

It is Finished!

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[0 : 00] Well, it'd be great if you could pull out your handouts with the reading from John's Gospel on it. But let me begin by asking you if you've ever had a plan that wasn't quite accomplished.

For example, one time I planned to build my children an amazing tree house. The plan was something like this. This is a real one.

It's a real one. But I only actually managed to build them something like this. Actually, it's not entirely true. I did nail some pieces of wood to a tree in our backyard for steps up that they could climb.

But when they climbed, they fell off. That is the steps, not the kids. So it wasn't quite mission accomplished. Or more seriously, last week, we've all heard about what happened last week at the Moscow concert hall, haven't we, where a group killed 137 people.

And the group of claim responsibility is ISIS, a group we haven't heard from for years. And it reminded me just how over 20 years ago in 2003, the US launched its mission to deal with ISIS after the 9-11 attacks.

[1 : 17] They had a plan two years in the making to invade Iraq, capture Osama, and save the world from ISIS. And I don't know if you remember, but it was only six weeks after they invaded that President Bush stood on an aircraft carrier with his thumb up and claimed it was mission accomplished just above his head.

Here's a closer look. Do you remember this? But it wasn't quite mission accomplished, was it? Sadly, America's involvement in the war continued for another nine years, during which time there were protests and his statement was definitely questioned, like the question mark at the end.

And a week ago today, it clearly isn't mission accomplished because ISIS is back. Perhaps they never left, actually. Either way, President Bush didn't save the world from them.

Well, today, it's just under 2,000 years ago when God launched his mission to save us not from ISIS, but from sin. You see, sin is not just the wrong things we do.

It's fundamentally about living without reference to God. That is living our way instead of God's good way or ignoring God or forgetting God.

[2 : 37] Most of the week or month or year and only occasionally thinking about him. It's not treating God as he deserves.

And while ISIS may bring physical death, which is horrific, I don't want to take away from that. Sin actually brings eternal death, which is worse.

But God had a plan hundreds of years in the making to save us from sin once and for all. And unlike President Bush, Jesus could say it is finished.

It is mission accomplished. That's what John wants us to see in his account of Good Friday. John was there.

He saw it happen. And he wants to assure us that God's plan was accomplished. It was finished through the person of Jesus. Indeed, John is the only gospel writer to record those words.

[3 : 40] It is finished. But first of all, who is this person, Jesus? Point one on the outline. Well, there's a lot here. There's too much for us to cover today.

And I'm going to look at it rather thematically rather than consecutively like we normally do. But briefly, Jesus is God's chosen president or king.

In your handouts, look how often John repeats the word king. I've highlighted it for you in a kind of goldy yellow color. Do you notice it there? Six times.

King, king, king, king, king, king. Was it five, six? I can't remember. Lots of times. By comparison, if you look at verse 18, where John records the physical crucifixion of Jesus with just one sentence.

You see verse 18? It's too hard to see on the screen. Hopefully those at home have bigger screens and are closer to them. But you can see it on your sheet in verse 18. He records the crucifixion in just one sentence.

[4 : 40] And he could have recorded the conversation between Pilate and the others just as succinctly. But it seems he has deliberately recorded every mention of king.

Why? Well, that's who Jesus is. Jesus is the king. And not a king who seeks to show off on an aircraft carrier, but a king who lovingly cares for others.

Like his mother, if you remember from our reading. Despite his agony on the cross, he gives her a new family. He's a king who lovingly cares.

But he's also a king who humbly suffers. Which is part of God's plan. Point two. This will be a longer point because it will take us time for me to show you what John is doing with the next lot of repeated phrases in green.

You see, again, more than any other gospel writer, John wants to highlight how Jesus' death fulfills Old Testament scripture. And he does this to show that Jesus' death is not a random event.

[5 : 53] It was planned by God. So let's pick it up in verse 23, the second paragraph there. So this is what the soldiers did.

Here they actually take all Jesus' clothes, including his undergarment. So it's down in front of the soldiers, which means Jesus is crucified naked. Humiliated.

And yet this suffering was part of God's plan. For hundreds of years earlier, Psalm 22 speaks of a king suffering just like this.

We heard it earlier in Psalm 22. That was written by King David. And the fact that this happens to King Jesus here as well shows that God is in control, causing Jesus to fulfill more fully.

The suffering of King David. In other words, it's part of God's plan for God's king. Even the way John writes it here highlights this.

[7 : 24] So notice verse 24 again. How John writes it. At the end of verse 24, John quotes Psalm 22. They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

That's Psalm 22 in the Old Testament. And then John adds, so this is what the soldiers did. It's like the soldiers are obeying Old Testament scripture.

Which they were. They just didn't realize it. Because God is actually in control. It's part of his plan. For his chosen king to be humiliated.

And even forsaken. That's how this Psalm started, if you remember, with those famous words of, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

You see, John knew his first readers knew their Old Testament way better than we do. And so when he quotes just one part that's fulfilled, He knew it would bring the rest of the passage to mind.

[8 : 27] It's kind of like if I quote just one bit from, I don't know, Shakespeare that you might know well, It'll bring the rest to mind. For example, to be or not to be. That is? There you go.

Brought it all to mind. And so while John quotes the specific bit that's fulfilled, He knew it would bring the rest of the Psalm to his reader's mind. Prompting them to see further fulfillment by Jesus.

I don't know if, as Psalm 22 was being read by Helen, That there was lots of things that sounded familiar. In Psalm 22, it says, They pierced my hands and feet.

I mean, can it get more familiar than that? John mentions it. It prompts them to come to mind, Helping them to know that this is all too coincidental to be random.

No, no, it's part of God's plan. And while King David may have felt forsaken by God when he wrote it, It is fulfilled by Jesus more fully at the cross.

[9 : 31] For Jesus is fully forsaken. As we'll sing later, The Father turns his face away. Which is hell.

To be forsaken by God really means hell. But this was God's plan. That God's chosen king would be humiliated and forsaken.

Which kind of makes God sound a little harsh, doesn't it? That he planned this. But here's the thing. Jesus himself was actually on board with this.

That's the point of the next reference in green. So verse 28 and 29. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, And so that scripture would be finished, Jesus said, I am thirsty.

A jar of wine vinegar was there, So they soaked a sponge in it, Put the sponge on a stalk of hyssop plant, And lifted it to Jesus' lips. I hear John uses the word finished instead of fulfilled.

[10 : 41] We'll come back to that later. But the point is that this time, Jesus acts himself in order to fulfill scripture. Do you notice that? Verse 28 says, So that scripture would be fulfilled.

Jesus then says, I am thirsty. Provoking them to get some vinegar, Which fulfills Psalm 69. Written by King David again, Where the king is again given vinegar for his thirst.

Christ. It's a bit like my wife predicting and planning, For our kids to complain at dinner time. And so to fulfill her plan, I deliberately say, We're having veggies for dinner tonight, Kids.

And sure enough, They complain. In fulfillment of my wife's plan. That's what Jesus is doing here. Acting deliberately, So that they would fulfill God's plan without even realizing it.

Why does Jesus do this? Well, Because he's on board with it. He's willing to suffer according to it. To his father's plan. But again, Why all this?

[11 : 57] Why would God plan this? And why would Jesus be on board with this? Well, The last two green references help us to understand this. I just skip down to the bottom paragraph to verse 31.

Now it was a day of preparation and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, They asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, And then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, They did not break his legs.

Instead, One of the soldiers pierced Jesus aside with a spear, Bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. And then verse 36, These things happened so that scripture would be fulfilled.

Not one of his bones will be broken. And as another scripture says, They will look on the one they have pierced. Now the reason the Romans broke the legs, Was so that those who were crucified couldn't use their legs to push themselves up.

[13 : 11] You see, On the cross, You would sink down, And your arms would go up, And it would make it hard for you to breathe, Like that. And so they pushed themselves up, So they could catch a breath.

But the Romans deliberately broke their legs, So they couldn't do that, And they basically choked to death. I mean, The Romans knew how to inflict pain, Didn't they? And they knew how to make sure someone was dead.

And so, When they come to Jesus, Just to make sure he was dead, They pierced his side with a spear. Jesus really did die. But by piercing him, Instead of breaking his bones, They unknowingly fulfilled scripture again.

This time, I think John is referring to Exodus chapter 12. Where it's actually, We were talking about the Passover lamb, And the Israelites were not to break any of its, Or his bones.

The Passover lamb was a young male lamb. The Passover lamb was first introduced, When Israel was slaves in Egypt, If you remember the account, God sent his angel of judgment, On all who sinned, Both Egypt and Israel.

[14 : 18] And the judgment was to be the loss, Of their firstborn son. But God provided a way for Israel, To be saved from that judgment. God provided a lamb, Who acted as a substitute.

The lamb died, In the place of the firstborn son. And the lamb's blood, Was then painted, On the wooden door frames, Of their houses. And so when the angel of judgment, Came and saw the blood, He knew, That the lamb had paid, For this household sin, And the angel would pass over the house, Hence Passover lamb.

And they would be saved from judgment. And so Jesus is saying, Sorry, John is saying that Jesus, Is our Passover lamb. He's our substitute, Whose better blood, Was painted on a wooden cross.

That permanently pays, For our sin, And saves us from judgment. Now this connection, Might seem a bit of a stretch to you.

But if it is, It's because, We haven't read the rest of John's gospel, To see other connections. Like chapter one, Where John the Baptist, Sees Jesus and says, Look, The lamb of God, Who does what?

[15 : 36] Who takes away, The sin of the world. And it seems like, A bit of a stretch, Then it's also because, We haven't noticed, The next reference in green, Which John combines, With this one.

The next reference in green, Is from Zechariah, Where God actually speaks, And says, They will look on me, On God, The one they have pierced.

And here is God the son, Who is just being pierced, By a spear. But again, John's, Knew that his first readers, Knew their Old Testament, Better than we do.

And a few verses later, Zechariah goes on to say, That on that day, A fountain will be opened, To the house of David, And the inhabitants of Jerusalem, To cleanse them, From sin, And impurity.

And so by saying, Jesus' piercing, Fulfills scripture from Zechariah, John is saying, That sudden flow of blood, And water from his pierced side, Is like a fountain, Of forgiveness, And cleansing.

[16 : 43] It's like the hymn we sung, Just a moment ago, Rock of Ages. The first verse, Picks up this passage, Let the water and the blood, From your wounded side, Which flowed, Be for sin the double cure.

Cleanse me, From its guilt, And power. And so putting these two, References together, As John does here in our passage, Jesus' bones are not broken, Because God planned for him, To be our Passover lamb, Who dies in our place, Whose blood pays for our sin, And saves us from judgment.

And instead of broken bone, God planned that he would be pierced, To show the flow of water and blood, Which were like a fountain, That brings us forgiveness, And cleansing.

This is why God's plan, Meant suffering for God's king. And this is why, Jesus willingly went through it all, So that he could pay for our sin, And bring us forgiveness, Instead.

So that we could be given life with God, Rather than judgment from God. And unlike mission of a rather presumptuous, President Bush, The mission of this humble king, Is finished, It is accomplished.

[18 : 03] So come back with me to, Verse 28, And 30, That we saw briefly before. And later knowing that everything, Had now been finished. And so that scripture, Would be finished.

Jesus said, I am thirsty. A jar of wine vinegar was there, And so they soak it, And give it to Jesus. Verse 30, When he had received the drink, Jesus said, It is finished.

And with that, He bowed his head, And gave up his spirit. Three times, John uses the word, Finished. Accomplished. Completed. But what is finished?

Well, God's plan in scripture, For God's king to suffer, That our sin might be paid for, And we forgiven instead. That's what's finished.

Jesus has done it. His work is finished, So the plan is accomplished. And so it means, Our sin is fully paid for. Past, Present, Future.

[19 : 04] It's why this event, Almost 2,000 years ago, Still has relevance for us today. Because it still provides, Forgiveness for our sins today.

It's like if someone paid for your, Car insurance, For the whole life of your car, And they paid it five years ago, That past payment, Still brings you, Present coverage, Doesn't it?

Or so too with Jesus. His past payment, For our sins was finished, Complete, Paid in full, For the rest of our lives. And so his past payment, Continues to give us, Present coverage, For our sins.

This year, Every year. That's why, This event, Is still relevant for us today. That's why we keep, Celebrating Good Friday. And it means, Because all our sins are paid for, Past, Present, Future, Then we can be certain, Of life eternal.

We don't have to try, And make up for our mistakes, Or earn our way to heaven. It's already paid for. So, No sin we do, No mistake we make, No mess in life, Can stop us, From receiving eternal life.

[20 : 23] How good is that? I don't know about you, But I, Still mess up in life. But because it was finished, At the cross, It's paid for. It won't stop me, From receiving eternal life.

Instead, We can be certain, Of being welcomed into heaven, All because it is finished. No other religion, Gives us this kind of assurance. But only, If we believe in Jesus.

And we can. The Christian faith, It's not blind faith, It's rational faith. We'll, See this even more so, On Sunday. But it's rational faith, Because it's based on, Evidence.

I skipped over verse 35, And it seems a bit, Out of place. It just kind of, Pops up there in the story. But John, Wants us to make sure, That we, Can have rational faith, Based on evidence.

He says, This man who saw it, Has given testimony, And his testimony is true. He knows and tells the truth, And testifies, So that you also, May believe.

[21 : 30] You see the language of, Testimony and testimony, It's courtroom language, Isn't it? This is an eyewitness account. Why? So that you, May also, Believe.

Believe. For it's only by believing in Jesus, That we accept, His finished payment, For our sins, And receive, Eternal life. That's what John says, In the next chapter, Which is almost at the end, Of his gospel.

He says, These things are written, That you may believe, That Jesus is the Christ, The King, The Son of God, And that, By believing, You may have life, In his name.

I had another plan, For today, Which was to, Give you all, An Easter egg, As a symbol of the new life, In his name. My plan included, Firstly, Finding some nice, Chocolate eggs, Like Cadbury.

Secondly, To make sure, There's enough for everyone, About 500. Pay the price, For the eggs, And then, Offer them to you. So, Here we go.

[22 : 36] Mission accomplished. But here's the thing, Here's the point, Don't get too excited, About the eggs.

Don't miss the point. To receive, The egg, You need to actually believe me. I believe, That I've actually paid for them, And not stolen them.

I believe, That they're actually in there, And not that I've eaten them. Because if you don't believe me, Then you won't bother, Looking in the box, Will you? And therefore, You won't receive, An egg.

Or so too, With Jesus. It is finished. Mission accomplished. But to receive it, We have to believe, In him.

Believe Jesus is, God's humble king. Believe he's already paid, For all your sin. Believe, And you'll receive, Not an egg, As a symbol, For life, But you'll receive, Actual, Eternal life.

[23 : 43] Life with God, And his family now, With meaning, And purpose, And hope, And life later with God, In a perfect world, Where there'll be, No more bridge collapses, No more bombs, In cities. You can believe, It's based on evidence, So, Will you believe?

And for us who do, Then we are to live for him, Who died for us. As some say, That if Jesus has already paid, For all our sins, Past, Present, Future, Then, Hey, It doesn't matter how we live now, We can just sin however we like, It's already paid for.

But no, Because if we truly believe, Jesus is our king, Then we'll live like it, Won't we? We will obey him, As our king, And seek not, To sin.

What's more, We'll do all this, Out of gratitude to him, Who died for us, Who was humiliated, And forsaken, For you, For me.

How can we not, Out of gratitude, Live for him? How can we not, Boast or rejoice, In his death, And resurrection for us? As our last team will say, Love so amazing, So divine, It demands my life, My soul, My all.

[25 : 08] My treehouse plan, Was not finished, Or completed, And so it meant, My kids didn't enjoy life, In it. President Bush's plan, To save us from ISIS, Was not really finished, Or accomplished.

And so sadly, It means those in Moscow, Are still mourning, Rather than enjoying life, But God's plan, For God's king, To pay for our sin, Is finished, It is accomplished, Which means we can, Enjoy life with God, Now, And forever.

Beware and Session,