

Redemption Accomplished

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Date: 14 July 2019

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[0 : 00] God bless that reading of his word. So we come tonight to our last saying from the cross. We haven't covered every saying, but tonight we want to look at the saying that is finished from the passage that we've just read.

Last week we looked at the first and the last saying from the cross. We noticed the great love of Christ for sinners when he said, Father, forgive them.

We noticed the great love he had for his Father when he said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. We saw how Christ began and ended his life in prayer in the same way that he had lived his life in a spirit of prayer.

And we continued our study this morning by looking at Christ's sayings as they came to the great climax of his forsakenness from God. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And as we saw this morning, as Christ reached the depths of God's wrath, he cried out in utter abandonment. And after three hours of light and three hours of darkness, Christ's ministry, his sufferings are now at an end.

[1 : 24] And before he dies, he utters two last words. The one before us tonight, which is, it is finished. And then finally, he says, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

And we're told that he gives up his spirit and dies. Now this phrase, as I'm sure many of you know, in the Greek is just one word.

Tetelestai. Now, the Greeks used to boast of saying much in few words. As one of them said, to give a sea of matter in a drop of language.

So our English translation is, it is finished, but it is just one word in the Greek. And what an incredible word it is.

It comes up several times in the New Testament. In Matthew 11, verse 1, it is translated as finished. When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

[2 : 32] In Matthew 17, verse 24, it is translated as pay. Does your teacher not pay tax? In Luke chapter 2, it is translated as performed.

And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned unto Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

And then just one more, Luke 18. It is translated as accomplished. And taking the twelve, he said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.

Finished. Finished. Pay. Performed. And accomplished. These are all aspects of this word. And it helps us to understand what is being meant here.

That Christ paid the price of our redemption. That he performed the utmost requirement of the law. That he accomplished the work the Father gave him to do. And he completed the work of atonement.

[3 : 41] And what Christ was saying here is that everything has been completed. Everything is finished. Everything has been paid. And we need to receive by faith the finished work of Christ.

So tonight I want to spend a bit of time just looking at this phrase. And the first thing we want to notice is receiving and understanding the gospel of grace.

And in the last two points I just want to try and spend a bit of time practically how we can live out this gospel of grace in our lives. What exactly is finished?

When Christ says it is finished, it is completed. It is paid in full. What is it that he means? Well first of all we can say that his sufferings are finished.

As you know Christ spent a lifetime of suffering, of humiliation, of rejection and of mockery.

[4 : 44] He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. You know that his enemies were many. His followers were few.

And even those who were his followers were so often faithless. He was let down. He was rejected. He was mocked.

And he was crucified. You remember that he was snatched in the Garden of Gethsemane by a band of men. He was tried six times and declared innocent.

But still the judge that should have protected him allowed him to be crucified. He was dragged through the streets of Jerusalem. He was crucified. He was burned by the midday sun.

And he was forsaken by God. And Christ looks from the cross everywhere. But there is none to help.

[5 : 51] Christ treads the winepress of God's wrath alone. And what Christ is saying here is saying all my sufferings are at an end. It is finished.

It is over. As Pink says, the sword of divine justice is sheathed. Christ has drunk the bitter dregs of Christ's wrath for sin to the end.

It is finished. The sufferings are at an end. But another thing we can say is that all the types and the shadows and the promises and prophecies of scripture are all fulfilled in Christ on the cross.

You will see there in verses 28 and 30 that the word finished is used twice. After this Jesus knowing that all was now finished said to fulfill the scriptures I thirst.

Everything was finished in Christ. All the types and the shadows and all the promises of scripture were fulfilled in Christ.

[6 : 58] Imagine if we didn't have a New Testament. Imagine if you handed somebody the Old Testament and said that you were looking for somebody who fulfilled the Old Testament.

You needed a prophet. Sorry, you needed a prophet or a leader like Moses. You needed a warrior like Joshua. You needed a priest like Aaron and Melchizedek.

A king like David and Solomon. You needed somebody who would be a lamb that was slain. He needed to be the priest.

The mercy seat and the tabernacle. We need to find somebody who appears at times to be in contradictory prophecies.

We need somebody who can fulfill Psalm 2. But also fulfill Isaiah 53. Somebody who can fulfill Psalm 45 and also Psalm 22.

[8 : 04] Where can we find somebody like that? A man who needs to be perfect and yet somebody who can bear sin. A man who is a root out of dry ground but yet also a glorious son of David.

Only in Christ are all these prophecies and all these promises and all these types and shadows fulfilled. And then also Christ was saying it is finished in terms of the sacrificial system.

He was quite clearly saying that there is no more need for all these blood sacrifices. The temple had been rent in two. And Christ was saying there is no more need for all these thousands of animals to be slaughtered year after year.

Think of the whole Levitical system. Think of the priesthood. Every morning and every evening these animals that were slaughtered.

You can imagine the people saying how long before enough is enough? How long will we continue to do this? Will it never end? Year after year the high priest goes into the temple to sprinkle the mercy seat.

[9 : 23] And every year he comes out. People would have been asking, When is it all going to end? When will the sacrifice be enough?

What's it all for? Will there always be remembrance of sin? When will the great high priest finally come? Well he came in Jesus.

And he said, It is finished. I am the priest. I am the altar. I am the mercy seat. And I am the sacrifice. And then we also notice that it was finished in terms of his perfect obedience.

Christ kept the law until his dying breath. And he kept the law perfectly. Christ in his act of obedience fulfilled the law that you and I couldn't keep.

He honoured his father and mother. In his public ministry he obeyed his father. And he perfected his obedience in death.

[10 : 29] That is why sinful man cannot save himself. Because we needed a sinless, perfect man to pay the price for our sin.

Christ was born under the law that he might redeem those under the law. Galatians 4 verses 4 and 5. Christ didn't just keep the law perfectly.

But he suffered its penalty. And he endured its curse. So when Christ says it is finished, he is saying it is finished.

In the sense that I have met all the just demands of the law. He becomes the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

As it says in Romans 10 verse 4. So we need to receive this gospel of grace. We need to understand it. We need to see what is finished.

[11 : 29] Christ has done it all.

He has paid it in full. It is finished. It is completed. Christ has done what we couldn't do. So that we can receive what we don't deserve.

But then secondly, I have called this rejecting a gospel of do. Christ gives us the gospel of done.

But we are constantly going back to the gospel of do.

The gospel of works. Now we live in a busy world. I am sure if any of you work here, you will have a to-do list.

And maybe like me, you have got an electronic to-do list. Which just gets bigger and bigger. And sometimes we have other people that put things on our to-do list. And when some of us prepare to go on holiday, we are trying to rush through our to-do list.

[12 : 52] But we never manage to quite get to the end, do we? And that's why it's wonderful to turn to the gospel and to see a gospel of done.

But it's such a challenge for us in this society in which we live. Which is wanting us to do so much to turn to the gospel and to see a gospel of done.

What are some of the big challenges to us in believing this gospel of done? Well let me just suggest four very quick things.

First of all, one of the challenges is our conscience. Our conscience is constantly accusing us. Our conscience is constantly telling us that we need to do more and more to satisfy God.

Our conscience is constantly telling us that we need to do more and more.

[14 : 04] And also the church can be challenged us in terms of this gospel of grace. Perhaps not our own church, but many, many churches that we go to will tell us that the gospel is all about duty.

It's all about doing things. If we go to the average Christian bookshop, the majority of books are on what we need to do to be better husbands and wives and better members of our church.

And if we do all these things, we'll be happy and joyful and fulfilled and accepted by God. Now of course there's a place for all these things.

There's a place for duty. And of course there is a place for law. But these things can drive us, of course, to believing that it's all about duty.

All of our Christian duties need to be set into the context of the gospel. Otherwise we become Pharisees. What will make us better husbands and wives and parents and members and citizens?

[15 : 20] The gospel. These are the things that will make us better people. Nothing that we do can make us any more acceptable to God.

But only receiving the finished work of Christ. And then, thirdly, under this heading, the culture. The culture all around us runs in a culture of reward.

You work and you get rewarded. Do equals money. Almost all the interactions, almost all the relationships around us are about doing something and getting paid.

When we come into the church after six days of being in that culture, it's so difficult to get back to the gospel of grace. The gospel of receiving something for nothing.

It feels alien. It feels like a different world. And then, fourthly, Christian failure.

[16 : 29] Most of us, I think, tonight would accept that we come into the kingdom of God by grace. We rest in Jesus Christ. We try to be holy.

We try to be zealous. We try to excel in holiness. But the problem is when we fall and when we stumble and when we sin and when Christian failure comes into our life, what do we do?

We go back to works. Sometimes we're tempted to say something like, in our minds, I got into the kingdom by grace, but I have to stay in by my efforts.

If we become Christians by God's grace, we stay in God's grace and we finish by God's grace.

When we fail, it's not about doing more. It's about going back to the finished work of Christ. It's about going back to Calvary. So these are just four challenges to receiving the gospel of grace or

the gospel of done.

[17 : 32] But let's just finish tonight by looking at four things and how we can live out this gospel of grace. Well, the first thing we need to do tonight is to re-believe the gospel of grace.

If you asked a work colleague or if you asked a neighbour or if you asked perhaps someone in your family how you become a Christian, I wonder what they would say. Most people would say you need to give up this or give up that or stop doing this or stop doing that.

You need to give up alcohol or stop going to parties or whatever it might be. But you see, the problem is that moral people still aren't Christians.

There are plenty of moral people in the world. There are plenty of people who don't drink alcohol and who are faithful to their wife. But that doesn't make us Christians. The rich young ruler kept the law scrupulously.

The Pharisees kept the law but it didn't bring them to God. And the problem was that their trust was in their righteousness not in Christ's finished work.

[18 : 50] And sometimes we hear these things in the church don't we? People that have been in church for many years we ask them what their hope is for eternity.

They say things like they've attended church, that they've been a good father, that they've worked hard, that they've been generous. Their hope is in their list of things that they can bring to God. What about those of us who are professing Christians? How much is our faith in the finished work of Christ?

If we're honest with ourselves deep down I wonder how often we put our faith in our Christian heritage or our Christian family or our standing in the church or our position in the church or in the length of our Christian service.

We need to re-believe the gospel of grace. It doesn't matter if you've been in the journey for 80 years or 5 minutes we all need a gospel of grace.

[20 : 00] We need to trust in this finished work of Christ. But then secondly under this heading we also notice that we need to refocus our Bible reading.

sometimes if we ask people what the Bible is all about they say something like well the Bible is all about how we can live a better life. How we can live a better life.

The Bible is all about instructions about what we should and shouldn't do. And of course there is much in the Bible that is like that. But the central message of the Bible is not just about how we can be better people.

The central message of the Bible is about God. He is the some centre and substance of the Bible. And the main question that we need to ask as we read the Bible is not how does this make me a better person or how do I apply it to my life?

But how does this what does this tell me about God? What does this reveal to me about my Saviour? how does this bring me to a clearer understanding of the gospel of grace?

[21 : 15] We need to refocus our Bible reading away from ourselves. Somebody has said when Christ becomes the centre of our universe we start to orbit around him and that means that we will always be in the light.

We must keep Christ at the centre stage of our lives and of our Bible reading. Of course we must teach our children the commandments and their duties but primarily we need to teach them the gospel.

We need to learn that it is finished that it is done and that we need to receive the gospel of rest. And then we also need to restudy salvation.

As I said this morning sometimes we become very over familiar with salvation don't we? We've heard the gospel time and time again. We need to remember that verse in 1 Peter 1 it was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you.

These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

[22 : 37] That word the angels long to look into these things is that word for peering. That sense that the angels are on their tiptoes seeking to gaze into this salvation of Christ.

And I wonder when was the last time that we were on our tiptoes with regard to this gospel of grace. When did we crane our necks to look into these things? When did we make an effort to study this gospel of grace?

So often we study doctrine like clothes in a wardrobe don't we? We look at the clothes they look beautiful they look bright and of course clothes do look nice in a wardrobe but clothes need to be worn to show them off.

And as we put the doctrines that we're talking about so often as we put them on Christ they become alive. These doctrines of propitiation and atonement they must always be studied with regard to the person of Christ.

Why don't we perhaps take one of these doctrines even over the summer months and study them ourselves. Take one doctrine and find a good book to study so that we can restudy salvation.

[24 : 03] And then just lastly learning repentance as a way of life. When we sin we have a tendency to put off repentance don't we?

And we do it in three ways. We do we delay or we despair. we sin so we think we've got to do something to atone for that sin.

We think we've got to read our Bible a bit more or pray a bit more. I'll definitely go to the prayer meeting to relieve my conscience. We think that grace needs works to make us acceptable to God. I remember chatting to a Mormon once and I said where does grace come into Mormonism? and he said we have works and then we have a gap and he said grace fills in the gap.

And that's sometimes how we can think isn't it? That this mixture of grace and works will somehow make us acceptable to God. But then sometimes we delay don't we?

[25 : 11] When we sin we feel like we can't immediately go to Christ. We've got to delay. We can't go to him immediately and repent. We've got to have a respectful pause before we go and ask for forgiveness.

But then also we despair don't we? We think that the more we despair over our sins the more we will be accepted. Do delay and despair.

You see biblical repentance takes us back to the foot of the cross. It takes us back to the finished work of Christ. As Spurgeon says, God as much accepts a sinner who only believed in Christ five minutes ago as he will a saint who has known and loved him eighty years for he does not accept men because of anything they do or feel but simply and only for what Christ did and it is finished. So tonight we need to re-believe the gospel of grace. We need to refocus our bible reading. We need to commit ourselves to restudy salvation and commit ourselves to a life of repentance.

Tetelestai it is finished. It's paid in full. When prisoners in bible times were being released from prison they had to show the piece of paper with their offences on it and it was stamped paid in full.

[26 : 46] Free to go it was stamped tetelestai. The crime was paid in full and they were free to go. Is that the gospel that we believe in tonight?

Are you trusting in this finished work? That Christ has done everything. That he has completed all that needs to be done. That he has satisfied the justice of God on your behalf.

that your sins have been paid in full and that you are set free. It is finished. Tetelestai. What glorious words for us to finish our series on sayings from the cross.

Is there any better word that we can use but this word tetelestai? It is finished. It is complete. It has been paid in full.

Praise God tonight that our salvation is complete in him. There is nothing that we can contribute to that salvation but accept it and receive it with the empty hands of faith.

[27 : 52] Let's pray. Our gracious God we thank you for the finished work of Christ. We thank you oh God that he has completed everything on the cross.

We thank you oh God for this gospel of done, this gospel of rest. Forgive us oh God that we are so often seeking to mingle grace and works. Lord we pray that in a culture of busyness, in a culture that is constantly making us do and do, help us oh God to remember that all has been done.

Help us oh God to refocus our Bible reading, help us to restudy salvation, help us to re-believe that gospel of grace.

And Lord help us to live a life of repentance. Lord when we sin, help us to go to the foot of the cross. Deliver us oh God from delaying or despairing or doing.

Help us oh God to seek repentance and forgiveness in Christ. So Lord bless your word to us tonight. Help us as we go into a new week.

[29 : 02] Lord go with us in all the challenges that are ahead of us. Bless those of us who are travelling and Lord bless our pastor as he comes back to us this week. Bless him in his soul, bless him in his preaching and his study, bless him in his family life we pray.

For all we ask is in Jesus name. Amen. So let's finish off by singing the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 31 verses 21 to 24 to 24.

All praise and thanks be to the Lord for he has magnified his wondrous love to me within a city fortified. Psalm 31 verses 21 to 24 to God's praise.

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