

Our Cup Matters

I have a favorite cup. I drink out of it almost every day. I like it so much that I'll sometimes even wash it when there are other clean cups available! I feel like the cup represents me in a way. It's kind of goofy, a little bright and loud, has a weird sense of humor, and was made in the 80's! It's a unique cup, and I love it! Usually, though, if someone comes to my home, it is not the cup I would choose to serve them. This is especially true if we don't know each other very well.



What is your cup like? Is the cup that best represents you the same cup you would choose to serve to someone else? What if someone were to pop over to your house unexpected? She sits down on the couch to chat and it feels appropriate to serve her a beverage. If your cup is anything like my cup, it's perpetually dirty. Let's say you're a minimalist or in the middle of a move and this cup, your cup, is literally the only cup in your house! Maybe it's even got banana chunks stuck to it from your grabby toddler, it may have been dropped and is chipped. Your cup is in pretty rough shape. And, for the sake of the analogy, you're unable to wash it. So you have a guest and you have to decide whether you should serve her a dirty, maybe chipped cup or just let her sit and have a nice beverage-free conversation.

Maybe you would serve it to her. Probably not.

Well, what if she looked thirsty? Maybe she mentions that she was on a long run and turned onto your street and decided to just stop in. You know she would benefit from some water, but your cup is almost embarrassing, especially if you can't even wash it!

What if she's showing classic signs of dehydration?? She is complaining of a headache, seems to have a dry mouth, and her eyes look at least a little sunken. You're probably less inclined to care about the condition of your cup when you see how badly she might need it to drink water!

What if she had crawled to your doorstep, and faintly knocked with the little strength she had left because she was literally dying of thirst? You open the door and all she can get out of her mouths is a dry, raspy "Water"!!

I don't think any one of us would deny someone water that could save their life just because we had inhibitions about the cup we had to offer.

You are your cup. I am mine. We are dirty, at least a little broken, and less than perfect sinners. Christ is the life giving, thirst quenching, pristine water that everyone needs, but not everyone has.

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life. John 4:13-14

I have been guilty, too many times, of overthinking my cup when it comes to sharing that water. I have worried that someone would know the imperfections in my life, and that they'd see me as a hypocrite, noting only the smudges and cracks of my cup as I held it out to them. I've avoided using my cup to offer that life-giving water because I was too concerned what reaction I would get. I worried that I would damage relationships because I was coming off as judgmental, politically incorrect, or self-righteous. Sometimes I'm just too scared. I don't know what to say or if I would have an appropriate response to questions or accusations. I'm more inclined to set my cup on a coffee table and subtly or casually mention that I am more than willing to share if they'd like a drink. Most people in my life know I'm a Christian, and that has too often been good enough for me. They can come if they have questions. They can approach me when they're ready. I'm not doing much to help them realize their need for that water, and I'm certainly not doing justice to advocate for the true life-saving benefits of Christ. When I think of the reasons that I don't share Christ more often, it always boils down the same way.

"The problem is that because of sin, each and every one of us has doubts and misgivings, fears and misconceptions that inhibit us, that diminish our resolve to act in certain situations. Each one of us may know (the above) things intellectually, but we have trouble putting all these things into practice spiritually.

"The apostle Paul wrestled with this problem. He writes about this in his letter to the Romans. 'What I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do....For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-this I keep on doing!' (Romans 7:15, 18-19)" Educating the Congregation for Friendship Evangelism, Rev. Howard Festerling

It is sin in the world and sin in ourselves that stops us from sharing the saving Word of God. Scripture has so much to say to help us overcome this sin and refocus on the Great Commission.

When sharing our faith, it is important to remember the significance of creating relationships, coming from a place of genuine love and concern, and not just following an impersonal script. Know that you are a wonderful and beautiful creation of God, called for his purpose, and well equipped to offer that pristine and miraculous water that will make those who drink it never thirst again. Stop worrying about your cup. You are a vessel lovingly created by a powerful God. He wants to use you and your flaws can not detract from the benefits of that water of life.

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for the times I have missed opportunities to share your Word with others. Remind me that I am your messenger and you are the Creator of faith. I trust you to not let your Word return to you empty. Amen.

For Further Reading: I would encourage you to read the following passages to help you refocus on the fact that we are called to share our faith and that Scripture continues to both remind and equip us to do so.

1 Peter 3:14-16

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

2 Timothy 1:7

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Matthew 28:19-20

Philippians 4:13

Philippians 1:18

Romans 10:17

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

1 Corinthians 6:19

Written by Jes Woller

Reviewed by Professor-emeritus David Valleskey