **cup** for us; and His **baptism**<sup>1</sup> will be a “**Baptism of death**” for the salvation of all people. In this context, both the **Cup** and this **Baptism** are references to His death on the cross.

Jesus says that **we too** will drink of His **cup** and be baptized with His **baptism**.

So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized . . .” Mark 10:39

You can think of this in two ways:

Jesus’ **cup** and **baptism** included persecution and suffering; so too, as His People, we will face persecution and suffering because of our faith to Him. *Maybe you have seen that in your life.* **The Christian life is not easy**; you can expect persecution because of your faith in Christ. And when you face that persecution, you are **drinking the Cup** and **enduring the Baptism** like that of Jesus.

**But there's another way to think of it also.** This verse can also mean that the **benefits of Jesus' Cup and His Baptism** are given to you in the Sacraments of Holy Communion (“cup”) and Holy Baptism (“Baptism”). *Both sacraments unite you to Christ's death on the cross.*

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<sup>1</sup> Be sure to note that this is not a reference to His baptism early in His ministry. Here Jesus is using the word “baptism” in a different sense, almost as if He will be “washed away” in death. His baptism by John the Baptist, early in His ministry, was the “official” beginning of His work as the Savior of the world. In that Baptism, He took our sins upon Himself as the Lamb of God. Now, almost as if to balance His life, Jesus indicates that the end of His work as Savior of the world will include another “Baptism”: this time His death on the cross with the sins of the world. Thus, there is a “Baptism” at the beginning and at the end of His work as Savior and Messiah.

- In **Holy Baptism** you are united with the crucified, buried, and risen Christ; so much so that there is a spiritual death and resurrection within you, with the certain and guaranteed promise of the resurrection of your physical body on the Last Day.
- In **Holy Communion**, you received the very Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for you on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins.

The Sacraments of Baptism and Communion unite you to Christ's death on the cross and they bring to you all the benefits that Jesus has earned as the savior of the world. In the Sacraments you drink Jesus' "**Cup**" and are "**Baptized**" with the Baptism of Jesus.

Jesus references His cross in many in various ways. One of the most interesting things that Jesus did, was that He predicted exactly what would happen in Jerusalem **THREE TIMES** before it happened. Three times He prophesied about His cross! Here's an example:

He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the Third Day He will rise again." Mark 10:32-34

In Theology, this is called a "**Passion Prediction**." Three times in the gospels, Jesus predicts exactly what's going to happen when He gets into Jerusalem. *Jesus knew what He was getting into; He did not just end up at the wrong place at the wrong time.* He did not just get caught up in *Jewish politics* and *Roman corruption*. This was all planned by God the Father ahead of time; Jesus obeyed His Father's will and journeyed straight into Jerusalem for us and for our salvation knowing that He would die on a cross.

These **Passion Predictions** remind us that Jesus truly is God *in flesh*, that He is the One, True, and Only God who has come into the world to rescue you from

your sin<sup>2</sup>. In essence, these are prophecies that Jesus makes describing in detail what will happen to Him in Jerusalem ... and it happened exactly as He said it would. Even though Jesus knew that He would suffer terribly, be humiliated, be turned over to the Romans, be flogged and killed, **He still went**. Jesus went into Jerusalem knowing these things because that was the only way your sins could be paid for. Jesus is the only sacrifice that God would accept on your behalf. His precious, divine blood will be shed so that you are forgiven. But Jesus also knew that He will rise again on the Third Day. He knew that God will accept the sacrifice that He makes *for all of us*. *The Passion Predictions show us the depth of God's love for us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!*

Jesus references His cross in many in various ways. After His death and resurrection, He commissioned His Church to proclaim His death and resurrection to all nations. This is the essence of all proper preaching and teaching in the Holy Christian Church. The message of the Holy Christian Church is that because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead on the Third Day! There is forgiveness of sins and eternal life for all people through faith in Christ! As a congregation, and as individuals, we proclaim the good news of eternal salvation that's found in the death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead on the Third Day.

The work of salvation is accomplished! When Jesus cried out, **“It is Finished!”**, your salvation was complete and secure. Your salvation is complete and secure because

- Jesus did drink the cup,
- He was baptized with the baptism He was given,
- and His hour had come.

Amen!

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<sup>2</sup> It is vitally important to make the connection to the **Transfiguration** of Jesus. In the Transfiguration of Jesus, Jesus showed His divine glory as He shined bright as light and His clothes became as white as the sun. This same Jesus will be the one crucified; this same God-Man will hang on a cross for us and our salvation. Jesus remains true God even through His suffering and death on the cross.

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God the Father, we thank You for sending Your Son to be our Savior. We will never understand the depth of Your love that gave up Your Only Begotten Son for us and our sins. Grant us faith to believe it, to trust it, and to know that our sins are forgiven because of Jesus' death on the cross. Allow us as individuals, and all of us as a congregation, to faithfully proclaim Your Son's suffering, death, and resurrection to the world. We pray this in His Name, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

## Mark 10:35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, “Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” 36 And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” 37 They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.” 38 But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” 39 They said to Him, “We are able.” So Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared.” 41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

# Colossians 1:9-18

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

# Joel 2:12-17

“Now, therefore,” says the Lord,  
“Turn to Me with all your heart,  
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

13 So rend your heart, and not your garments;  
Return to the Lord your God,  
For He is gracious and merciful,  
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;  
And He relents from doing harm.

14 Who knows if He will turn and relent,  
And leave a blessing behind Him—  
A grain offering and a drink offering  
For the Lord your God?

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
Consecrate a fast,  
Call a sacred assembly;

16 Gather the people,  
Sanctify the congregation,  
Assemble the elders,  
Gather the children and nursing babes;  
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,  
And the bride from her dressing room.

17 Let the priests, who minister to the Lord,  
Weep between the porch and the altar;  
Let them say, “Spare Your people, O Lord,  
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,  
That the nations should rule over them.  
Why should they say among the peoples,  
‘Where is their God?’ ”