

It Is Finished

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Date: 13 September 2026

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[0:00] I'm going to get my throat cleared out here in a minute.! This morning we are going to... Roger, you're playing. Oh, what a nice guy.

Thank you. Thank you, brother. I thought a hurricane was sweeping through here. This morning we're continuing to preach in the book of John, and we're getting toward the end, we're getting to chapter 19.

There's only four sermons from the book of John after this one. And it's been wonderful. We've been going through it since around the middle of January. And so today we get to chapter 19. Let's take a moment to pray before we begin. Heavenly Father, Lord, we take a moment to be silent and let our thoughts settle down.

Help us, Lord, remove all of our distractions. Help us now to be ready to receive the Word of God, the very Word of God. We will read and talk about it.

[1:09] Father, by your Spirit, come move among us. We need a fresh touch today from the living God. Lord, we didn't just come to sing and greet each other and talk.

We came to meet with you. God, meet with us. Meet with us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So, in chapter 19, it's a pretty long chapter, and it is where John covers the whole crucifixion. And so there are many things in this chapter, and I'll just mention, make a few observations about the chapter before we really get into the sermon. One interesting thing in there is that back at the time of Christ, when the Romans were crucifying people, the normal procedure was, after they were dead, you took them down off of the cross, and you threw them in a mass grave.

I mean, they were just convicted, executed criminals, and they got tossed in a grave. But with special permission, a family could come and get the body of a family member and bury them separately somewhere.

But that took special permission. Most of them were just tossed in a mass grave. And so it's kind of interesting in this particular passage that we see two guys who have been secretly followers of Jesus because they were Pharisees.

[2:43] You see a guy named Joseph and a guy named Nicodemus. Now, we've already seen Nicodemus a couple times in the book of John. This is the first time Joseph has appeared. But both of them, after having secretly followed him and not wanting to be publicly associated, suddenly find all this courage, and they go to the Roman governor and say, we want to take his body and give him a proper burial.

And Pilate says, he's yours. Take the body. And so that's really interesting because until now, the disciples have been the bold ones. They're all off in hiding.

And these Pharisees who have been hiding have suddenly stepped forward. Except for one disciple, John, who's writing this, is the only disciple that had the courage to be right there at the cross that day.

And so he's an eyewitness of these things. In fact, he makes that very clear. In verse 35 of this chapter, he actually says, John 19, 35, I was an eyewitness.

I was there. I saw this. I'm telling you things you can trust. And so we're getting this eyewitness account. Now, what did these two Pharisees do?

[3:58] They took his body and they carried it. It just happened that Joseph, who was a, all the Pharisees were rich guys. These guys were politicians.

Now, they were also religious leaders. But at that time, religion and the government were totally mixed until the Romans came in and said, we're the government now.

And so that, you know, put a different emphasis on things. But nevertheless, you got to be a Pharisee by being a good politician. You had to have the right connections, right family and money.

And then once you became a Pharisee, you could use the position to make more money. You had a lot of authority. And so these guys are rich. So what does Nicodemus do? He comes, according to the scripture, with 75 pounds of spices to put on the body.

That's like, I got to thinking about that. I thought, did he bring a wheelbarrow? 75 pounds, it says, of myrrh and aloes to put on the body.

[5:08] And then I thought, did they always do that much? I knew they put spices so that when the body began to decay, it wouldn't smell so terrible, but 75 pounds.

So I looked all this up. It turned out that what was typical for the average Jew was one pound. And only really wealthy people and kings would receive 60, 70, 80 pounds.

So in his death, he wasn't treated like a king. But the placard over his cross said, King of the Jews. And in his death, he was buried in a rich man's tomb, buried like a king.

And truly, he was a king. 75 pounds. The typical, by the way, would have been when we studied Mary anointing his feet, and she took that one little bottle of anointing oil called Spikenard and broke it open and poured it on his feet.

And they were all so upset because it cost so much money. That would have been the typical amount that you would have anointed a body, a dead body with. And so then, by being put in this new grave, it even says in there, no one had ever been buried in that grave before.

[6:31] Graves back then, especially this kind, that were dug out, a cave dug in rock, it became a family mortuary. You see those sometimes in America, not a lot, but somebody that's...

Okay, there's one down at Buffalo Cemetery in Sanford that the family, the Coca-Cola people, I'm forgetting their last name right now. Can somebody help me? No.

The Coca-Cola people have a... The family that owned the Coca-Cola plant, they had a big thing, like a little stone house built out there in the graveyard with an iron door on it, and you can go in there, and their caskets are above ground on shelves in there.

Well, that's kind of how they did it. They dug a cave out, and you'd put more than one body in the tomb. So it was a brand new tomb. Nobody else had ever been laid in there before.

And then the door was shut and sealed. The stone sealed it. Well, why is this important? If he had been put in a mass grave, then when he was resurrected, and his disciples are saying, he came out of the grave, you'd go there and say, well, you know, there's like a dozen, 15 bodies in there.

[7:48] How do you know he came out? If he'd even been in a grave that a family had used a lot, well, there's still five or six or eight bodies in there. How do you know?

But by belonging to a rich man, a man with influence, Joseph, and by it being nobody had ever been laying there before, when that grave was empty, there was going to be no denying that Christ had been put in that tomb, and now it's empty.

And you're going to have to come up with some kind of an explanation. How was it? They know they put him there. They know they sealed him there, and now it's empty. And so all of these little details, God plans out the tiniest details.

Now, I still haven't gotten to the sermon, but this is pretty interesting, isn't it? We're going to get there. So another interesting thing in this picture at the foot of the cross, even though he was dying, one of the last things Jesus took care of, he says to his mother, Mary, who's right there at his feet, woman, this man will be your son.

And he says to John, John, the guy writing the book, John, she's going to be your mama. And John writes, from that day forward, she went and moved into his house.

[9:19] And so this is really interesting. Why did Jesus do that? He was keeping the law, the fifth commandment, honor your father and your mother.

Even though he was dying, he was going to be sure he kept the law, and he took care of his mama. Somehow you just got to admire that about the Savior.

Now, here's the main thing I want to focus on today. John 19, verses 28 through 30. And I love the songs that you picked out today, Gretchen.

They go with the very passage I picked. Good job. The Lord was at work. John 19, 28 through 30. After this, Jesus, realizing that by this time, everything was completed or accomplished, said, in order to fulfill the scripture, I am thirsty.

A jar full of sour wine was there. So they put a sponge soaked in sour wine on a branch of hyssop, and they lifted it up to his mouth.

[10:34] When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, it is finished. That's another way of saying it. It is completely done. Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished, he said. Now, I think sometimes in the past when I read that, I thought, was this like a last week gasp?

Was this in despair? Like, it's all over now. But the more I studied this, I realized this was a victory cry.

This was, it is finished. And I looked the word up in the original Greek language and did the research, how will you translate this word?

Finished. And it just kind of tells the story more completely. In other places in the Bible, it's translated as, it is ended.

[11:38] It is completed. It is completely concluded. It is accomplished. It is filled up.

Like, for example, there's other places in the Bible where they were totally needing to fill something, like maybe the jars of water when Jesus turned them to wine. and they used the same thing, like we're finished filling them.

They're completely full. It even sometimes was used to mean overfilled, gone over the top. It was sometimes used to mean you had paid a debt in full.

So you owed money and you would use this word, finished, meaning debt paid in full. It was also used to mean that you had a duty to perform, you had performed it completely to the last detail.

So, picking this word, there were other words for finished that were not so completely conclusive.

Then, let's wonder and ask, what was it he finished?

[12:45] It was finished. Well, what was it? Now, I'm going to put my grandchildren on notice because they're having lunch at my house today. And I'm going to ask you to tell me what was finished when he said, it is finished.

All right? Okay. I don't know if there will be a prize or not. At my house, probably not, right? You never know.

Okay. Well, what did he finish? The first is very obvious. His great suffering. He had been beaten and whipped and dragged across and found crown of thorns on his head and nailed to this rough wood.

The old rugged cross we just sang about, lifted in the air, hanging there, struggling to breathe. I mean, I cannot imagine the horror and the agony.

And so, one thing of, it is finished is, I am finished completely with this task of dying and suffering. But it kind of speaks to his whole human record.

[13:53] In other words, he was never again going to have to catch a cold or he wasn't going to, you know, he was a carpenter. He was never again going to hit his thumb with a hammer.

He was never again, his brothers didn't like him. He wasn't going to have to deal with family issues. He, I mean, just everything that went wrong in his life, being hungry sometimes, not having a place to sleep, it was all finished.

The part of being a human that's hard, that we all live with, it was finished. Well, what else was finished? The other things are, I think, are more important.

I'm going to give you a list of 12 things and you'll have to name all 12 at lunch today. or no prize. All right.

The next thing is that the law of God for the first time ever by any human being, every requirement of the law of Moses, somebody had finally done it all.

[14:57] Right down to being sure to honor his mama the fifth commandment as he was dying. No one else had ever completely fulfilled the law.

How wonderful. What else had he done? All of the prophecies had been fulfilled that said a Messiah was coming. These prophecies had gone on since Adam and Eve in the garden.

Somebody tell me what was that first prophecy when Adam and Eve had sinned and God judged them? Your seed will crush the head of the serpent.

starting with that prophecy it was finished. There's over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah. Jesus fulfilled every one of them.

Some of them written hundreds of years before, some thousands of years before. He fulfilled all of them. Let's just remember a few of them together. Some of them he could intentionally fulfill, but a lot of them it was just God at work.

[16:02] He couldn't do it. For example, his mama was a virgin. Well, no way he could have engineered that. He was born in Bethlehem. These are all prophecies.

He was born into a lowly family. He was a descendant of King David. He, the arrangement of his childhood, he had also come out of Egypt, which had been prophesied.

He was a miracle worker, a healer. He had been rejected by his own people. He was falsely accused. He was sold for 30 pieces of silver.

All of this is in the Old Testament. He died between criminals. He was buried in a rich man's grave. While he was dying, the soldiers gambled and cast lots for his clothing.

All of this was prophesied. He was pierced with a spear. It's all there in the prophecy. And then, even hanging on the cross, do you remember what we just read together?

[17:08] I'm going to read it to you again. This was in verse 28. Jesus said in order to fulfill the scripture, I am thirsty.

Now, what scripture and prophecy was he fulfilling when he said, I am thirsty? The details are just so interesting. He was fulfilling two prophecies at that moment out of the book of Psalms.

One of them, Psalm 69, 19 through 21. The psalmist prophesying of the Messiah says, You know how I am scorned, disgraced, and shamed.

All my enemies are before you. Scorn has broken my heart and has left me hopeless. I looked for sympathy, but there was none for comforters, but I found none.

Look at this last verse. They gave me vinegar for my thirst. Sour wine is vinegar. So, he was, by them, handing him vinegar to drink.

[18:12] He's fulfilling Psalm 69. And if you really want to see all the details of the crucifixion prophesied a thousand years before Jesus, you can read it in Psalm 22.

The whole Psalm is the crucifixion in great detail. Before crucifixion had ever been invented, no one had ever seen it done, and you'll read a description there.

And one verse in there says, The roof of my mouth is as dry as a piece of pottery. My tongue sticks to my gums.

You have set me in the dust of death. It is a description of what the crucifixion would be like. And reading about that dry mouth and pottery, I think I'll have a drink of water.

So, he fulfilled all the prophecies. Let's continue on. What else had he finished? He had totally obeyed God the Father.

[19:13] Everything God had told him to say and do, he had said it and done it. He could say, it's finished. What else had he done? He had completely revealed God.

Because of Jesus, we know what the character of God is like. He had that same kind of character of both mercy and yet justice and judgment.

Jesus had that character. He was strong and decisive and yet kind and gentle. He also completely revealed the power of God. Walking on the water, calming storms, creating food out of one lunch to feed 5,000 plus people.

He showed us the power of God. He showed us the glory of God. Remember on that Mount of Transfiguration when he began to glow and his garments turned white and Moses and Elijah who were dead came and appeared and talked with him.

We saw the glory of God revealed. So another thing he had finished, people did not know much about God the Father, but Jesus came and we were able to see.

[20:25] That's why he could say to his disciples, when they said, show us the Father, he says, have you been with me this long and you don't know who I am? He completely revealed God the Father.

He completely satisfied the wrath of God. I'm going to come down here and talk about this one.

I've got to tell you a little story I read recently. I'm sure this is a true story. It probably happened over and over. Sometime in the 1800s out west in the prairie lands, the great plains, it's all in certain seasons of the year, it's all dry grass.

Every now and then, a lightning bolt or something would start a fire, and that fire would rage across the plain, consuming everything, and it would go however fast the wind was blowing.

Sometimes those fires had been measured at 50 and 60 miles an hour, just sweeping across the plain. And, you know, burning up dried grass, but if it gets to a house or a tree or whatever, the flames keep going, but it burns everything in its path.

[21:43] Well, the story I read recently, a prairie farmer and his family, like homesteaders out there on the plains, he's got his little house he's built, he's making a go of it, and one day he looked, and way off on the horizon, a long line of smoke, smoke, and the wind was blowing that toward his house, toward him, and he thought, oh my goodness, don't have much time, there's no way to run, what are we going to do, what are we going to do?

He went out in his field, right by his house, and started a fire, and just let it burn out of control, it went in the same direction the wind was blowing, it just took off burning up everything, and when a pretty good bit of it, while it was burning, he went into the barn, and got his wagon, and hitched his horses up to it, and got his family helping him, they were gathering up chickens, and throwing them in the wagon, and a pig or two, whatever they had, he got the family together, they grabbed a few clothes and stuff, threw it all in the wagon, and now the part he had burned, they could see the flames now coming, and the smoke was everywhere, but the part he had burned had burned a pretty big space, he drove his wagon with his family and everything in the middle of the burned part, and stopped and waited, and when the fire got there, there was nothing it could consume, it was already burned, and so the fire stopped there, and simply went around the burned spot, and kept on burning, they were saved because they stood where the fire had already consumed, what does this have to do with

Jesus finishing, satisfying the wrath of God, well we love to, it's true, we love the part of God, which is true, that he's kind and merciful and forgiving, but he is equally just, and even the New Testament says he's a consuming fire, and that he's coming on a day of wrath and judgment, and that he will judge all who have refused his offer of forgiveness, and so Jesus at the cross accepted all of that wrath, he got burned by the wrath of God, and the only way you can be safe is if you stand in Jesus when the wrath of God is revealed at the end, if you're standing in Jesus, he's already accepted all that wrath, and the wrath of God will go around you, that's what Jesus had done for us when he said, it is finished, let's see what else, our ransom has been paid in full from the first time you sinned,

I don't know when that was, but I'm going to guess, you were about two years old, and your mommy said, do this, or don't, you know, your mama said, don't touch that, that's mommy's special vase, and you went, okay, on that day you officially became a sinner, now you were born with a sinful nature, but you became your own sinner back there when you were about two years old, and you kept on doing it, she said, don't eat those cookies before supper, and you sneaked in there and ate one, and your dad said, I'm going to be gone a while, and when I come back, I want this to be cleaned up, and when he came back, it wasn't cleaned up, and you made some excuse, I mean, in other words, you understand, we could keep going, our sins simply grew larger and more complicated, and sneakier, maybe, the older we got, and so here we are now, from that moment we became a sinner, we declared that we were followers of the devil, that we were children of the devil, and by dying on the cross,

Jesus paid a ransom that brought us back out of our captivity, we were no longer kidnapped by the devil, the ransom was paid, we were freed from the devil's claws, he finished that completely, the wages of sin was paid in full, oh, those songs this morning about the blood of Christ, his blood that cleanses from every sin, what does the Bible say, the wages of sin is, but the gift of God is, eternal life through, through Jesus Christ, the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, so we have wages to pay, Jesus paid the wages of sin in full for you, he paid, he died, he didn't have sin of his own, he didn't have to die, he died for you, our guilt was washed away forever, man,

[27:09] I hate it when I feel guilty, don't you feel guilty sometimes, you've done something stupid, whatever, for me, it's often I wasn't very nice to my sweet wife, Becky, I know that's hard for y'all to believe, but it happens, and so I'll be feeling kind of guilty about it, and the good thing about being a believer, not only can I go to her and say, I'm sorry, I was wrong, but I don't have to carry the guilt, Jesus took all my guilt away, I can go to him and say, Lord, forgive me again, take my guilt away, you don't have to feel guilty about anything, Jesus said that is finished forever, and what else, oh, my land, the song we sang this morning, I forget the words, but it was words about a chasm that was too wide to cross, when we sinned, we separated ourselves from God, he cannot tolerate sin, and the chasm, the canyon between us and God is huge, but when

Jesus said it's finished, he had finished building the pathway, the bridge from sinful humanity back to the presence of a holy God, he had opened that door for us, and then once you're in heaven, all

the good things that are going to happen when he died on the cross, he secured our eternal inheritance, so the fact that you're going to have a glorified body, when Jesus says it's finished, he paid for that glorified body, that body that's never going to hurt again, never be sick, never have any illness, he paid for no more tears, no more sorrows, he paid for every good thing that we will enjoy forever with God in heaven, it is finished, he paid for it, it was finished, and then, and this is the last one that I'm going to mention,

I don't think it's the last one he did, but he opened a door, remember Jesus told his disciples, it'll be good for you if I go away because I'll send a comforter, when he died and said it's finished, he had also opened the door for the Holy Spirit to come to you and me, so we're never alone without God, the Spirit of God is always with us, Jesus paid for that, it was finished, and this list I'm sure could go on and on, but he had finished everything he was sent here to do, every detail, he had accomplished it, and in eternity we'll probably see the rest of what he accomplished, now somebody might say well wait, now was he completely finished, doesn't he still have to rise from the dead, doesn't he have to ascend into heaven, yeah, but that's not work, that's rewards, his work is finished, now he starts receiving rewards, being raised from the dead, ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, that's not work, he now has entered into the rest, R-E-S-T, the rest, that God provides, and when he was through with that, the final verses of that chapter, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit to God, we can't do that, we're not God, we can't just say, I'm going to release my spirit right now, and fall over, that is not our ability, and it's also we don't have the authority, we don't have the authority to give life or to take life, now sometimes God gives that authority to governments to take life, he's given that authority to governments, but he hasn't given that authority to individual humans to give life to take life, that is in the hands of God, but Jesus had that authority, and so he said, into your hands I commit my spirit, and he bowed his head and let his spirit go, God, no one else has ever died that way, let me start making concluding remarks then,

Christ finished all of those things for you, plus more that we don't know about or I haven't listed, what have you done for him, you say, wait Matt, you said we didn't have to feel guilty anymore, why are you trying to make us feel guilty, well I'm not talking about stuff like did you visit the sick, and did you pay your offerings, and did you teach Sunday school, did you mow the church yard, did you help the lady next door who's a widow, I'm not talking about any deeds, I'm talking about what Jesus said you were required to do, have you done that, and he repeated it over and over and over, right here in the book of John he repeated them, for example in the very first chapter of John, to everyone who received him, he gave the right to be children of God, have you done that after all Jesus has done for you, have you simply said Lord I receive you, come into my life,

[32 : 32] John repeats it many times, here's a famous time, John 3 16, whoever believes in him will not perish, but will have eternal life, that word believe means trust in him, follow him, commit your life to him, depend on him, have you done that, it's not a deed you have to do, it's a thing between you and Jesus, have you said Jesus, I believe, I trust you, I receive you, and then just a month ago, I believe it was John was preaching, he came to chapter 17 and spent some time on this verse, a definition, this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent, do you know Jesus?

And you say, well I've tried, to know Jesus, you just talk to him and you say, Jesus, I want to know you, I want to receive you, I do believe in you, I do believe that you came as the son of God and died for me and rose again, I do believe, now God, I want to know you, I want to know you, Jesus, I want to receive you, come to me now.

That's the work that remains for us to do. Have you done it? Have you taken refuge in Jesus? He's already been burned by the wrath of God, so that when the day of wrath comes, you will not be burned, but you will be saved in the presence of Jesus.

today is that day for you. If you've never done that, if you've never really made that commitment, what more can Jesus say?

What more can you do than he's done? He's finished his work for you. What are you waiting for? It is time to receive to make that decision.

[34 : 31] His work is finished and you and I are running out of time to respond to that work and be saved.

Let's pray together. Lord, it's an amazing thing that you did on the cross and we've only examined some of it. Help us, Lord.

We pray this prayer now. I pray it, Lord, for any who want to pray this prayer and maybe there's some here who have never prayed it. Lord, we do receive you.
Jesus, come, we receive you. Jesus, we believe in you. We trust you. Come, Jesus, save us, forgive us, help us to know you and save us and we do believe.
It's in your name we pray. Amen.