

John 19:1–30: It Is Finished

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Date: 18 April 2025

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[0 : 00] Tonight, for my text, I was assigned an excerpt from what Lisa read, John 19, verse 30.

It is finished. They are, the Bible records seven words, seven phrases spoken by Jesus from the cross.

It is finished is numbered six. It is finished. These are not unfamiliar words to us. They come out of our mouths whenever we complete tasks that are worthwhile.

This past week, you may have breathed a sigh of relief and thought or stated, it is finished after you submitted your federal income taxes.

Perhaps a large work project, a school problem set, a multi-page essay, maybe an impending graduation.

[1 : 21] Yes, even an 800-page long dissertation may draw out of you the statement, it is finished.

It's been months since you undertook that, what was conceived as a small home improvement project, only to find out it's being drawn out longer and longer.

When the final coat of paint goes on or the last nail is driven in, you cannot help but declare, it is finished. See, we associate it is finished as a declaration of achievement.

It's finished. It's what we announce after an accomplishment, whether small or large, it is finished. It is a statement that says whatever was undertaken was not left incomplete or undone, rather completely fulfilled, completed, finished, victory, success, triumph are the feelings.

It is finished as the declaration. And these three words are where I want to spend 10 minutes. Yes, 10 minutes. For they might as well be the three most important words in our English Bible.

[2 : 45] I make this case because of the source of these words. It is one thing for you or me to declare triumphant victory over a home improvement project.

It is altogether something else for Jesus to utter these words. They are supreme words because of their source.

And it is Christ upon a cross that utters these words. It is heaven's only son that declares it is finished.

And tonight we need to ask what is finished. What was his lifetime work that while suspended in agony on a wooden cross, at the young age of 33, he could utter to Teletai.

It is finished. What was Jesus's purpose? Most explicitly, it was well stated in John's gospel earlier on.

[3 : 53] Behold, he's the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He would not come at that time to eradicate sin.

He will do that one day. But what he could do, what he did do, was erase sin from one's account. See, one of the most common images the Bible uses for sin or our rebellion against God is a debt that we cannot pay.

It is an ever-increasing debt that regardless of how hard we work or how good we act, it cannot be paid in full. It's the mortgage you could refinance over and over and over, but it never ends.

Good acts simply do not erase bad ones. For the Christian faith does not operate on this economy of good and bad, no. You and I live before a holy God who is not only good, but he's perfect.

His ways are righteous and his ways are just, and his expectations are holiness, righteousness.

They're standards you and I probably desire, but they're standards we never obtain.

[5 : 11] We are therefore divine lawbreakers, rebels against God's rule, consigned to his just judgment.

And because heaven's standards exceeded earth's resources, what the Bible tells us, that out of God's love, he sent his one and only son, that whoever would believe in him should not perish but have eternal life.

He did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. So God sends his son to pay the debt of sin that you and I, the world, had incurred.

He would take upon himself the judgment of God that we rebellious people rightly deserve and serve as a scapegoat, a sin bearer, an innocent victim.

And as a scapegoat, he would be a suffering substitute. Jesus was a substitute. We see this in various areas of life, this term, most commonly probably in the classroom, when the normal teacher is absent and one takes their place.

[6 : 33] We see it in the realm of sports. When one player is fatigued or falls to injury, another takes their place. It's a person acting or serving in the place of another.

And we see that Jesus was sent to serve as a substitute, to personalize it in sports terms, to serve as our substitute, my substitute, your substitute.

In sports terms, he came to sub you out. And the image is readily applied throughout the Bible. And for the sake of time, I won't go all over all of them.

But it's worth reading, not only John 19 again, but John 18. Because in John 18, there is a clear substitution taking place.

There was a criminal, a robber, an insurrectionist named Barabbas. And as was the custom, the Roman custom, during Passover, the pilot would release a prisoner to the people, back to the people.

[7 : 40] And there before the crowd, there during the feast of Passover, when the city was the most populated it would ever be, two men stood, one guilty as charge, Barabbas.

And one innocent, blameless, clean, righteous, holy. And when Pilate said, who do you want me to release?

The crowd shouted, give us Barabbas. And there, the exchange happened. Jesus for Barabbas, the innocent for the guilty, the son of heaven for the son of Adam.

Substitution was displayed. We are Barabbas. I am Barabbas. He would not only be a substitute. He would suffer. He would suffer for us, to win us, to secure us, to save us. The gospels mute the horrors of crucifixion. They speak little of the grotesque and gruesome nature of it all.

[9 : 03] But they do record Jesus' suffering at the hands of Roman soldiers, flogged, beaten, scourged, whipped. They tell us of the emotional mockery that as he walked to his death site, they laughed at him.

They spit on him. They ridiculed him. Think about this. Who would laugh at a dying man? This is all the earthly suffering.

And you can feel it. However, the heavenly suffering he experienced, you and I will never fathom. One of the other seven saints on the cross, one that was uttered in despair, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It is a forsakeness none of us will ever know. You have to understand all suffering, human or heavenly, had been foreign to Jesus up to his earthly life.

Think of that. And now it would seem that unfathomable suffering had settled upon him. The sun failed to shine. The songwriter's words are so appropriate.

[10 : 20] The father turned his face away. And that's the scene. Upon the cross, as he cries, it is finished.

What kind of cry is that? Of defeat? No. Of triumph. Of victory. Because how those words would have fell upon the ears of those listening.

How would God the father have heard that? Father, it's finished. I'm coming home. 43 days.

I will. I'm coming home. I'll travel through a grave. But we'll be back together again. I'm coming home, dad.

I'm not only coming home, but all the prodigals. All of them are coming home with me. You. You. Father, what a rejoice.

[11 : 40] Satan would have trembled. It is finished. What is finished? What could possibly be finished? Satan would be saying, you are finished, Jesus.

But no, the text doesn't say Jesus said, I am finished. He said, it is finished. Jesus was certainly not finished. Oh, death. Where is your victory?

Oh, death. Where is your sting? Because what Satan did not know was sin had brought Jesus to the death. Better put, Jesus brought death to the grave.

And I could tell you this, that when Jesus and death went into that tomb together, only one of them came out. And I will tell you, we could come back here in two days, and I will tell you who comes out.

Satan must have been horrified when he heard those words. It is finished because Jesus would emerge victorious.

[12:50] What did the Father hear? What did Satan hear? But most importantly, I think, what do you hear? When you hear the words, it is finished.

How does that hit you? Do you not hear now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?

It is finished. Do you not hear he is able to save to the uttermost? He is able to save forever all those who draw near to God through him.

Why? Because he lives to make intercession for you. It is finished. Do you not hear come to me? all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Do you not hear a single offering? For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

[14:04] It is finished. Do you not hear rejoice? rejoice not that demons tremble at your word but rejoice that your name is written in heaven.

Do you not hear what shall separate you from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Shall distress? Persecution?

Famine? Nakedness? Danger? Or sword? No. Why? Because it is finished. Said the son. For neither death nor life angels nor rulers things in the present or things to come powers height depth nor anything else in all creation that you see shall separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord it is finished and does it not compel you when you hear those words it is finished my sin oh the bliss of that glorious thought my sin not in part but the whole was nailed to that cross and I bear it no more praise the Lord praise the Lord oh my soul when a mortal a mere human completes a task and declares it is finished we may give them a kind word affirming gesture well done but when the son of God completes his work and he declares it is finished the only appropriate response is adoration acclamation adulation when humans accomplish feats they are forgotten when Jesus the son of God finishes work he receives worship and with that and by you stand with us

I'm going to pray and then we will close our time in worship father we see him upon the cross taking the drink of the vinegar and then declaring victory over sin death hell and judgment it is finished and may that finished work be applied to all your people this night and forever more to the worship and the adoration and the exaltation of Christ our king we pray amen