

Well hello everybody. So this text is honestly my favorite in the bible mostly because it is simply so relatable. We've all been facing something we absolutely do not want to do. Ever ask a professor for an extension on a paper that you absolutely don't want to do? Take that cup from me. Ever wake up to the alarm for that 8 am final exam? Take that cup from me. Ever have to tell your parents what your GPA was this semester when you come home. Take that cup from me. We all have things we do not want to do. We all have things we do not want to do and sure, Christ's crucifixion and my research paper are not exactly equivalent but the point is, the point is that occasionally in this Christian life, we encounter things that we do not want to do.

At this point of the story, Jesus doesn't want to do the task before him either and honestly, I don't blame him. I mean, which among us wants to look at 24 hours that are before Jesus at this point and think, I get deserted by my friends, yelled at by the local religious leaders, sentenced to death by basically the most painful way to die designed by man, where can I sign up? (pause) If it's me? I've hightailed it for Greece or Persia long before anybody would think to put a nail anywhere near these wrists. "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me" Let me put that in language that I understand: Is there any other way? There's gotta be right? A technicality or a loophole that we can save humanity

through. Maybe a game of chess or a nice game of cards. Do we have to do it this way? Do I have to?

This might sound weird as I stand in the direct eyeline of the Christus rex, but I have never been all that impressed with the miracles of the bible. Turning water into wine, calming the storm with a hand, making the lame walk and the dumb talk doesn't really do anything for me personally. It's not that I don't believe in them or anything, it's just that any god, Greek, Roman, or even Thor for that matter, they all have stories attached to them detailing the ability to commit acts that defy human reason and imagination. In my eyes, the special thing about the Christian God, about my God, and about Jesus has almost nothing to do with the fact that he is powerful.

Coming into college, to some degree, I thought I was powerful. More like invincible. I graduated salutatorian of my class in high school and was walking into Christ College here at Valpo ready to take on the world and shape it however I wanted with my head the size of the state of Texas. I thought that I would get A after A just like high school and well...I didn't. It turns out that if you ignore anxiety and depression long enough it gets worse and impossible to ignore. At some point between the 19 credit semesters, the slew of extra-curricular

activities, the two widely different majors, and the weekly all-nighters to make it all happen, the lingering mental health issues that I'd been hiding for years got much worse and I simply shut down. I didn't want to do anything, for anyone, at any time. Forget taking the cup away, I wanted to throw it out the window. I was done. Plain and simple.

Yes, Jesus eventually goes and does the task before him and we're all saved because of it but I want to point out something that Jesus finds important in this moment of trepidation. Jesus brings disciples with him. Yeah, they are imperfect and they fall asleep and they are about to run for the hills rather than defend him. But even those most imperfect of companions, Jesus wants them there, having his back. He wants them there. That fellowship. That community. Community can make all the difference.

While I was slowly having a breakdown and back when the chapel was open all night I was sitting at the front table in Helge. The custom we had all fallen into was that if you really wanted to do work you would head down the hall to the workroom and everyone who was there to "work" on homework was sitting at the front table. I was knee deep in a paper that was supposed to be due the next day, before the project that was due the day after and God-knows what was due

next and I was quite frankly, freaking the hell out. I was going off about how I was supposed to have this done ages ago, why the paper I was writing was a stupid assignment, threw in one or two choice phrases about my professor. I am not fun to be around at all at this moment. My friend walks in and I let him cause the door's locked. I start telling him about all of this and he is initially walking down towards the hallway, towards the workroom, and way away from me 'cause I'm not fun to be around and presumably, he has work to do. So we talk for a minute and eventually mount Joshua finishes erupting for the moment and I go back to table to fret some more. And he looks at me for a moment standing right next to Deb's desk and then he walk over the front table and sits next to me. Plugs his laptop in and listens to me rant some more. He didn't really say anything. He didn't try and calm me down. It's not even like that drastically turned my life around. I was on my way to having to drop classes that semester and eventually drop a major. He just sat there. With me.

It didn't make it better, just more bearable.

The thing that I've found the most important in this Christian life is that it is very okay to not want to do things. Sometimes things are just hard and there ain't no way around them, ain't no way over them, gotta go through. It's okay to be

apprehensive, to be unsure, to try and find a different way around things. It is also okay not to find that way out and press on anyway. The love of God compels us to keep going to keep fighting for everything that we are called to be as children of God. Even, especially, when we don't want to. Those moments of trepidation, of anxiety, of stress, are where the body of Christ can come in, not always to solve the problem, not to waive your hand and make the storm go away necessarily. Just to be there. To Laugh together. Cry together. Defeats are softened and Victories sweetened together. It's that power of the community of the body of Christ that allows us to say not our will, but his, be done.