

It Is Finished

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[0 : 00] What does victory look like?

Does it look like a great parade? A sports team lifting a trophy? Standing number one on the podium? If we were to ask somebody, does victory look like a bloody cross? With a man hanging on it, naked and abused? Most people would say, no, that is not what victory looks like.

And yet, and yet, according to the gospel, the cross where Jesus died was the site, the place of the greatest victory humanity has ever known.

A victory which has been unmatched for 2,000 years and a victory which will stretch from that day on the hill of Golgotha all the way into eternity.

[1 : 13] A victory so wonderful that we will praise it and sing about it and rejoice in it all the days of this life and for the eternity of our life to come.

It is, in some sense, a desperate scene to see our Lord on a cross.

This is Jesus, the one who is called the Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah, the one who has come to fulfill all of the Old Testament promises on behalf of his people and he has been arrested on trumped up charges.

He has been tortured and now he is being executed. And yet, as we read in this passage this morning, Jesus, Jesus is being victorious.

He is winning for us what we could not win for ourselves. And therefore, this morning, I want to take this in three parts.

[2 : 31] I want to think not straight through this but more topically. That first of all, we will think about the kingship of Christ which is on display here, his kingship.

Secondly, his priestly sacrifice. And thirdly, his prophetic declaration.

His kingship, his sacrifice, and his declaration for us. First of all then, his kingship.

Jesus, when he is taken to Golgotha, when he is taken to the place of the school and he is crucified there, is called a king by the Roman forces.

Pilate writes out an inscription, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews, and he puts it above Jesus' head on the cross.

[3 : 37] And this was to show the reason why Jesus was being crucified. He had been brought to Pilate as supposedly a king who had set himself up against Caesar and he was being executed as a rebel.

It is supposed to be an insult to the people that Pilate is governor over, as if to say to those passing by, look what I have done to your supposed king.

The Romans are in charge. Look what happens to troublemakers and to make sure that it is understood, it is written in all of the common languages of the day.

Aramaic, the street language of Jerusalem and Judea. Greek, the language of trade, the international lingua franca, if you like, and Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire.

Everybody going past would see that this Jesus was the king of the Jews and had been killed by the Romans. How pathetic he looks compared to Roman might.

[4 : 55] And the fact that it is an insult against the people is recognized by the priests themselves, because they go to Pilate, don't they, and they say, do not write the king of the Jews, but rather this man said, I am the king of the Jews.

As if to say, don't make the claim that he truly is our king, because that would mean that we failed.

Instead, simply say that he claimed to be our king, because that puts some distance between us.

It's not quite as insulting, but Pilate won't have any of it. What I have written, I have written. But Pilate writes more than he realizes, because it's true.

Jesus really is king. In fact, he's not just king of the Jews, he's king of kings. He is the one who has come from heaven to earth.

He is the one who is lord of all. And he has gone to the cross as a king. He has gone to the cross as one who has immense power.

[6 : 04] One who, if he desired it, could call upon the hosts of heaven, the angels of heaven, to come down and to free him. Indeed, we heard in our earlier reading from Luke, didn't we, the very fact that if Jesus had wanted to, he could have turned stones into bread.

And do we think here that if Jesus had wanted to, he could not have demanded and called and freed himself from the cross? of course, of course he could have done. But Jesus is allowing this to happen.

He's allowing this to happen because scripture must be fulfilled. In fact, when he is stripped naked and his garments are being divided between the soldiers at the foot of the cross as they're helping themselves to his belongings, he's a condemned criminal, he has no rights, they can take whatever they want from him, they come to his tunic, which is seamless, it's got no easy way to divide it, and if they cut it up, it'll lose its value, so they gamble for it.

And we're told this was to fulfill the scripture, which says, they divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots, to fulfill Psalm 22. But more than that, Jesus is active himself in making sure that the scriptures are being fulfilled.

Jesus, we're told in verse 28, calls out, doesn't he, saying, I thirst. Why? To fulfill the scripture.

[7 : 49] Again, from Psalm 22. Jesus, on the cross itself, is still active. He's still working, he's still going to fulfill the scriptures which he came to fulfill.

He is not a passive victim. He is somebody who in that very moment of excruciating agony, is still choosing, still choosing to care for his people, still choosing to fulfill these things. And we see the ultimate sign of that, that use, that choice by Jesus to fulfill these things, by the words of verse 30.

He bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Earlier on in John's gospel, in John chapter 10, Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd, the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. He's predicting his death there. But as part of his teaching in John chapter 10, he says, I lay down my life, no one takes it from me.

[9 : 09] Of course nobody could take it from him. How could God in the flesh ever be forced to give up his life unless he voluntarily lay it down and so he does.

Voluntarily experiencing pain and death itself. And we look at a king like this, a king of infinite power, a king who has all of creation at his beck and call if he so chooses.

And we ask the question, what is he using that power for? What is he using this strength for? What is he doing? He's using that strength and this power to come and serve his people.

This is what true kingship looks like in his kingdom. kingdom, a king who comes not to be served, but to serve.

This is our king serving us on the cross. cross. But then we move then to his sacrifice.

[10 : 37] Because why was Jesus willing to die on that cross? Why did he choose to serve us in that particular way?

Well, John makes note of something very important about the timing of Jesus' crucifixion. Nothing was an accident. It's not coincidence that this occurred when it did.

And we're told in verse 31 that it was the day of preparation. The day of preparation was the day when the Jewish people prepared for the Passover.

Ever since they had been freed by God from slavery in Egypt, they had to remember the Passover. In Egypt, when God passed through the land and he judged the gods and the king of Egypt for their evil which they had done, the people had taken a Passover lamb, they'd taken a lamb, they'd sacrificed it, and they'd put the blood on the mantle and on the post of their door.

And when the day of judgment came, God's people had sheltered under the blood of the lamb, and the judgment of God did not touch them.

[12 : 02] John, throughout his gospel, has been making the point, Jesus is our Passover lamb. The very early on in John's gospel, all the way back in John chapter 1, when a man named the Baptist sees Jesus, he calls out, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

And now here is Jesus, on the day of preparation for the Passover, being offered up as a Passover lamb.

But the Passover lamb has to be perfect, it can have no flaws of its own, and Jesus is flawless. sinless. He is perfect in every way. As we heard in the reading from Luke earlier, when he was tempted, he did not give in to temptation, he was sinless.

Indeed, even in our passage that we have read from John chapter 19, we see Jesus, even now, in the final moment of his life, fulfilling the law of God on behalf of his people to make sure that he is totally sinless.

[13:16] Jesus, isn't it a moving passage, when as Jesus is on the cross, and as the soldiers in front of him are gambling his belongings, he looks out and sees that standing by the cross is his mother and his aunt and Mary Magdalene.

And what does Jesus do from the cross? But he sees that his disciple, one of his disciples, John, is there, and he says, woman, behold your son.

And he says to the disciple, behold your mother. And the disciple, from that hour on, took her into his own home. Jesus on the cross is fulfilling the fifth commandment, that you will honor your father and mother, that Jesus knows that as the eldest son has responsibility for the care of his elderly mother, that when he dies, his mother will need somebody to look after her in a world where there is no state pension or welfare state or anything like that.

And Jesus on the cross itself is making sure that his own mother will be cared for when he is no longer there. fulfilling the law of God perfectly, wonderfully.

He is morally perfect, morally pure. But Jesus' sacrifice is also pure and perfect in other ways.

[15:01] After Jesus has died on the cross, we're told that the religious leaders did not want the bodies to be kept on the crosses into the Passover because it was a special celebration and they didn't want it to be spoiled by having dead bodies hanging around.

So they asked that the legs will be broken and the reason you break the legs of somebody who's hanging on a cross is because you use your legs to keep yourself upright so you can continue to breathe and if your legs are broken, they can't take the weight and then you can no longer get yourself into a position where you can continue to breathe.

It speeds up the killing. And they do that to the two men either side of Jesus, the two criminals who've been crucified with him. But when they come to Jesus we're told that they discover he is already dead and so they stick a spear into him instead and the blood and the water running out together prove that he is dead.

But we're told that this happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken. In the book of Exodus when the Israelites were to choose a Passover lamb it did not just simply have to have no obvious blemishes but it had to have no physical defects as well.

And when they killed it they were not allowed to break any of its bones. And here we are being told that even in Jesus' death he is fulfilling that role of the Passover lamb.

[16:45] No bones broken just as they had no bones broken either. And what will be the effect of this? What will be the effect of Jesus being the Passover lamb for his people?

Being the lamb that takes away the sins of the world were even told that as well. Verse 37 They will look on him whom they have pierced.

You might see in the footnote there that is a reference back to the Old Testament prophecy of Zechariah. To Zechariah chapter 12 verse 10 and let me just read to you the whole of that verse. There's no need to turn there now but you can make a note of it for later if you want to. But let me just read out the whole verse for you. And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy so that when they look on me on whom they have pierced they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weeps bitterly over him as one weeps over a firstborn.

What will be the impact of Jesus dying as the sacrifice for his people those who even now are mocking him even those who have rejected him and offered him up for execution will look on his piercings and one day one day the Lord will pour on them the spirit of grace and they will mourn in repentance and return back to the living God.

[18:36] Jesus offers himself up as sacrifice so that even his worst enemies those who celebrated his death will turn back to the Lord in repentance and be restored to relationship with the living God.

That is what the Lord has done for us. This morning if you read this passage and if you think of the sacrifice of Christ and it is moving you this morning be assured it is moving you because the Lord is being gracious to you so that you will turn in repentance away from the wrong things you have done

and from your rejection of him in the past and come back to God and trust in him again. Perhaps this morning there is somebody here who is experiencing that for the first time and if that is so then let me assure you Jesus wants you to come to him no matter what you have said about him or done to his people in the past he has died so that you may come back to the living God and be restored.

finally then we come to his prophetic declaration because just before Jesus dies he says these final words it is finished what is finished his work his work to save sinners such as you and me his work in fulfilling all of the Old Testament law on our behalf his work in paying for our sins by his own blood and the question this morning is do you trust the words of Jesus do you think the work of Jesus was finished or do you think

Jesus was a liar if Jesus' words are true here if it truly is finished if his work is complete then it means we cannot add to it can we we can't do anything to add to the finished work of Jesus what could we add to the blood of Christ what could we add to his fulfillment of the law what could we you have two options this morning either Jesus is a liar and his work is incomplete and you must add something to it or Jesus is speaking the truth and you must receive his finished work as a free gift that cannot be added to or earned or completed by yourselves in any way don't pay don't pay lip service to

[22 : 46] Jesus' words here don't say yes I know Jesus said it is finished but in the week that has just gone by I don't think I spent enough time in my quiet times to really be right with God this week that's what we sometimes act as as Christians Jesus died for me but have I read my Bible enough this week have I prayed enough have I done enough of my own works no shift your focus away from yourself this morning only to Jesus and his words and his declaration it is finished there is nothing more for you to add to his completed work to be right with God there is nothing more for you to go through after this life there is no punishment waiting for you in the next if you are trusting in him this morning there is no period after you die for you to have to be cleaned up before you get to see him face to face if

Jesus says it is finished it is finished so this morning as we prepare in a moment to come to the Lord's table to eat his bread and drink his wine and remember what he has done for you and for me I call on you to think of your king who has served you of your high priest who has sacrificed himself for you of your prophet who has declared said to you that his work is finished and come this morning to the bread and the wine trusting in nothing else but in Christ whoever