

Poured out for nothing? Yes, there's no use crying over spilled milk, but have you tried cleaning up a cup of milk that is thrown on the floor? It gets places you didn't think existed! Without mopping the whole floor, a spot cleaning never quite does the job. Paul writes in our text, **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”**

Poured out for nothing? Throughout history, almost every society has observed some form of a drink offering. Whether it's Greeks pouring out wine to appease a god, the patriarch Jacob pouring a drink offering to Yahweh, the true God, or it's modern-day rap artists pouring out alcohol in memory of departed friends. Why waste good wine? Isn't it better on the lips than on the ground? **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.”**

Poured out for nothing? A seminary professor faced much resistance and conflict in his tenure teaching. The powers that be ask him to retire before he was ready. After much struggle, he is reinstated and scheduled to teach in spring. However, the stress got to him. He died of a sudden heart attack the preceding autumn. **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.”**

Poured out for nothing? Paul writes this letter to Timothy, and we believe 2 Timothy is the last thing Paul wrote before he was martyred for the faith. In other places, Paul lists the sufferings he endured in his ministry. **“...in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger.”** By the end of his ministry, he's spent. Why go through all the trouble? Life would have been easier as a pharisee, right? **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.”**

Poured out for nothing? Cut down in the prime of His life—thirty-three-year-olds still have a lot of life ahead of them! Think of who could have benefitted from more decades of miracles and teaching. Perhaps He could have benefitted from a bit more tact, and a little more self-preservation. Did Jesus really have to die the way He did? He's God, after all, creator of the universe. Was there really no better way? **“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”**

We're in the last of our four-part sermon series on 2 Timothy. The title of the series is draft, and each week we're focusing on a different sense of the word draft. We started talking about the military draft and who of ministry. God selects Christians from before the foundation of the world to serve in Christ's army. The second week we went to the farm and discussed draft horses and the how of ministry. Ministry happens as Jesus forms faithful men and women to serve in congregations from leadership roles such as pastor to seemingly insignificant roles such as the homebound lady who keeps on praying for the saints on a daily basis. Last week we discussed a writing draft and how God's Word is the final draft upon

which we can rely. The what of ministry is having that Word of God burst into your life and give you peace, hope and forgiveness.

Who, how, what, and finally why. Why do ministry? Why be a Christian? This week we're going to the bar and we're going to talk about a draft as in beer. Sorry folks, no demonstrations today. But Paul compares his ministry in 2 Timothy 4 to a drink offering. Usually those were alcoholic drinks such as wine or beer poured out to God. And as we kept on asking, why go through all that trouble?

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”

Draft: poured out to be filled up. Yes, the cup of spilled milk gets everywhere, but maybe that's not such a bad thing. Cleaning out the spaces you forgot existed reminds you that your house is bigger than you thought it was. It's an excuse to pull out the mop and finally clean out those corners that have been getting a little sticky. **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

Draft: poured out to be filled up. Yeah, it might be a silly practice to pour a little of your drink on the ground to remember departed friends. God isn't thirsty. Maybe Jacob really didn't need to pour a drink offering to the Lord. But those who pour remember and put some skin in the game. Friends and family who made us who we are and the God who saved us—how can we repay them? At least we can remember the ways that they've filled us up when we were running on empty. **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”**

Draft: poured out to be filled up. Yeah, he might have died suddenly, but like that cup of spilled milk or a drink offering, he got everywhere. His kids and grandkids live out his legacy. His students followed in his footsteps for standing up for what's right. The hundreds of mourners lined up at the funeral attested to the fact that he made a difference. Why be a Christian? Why live the Christian life? There are thousands of Christian men and women just like that professor who spent themselves to make a difference in the life of their loved ones and the lives of those with whom they interacted. We are the benefactors of men and women like that. We have been poured into from faithful Christians like that professor. **“Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day”**

Draft: poured out to be filled up. The Apostle Paul certainly left his imprint on the world. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul wrote thirteen books of the Bible which to this day inspire, encourage, and direct. He planted countless churches and worked with a team to give Christianity in the early church a booster shot in the arm. All of his blood, sweat, and tears were poured out to water the ground

underneath. As He was fighting the good fight, finishing the race, and keeping the faith, he never let the goalposts slip out of his view. **“Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”**

Draft: poured out to be filled up. **“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”** There was no other way. Jesus was poured out as a drink offering that we may bear the fruit of forgiveness, life, and salvation. It just took three years of public ministry for God to do what He needed to accomplish on this earth. The point is that the ministry continues on. Jesus is not dead, but the crown of righteousness was laid up for Him by the Father, and Jesus then goes on to bestow that crown onto the multitude of Christians who will join Him at the resurrection. It was worth the suffering. It was worth the pain.

It was Jesus who provided the why of ministry for Paul, for that seminary professor, and for me and for you. Jesus was poured out as a drink offering for the sins of the whole world. Yet at His resurrection the Father filled Him back up again and His cup runneth over.

What’s on tap in Jesus never runs out. Find in Jesus your draft who fills you up when you’re dry. Let Him refill you through His Word preached, taught, and read, as well as the Sacrament of His body and blood, true wine and true blood that is God’s drink offering to you. Each week we gather here because we’re running on fumes. It isn’t a question of who needs our love, patience, and kindness, it’s a question of how many?

A life of a Christian is one of being poured out as a drink offering and getting everywhere like a cup of spilled milk or beer, but that’s the point. As each of us considers that the time of our departure is nigh, we strive to fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith. There’s always time to share a cup of kindness, a goblet of gladness, and a teacup of thankfulness.

The why of ministry is that through the Holy Spirit working in our words and deeds, we might be the only Jesus some people encounter in their lifetimes. The why of ministry is that even if we end life as an empty glass, spent through helping and loving others, we await that eternal crown of righteousness that will be awarded to all who believe in Jesus.