

It is finished

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[0:00] See from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.

When did such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown? Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small?

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. We come to the final moments here, concluding with this cry from Jesus, verse 30.

When he had received the sour wine, he said, it is finished. That remarkable cry, not, I hasten to make clear, a cry of despair.

Oh, it's all finished. But a cry of something. He had always said, I've come to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work.

[1:16] So, are there any boys and girls here? Could they work out what this is? A cry of T, something, something, something, something, something, H. Anybody work out that word?

I'm just trying to work out where to look. Any boys and girls go for that one? So, it's not a cry of defeat. You're too old. What do you think? You think triumph? What do you think?

You think triumph. Anybody else like to have a go? You think triumph? I'll give you a go now. I'll tell you. Oh, right, okay, yeah. But, it is, it's a cry of triumph.

We'll just give the boys a kiss. Well done for getting that. A cry of triumph. All finished.

Price paid. Work done. Remarkable thing to hear from this crucified man.

[2:25] Finished. Finished the victory cry. But there's more details to go through. They need to tidy this scene up because it's a Sabbath the next day and they don't want the untidiness of dead bodies hanging around.

Or bodies on the cross, rather. So, they hasten to accelerate the death. So, if you're crucified, your big problem is dehydration and breathing.

And people have to push themselves up so they can breathe. And if the legs are broken, which is a cruel thing to do anyway, isn't it? People can't hoist themselves up to breathe so they suffocate and die more quickly.

So, they do this to the two on either side of Jesus. But, when they come to Jesus, they don't break his bones. Now, here's perhaps a more difficult one for the boys and girls.

Give you a few clues. Because this, the bones were not broken is said of some other thing or person in the Bible. And there is, it goes way back into the history of Israel when they were coming out of Egypt.

[3:37] And somebody or something else died. And it's there on the screen. The unbroken bones like the P something SS something something something something something something.

All that. Anybody work that one out? Anybody else? Is there anybody at the back I should be looking for?

We'll do this under 21s. So, we've got one keen suggestion here. Anybody else? Okay.

What do you think? You think Passover lamb? Anybody else want to have a go? Was he right?

Yeah.

Yeah, well done. Go on. Go on. The Passover lamb. The bones were not broken. And John says this happened so this scripture would be fulfilled.

[4:40] There's a full meaning of something that was back there with the Passover lamb. And here is Jesus. And he's like that but fuller. And better. It's a fulfillment.

So, there's a detail there. And then there is the wounded side from which comes blood and water. And those two elements and substances are very special in the Bible.

So, anybody like to suggest blood? What particular use is there of blood? Or what particular special things get done with blood in the Bible?

To do with what? So, Corrie knows at the back. But she was... Anybody a bit younger than Corrie like to have a go? Thank you, Arsema.

Yep. Any boys and girls like to have a go? Blood is usually associated with? You're going to say sacrifice. I was going to say it was put on the doors.

[5:45] It was put on the doors as a proof of the death. So, death and sacrifice. I'll go for that. Yep. Thank you very much. Death and sacrifice.

And water. In... I'll make this a bit more difficult question. In John's Gospel, water... Hmm. Now then, that might... I think I'll have to open this to all ages. In John's Gospel, water is associated with what? Think of the woman at the well. Think of...

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out in a loud voice, If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. I will say I'll give him living water.

He spoke this about... Anybody remember this one? What do you think? I'm just guessing that I think he did life. Definitely life.

[6:44] It can go a little bit more specific than that. The Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Thank you very much. I think they reserve a round of applause as well. Applause. Blood is the key ingredient in the sacrificial system.

And water is essential for life. And in John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit is signified as water. Actually, in the Bible, I will pour out my spirit on dry ground. And I think significantly, John, as he writes this, says, There at the cross, there at the wounded side of Jesus, there comes sacrificial blood to cleanse sinners.

And water, the gift of the Holy Spirit, comes, as it were, from Christ's achievement on the cross. What a beautiful picture that is.

It could be. I'm going to stick with the Holy Spirit, but... Yep, there's water associated with newness of life and cleansing and certainly with baptism.

So we've seen through the crucifixion. Thank you so much to Margaret for reading. Well done. Thank you. And correcting my verse numbers. And thank you to the folk who've sung and played.

[7:59] Beautiful. Thank you very much to them. I've wanted to just sort of wrap this up. If you are visiting this morning and you have just come to see what happens on a Good Friday, what Christians think about, you might be wondering what you're supposed to make of this.

And I would like to suggest three possible reactions. Number one, you might think, well, it's okay for them, but really this is an irrelevance today.

Number two, you might think it's just absurd. It doesn't mean anything. Or three, you might think that what's going on here is redeeming love.

And I'd like to just take us through those three options for a few moments. The first one is that you might say it's irrelevant. And I'd say you wouldn't be alone in thinking that because there are whatever there are, 70 or 80 of us, 50 or 60 of us this morning, and there are 250,000 people who haven't come to church on a Good Friday and who think it's irrelevant.

Why bother? There's other things that people think are irrelevant. Things that people might say, well, stopping smoking is irrelevant.

[9:24] I don't care. Or if you're younger, taking out a pension. You say, nothing to do with me. Why should I bother with that? It's for old people.

Getting exercise and a decent diet. Well, that's irrelevant. We'll put that off for another day. Getting insurance for the car.

An unnecessary expense. Well, it is until you have an accident or until the police stop you and ask to see your insurance. These are things that people think are irrelevant.

To think it's irrelevant is not actually realistic. To think it's irrelevant does not fit the current reality.

Because if you're a smoker, the current reality is already you're probably engaging your life. If you haven't got a pension, the current reality is you're building up a deficit, which you'll regret later. [10:24] If you're not getting exercise and a diet, you will regret it later. If you don't get insurance for the car, you will regret it when the police stop you. The current reality is you ought to be, these things ought to be relevant.

But I suppose the thing is you don't actually notice the problem until later. And if you're thinking this is irrelevant, let me just point out a couple of things to you.

Number one, that Jesus said he came to testify to the truth. He came to say this is the current reality. What I'm telling you is the real truth about this universe, about you, about God, about how things are.

I come to testify to the truth. And if you're saying that's irrelevant, I think you've got an argument with Jesus. The story doesn't stop at the cross.

Jesus goes on to defeat death. Death's relevant to all of us, isn't it? We're all going to die. Jesus says he has the answer to death.

[11:42] That's relevant to each and every one of us, isn't it? And suppose he really is the king. That he is the king of the world.

That he is the king forever. Where does that leave you when you're telling him he's irrelevant? It leaves you way out of step with the boss.

You'll regret that later, if I may respectfully say. I don't think this is irrelevant at all. And I'd like to persuade you that this is not irrelevant.

Second thing that you might think, is it absurd? It's just a story of things going wrong. Things that happen in a bad way. And life just has this sort of thing in it.

You know, like people dying in an earthquake. We see it on the telly and we think that's just awful. I can't see why that should happen. It's just a bad thing. That's what happens in this world.

[12:43] Is Jesus' death just an absurdity? Because he definitely does suffer. He definitely is a victim. Those psalms that were quoted as relevant to Jesus are about an innocent sufferer.

There's definitely suffering going on there. But is it just unfair? Is it just pointless? Is it just useless? And I want to say that the whole story screams out, is what I was about to say. The whole story screams out. It's not absurd.

It's not pointless. It's full of meaning and full of significance. The whole story as we go through it keeps on popping up with, this is a mission that Jesus is on.

This is a work that he's completing. This is a significant thing. This point, this point, this point. It's all significant. There's a deep meaning to it all. Jesus predicts it.

[13:52] Jesus chooses to go down this road. God's plan is behind it all in a very deep way. It's not just absurd.

There is a meaning to it. And I want to suggest to you this morning that the meaning that we're to understand is that there is redeeming love going on here by means of substitutionary sacrifice.

Those words just need a bit of unpacking, don't they? Earlier on in the story, the high priest had said it's profitable for one man to die for the nation.

Now, he meant it in a malicious way, really. But John picks up and it says, actually, there's a fundamental truth there.

There's a swap. There's a substitute. One man for the nation. Like the Passover lamb, the son died. I'm sorry, the lamb died so that the son wouldn't.

[14:57] There's a swap. There's evidence of the death. That's where the blood on the doorposts came in that we were reminded of. The lamb dies so that the son doesn't.

And there is a substitution going on. The son of the house did not die because the lamb died instead. The animal was swapped over for the son. And here is Jesus.

Not an animal. But a perfect human life swapped over for a vast number of sinners.

It's a very uneven swap, isn't it? One perfect life for a huge morass of sinful, traitorous, selfish, sinful people.

And what's going on is Jesus says, yeah, they ought to die. But I'll push them out of the way and I'll die in their place. Which is remarkable, isn't it?

[16:07] He takes their place. He dies. They go free. Barabbas would have said, that's actually what happened to me in real life. I should have died, but I go free. He died in my place.

What's the motive for this sacrifice? And I'm saying that this redeeming love is the motive. Most remarkable love. That he should take my place to die for me. That God should send his son to die for me and people like me.

Redeeming love has been my theme and will be till I die. Isn't it the most amazing thing that Jesus should be on that cross?

He doesn't deserve it. We do. He took my place. Redeeming love through substitutionary sacrifice. And we notice that he doesn't go unwillingly.

[17:12] He doesn't go begrudgingly. Well, I suppose I've got to. He goes positively. And I want to put to us this morning that this is the greatest display of love that this world has ever seen or ever will see.

When the son of God comes down and dies on the cross for sinners for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

That display of love touches you and me. If you're a believing Christian this morning you have an assurance, don't you?

He loved me and gave himself for me. If you're anything like me, you find that difficult to believe sometimes because we're such rubbish. But there's the assurance.

God demonstrates his love for us in this. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Isn't that the most wonderful thing? And if this morning you're not a believing Christian, you just sort of come to find out about things, this love touches you because it says, this is how much God cares for people like you.

[18:35] Won't you come and enjoy it in a full way? Won't you sort of cross that boundary and say, I don't want to be on the outside. I really do need to be on the inside of this. So will you consider this irrelevant?

Please don't. Will you consider what happened to Jesus absurd? No, far from absurd. This is the wisest plan this world has ever seen.

Or will you receive this as the most amazing love sent from heaven for us? How deep the Father's love for us.

How vast beyond all measure. That he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure. How great the pain of searing loss the Father turns his face away.

As wounds which mar the chosen one bring many sons to glory. Please stand when the music starts.