

It Is Finished

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[0:00] Pray. Our God and Father, this morning as we who are your children come into your presence, we do so! We do so because you are the one who in your loving kindness and grace lifted us out of the pit and changed the heart of a rebel into a worshiper.

We're thankful that this morning as we look into your word and we rely upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we can see more of the Lord Jesus and we can grow in appreciating his love and his work.

And we can have our hearts stirred to look forward to the day that we will see him face to face.

We're mindful this morning that our hearts, our thoughts are inclined to wonder.

And we recognize that we need your help, your encouragement, the work of the Holy Spirit, that we would think deeply of the truths that you have for us and that seeing those truths, we would be changed from glory into glory, growing to be more like the Lord Jesus Christ, reflecting our Savior's character and heart to the people that you place us in connection with and that you would stir us this morning to love righteousness and hate sin, even like Jesus.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I want you to turn your Bibles this morning to John chapter 19, verse 28. And as we begin this morning, let me just take a minute and remind you of something that I anticipate probably doing for about another year.

[2:20] I think there's been very few Sundays that I have not said to one or many of you, pray for me. That's not a lesson that I learned early in pastoral ministry, but one that I remember actually sitting back about where Joe Holloway is because my youngest son was an absolute infant at that time.

And I was sitting back there when Bill Brock resigned from the ministry here and became the state representative. And he taught a series of lessons about the importance of praying for your pastor and the role that prayer had in ministry.

And it affected me deeply. It's carried me through the last 35 years. So you're going to hear me say that for about another year. Remember to pray for me. And I trust that that will have stuck in your mind adequately that whether or not Pastor Shearer says it as often as I do, my wife accuses me of being profoundly redundant.

I love her anyway, but, you know, I say things many times. I trust whether or not Pastor Shearer says it as often as I do, you will remember to pray for him because the Scriptures encourage you to pray for those that God calls to teach the Word of God.

So you pray for me, and you rely upon the Holy Spirit to take the Word of God and hammer it home to the glory of Christ. Let me read, beginning there in verse 28.

[3:57] After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the Scripture, I thirst. A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, it is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. I have to tell you this morning, as I take this passage in hand, I am profoundly aware of the significance of my dependence and your dependence on the Holy Spirit in understanding and applying this passage to our life.

We are looking this morning at the very epicenter, the focal point of the plan of God in redemption. And this morning's passage is not one that I trust you will sit here and allow it to kind of waft over you and just kind of think, oh, well, okay, you know, he did the blah, blah, blah.

No. This should be a passage that affects you. And if it does not, the fault does not lie in the text, but the fault will lie in you and in me.

[5:29] So prayer. With that being said, I want you to recognize that as we take this passage there in verse 28, we're dealing, first of all, with Jesus making a very clear announcement of his

completed work.

Recognize the opening words of verse 28, after this, prompt us to take a moment and really stop and think of the larger context of what had been taking place.

If you were to look in John alone, you would recognize that over there in verse 27, Jesus made a comment about the relationship that John the Apostle was to have with his mother.

But if you were to take the larger part of the synoptic Gospels, you would understand that actually between the time of Jesus being put on the cross and the time of his death, there was a substantial amount of time that elapsed.

John, consistent with his objective of focusing principally on the glory and the supremacy of Jesus as God himself, does not give us a great deal of information about the history or the practical issues related to the crucifixion.

[6 : 45] It focuses primarily on Christ, the Lord, and his death. What you would note, if you were to look at the synoptic Gospels, is that there had been a three-hour period of darkness.

And during that time, one of the things that took place, Jesus had cried out in accordance with the Old Testament, particularly in Psalm 22, my God, my God, what?

Why have you forsaken me? And if you were to stop and go back there, and I'm not asking you to do that, but you'll remember in that passage that Jesus, even as he was thinking of what was taking place, his heart must have found some comfort in the remainder of the passage in Psalm 22, which says this, but thou art holy.

God could not look upon the sinfulness that Jesus bore at that moment. And so here we find these two little words tell us about what had taken place in this time as Jesus bore our sins.

Now what we read next in the passage is this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the Scriptures, I thirst.

[7 : 59] Jesus knew at this time that his work was complete before he died. I want you to ponder that just for a moment. Jesus knew, and here's a little point to stick in your mind, the words of Scripture are preeminently important, and we do not help ourselves if we don't think carefully about the exact nature of what the Holy Spirit has tended, in this case, to tell us.

Do you follow? Why is it there? What's that say? How does it fit? What's its value to me? Here is Jesus knowing in advance that his work is completed.

His death had not happened yet. So you have to ask yourself the question, how could it be said that he knew that his work was finished? Look at the word again there in verse 28, Jesus knowing that all was now finished.

I want you to recognize in relationship to that, first of all, that all of the Old Testament prophecies concerning him had been completed and fulfilled. There wasn't a single prophecy given in the Old Testament that Jesus had not brought to fruition and fulfilled.

And so when he said, it is finished, he understood and he was clear in his thinking that all that had been prophesied regarding him had been cared for. Secondly, he knew that he had glorified his Father and done everything that the Father had appointed him to do.

[9 : 33] It is finished. Furthermore, I want you to understand that Jesus had suffered for our sins and satisfied the judgment that we were due.

So how can you say, in advance of his work being complete, how could he say, it is finished? Well, let me propose two thoughts in relationship to that. For one, the sovereign plan of God to send his Son into the world to take our place and die for our sins had been accomplished by Jesus coming as an infant, living, and then dying as he was, dying at that moment on the cross.

And so when he said, it is finished, before his death, he was referencing the plan of God for salvation and the fact that it had come to fruition. Now, it's a little bit like, I'm thinking about the men's retreat that will take place.

I'm debating whether I want to go off the zip line again. You have to climb way up high on the zip line. Anybody else done it? It's kind of an arduous journey up there and you're asking yourself, why am I doing this?

I did say that several times, but I thought, once I started up, no going back down. And they buckle you in and you are there teetering into the face of eternity.

[10 : 50] Your feet are kind of resting on the very cusp of the moment and you don't have to jump off, right? But the minute you give in to gravity, it's all over.

And here was Jesus hanging on the cross and the reality of this is that the inevitability of what God had ordained was taking place and he said, it is finished. And we understand that the unchangeable nature of God and his infinite power was bringing to complete fruition that had been planned from eternity past.

Furthermore, and I'm not going to have you turn back to the passage we looked at in Isaiah chapter 53 earlier, but if I were to direct you to that passage just for a moment, you will notice that 700 years before Christ died on the cross, the Spirit of God speaking through Isaiah chose to use the past tense in numerous instances referring to what Christ would do for us.

He was wounded for our transgressions. He bore our sin upon himself. It says, it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

And on repeated occasions as we read in Isaiah, we see here that the indication is that God had accomplished already, prophetically though it was being uttered, he'd already accomplished the work of redemption.

[12 : 12] Another little note in relationship to this is that the way in which we determine accomplished action has primarily to do with time.

Something that's going to take place in the future, it will be. Something that has been done, we say, it was. And in the Greek, in the Hebrew, and particularly more in the Greek, the aspect that is used here in the tense is referring to something that is accomplished not necessarily simply by virtue of time but also by virtue of intent.

And by the way, when God intends to do something, is it something that's still a question? What's the answer? No, not at all. So here is Jesus and he is hanging on the cross and he says, knowing that all was finished, he announces the statement, he takes first of all the wine to moisten his lips and then after he has had adequate refreshment or at least moisture so he can speak carefully, he says, it is finished.

Now, John uses this exact same word, it is finished, earlier in the passage in a number of different places actually that John uses it but if you were to look at the first part, we're now in verse 30 so recognize, Jesus here, he says, it is finished.

Jesus had used that same Greek statement in 28. Some of you in your translations in 28 will have knowing that all was accomplished, right?

[13 : 48] How many of you have the word accomplished? It's another way in which it is translated. The word is *tetelestai* and it refers to the fact that that work had been done. In John chapter 7, 17 rather, verse 4, we find Jesus in his prayer to the Father, remember, I've accomplished all the work that you've called me to do, I've done what you've asked.

He used the same terminology to communicate the fact that even before the cross, he'd accomplished all that needed to be done. The Greek word was used in a number of different areas, arenas.

For one, it was used in business, it was used in accounting, accounting. It was also used in religious circles and it was a very common word, you find it in ancient vocabulary and text, that it was used in relationship to sacrifices.

When the work was done, it was announcement that the matter had been completed or that the debt was paid in full. And so here is Jesus, even before his death, he is making the statement that he had accomplished all that God had sent him to do.

I want you to understand that when he said, it is finished, it was not kind of the cry of a person who was despairing of what was taking place at all. It was a declaration, it was the announcement of a victor that the game, the matter, had been settled.

[15 : 18] I think it's pretty important to remember that. When we hear him say, it is finished, it is an absolute resonating declaration that we have the joy and certainty of our finished salvation as well.

I want you to stop and realize that when he said this, he was referring to the broad scope of the plan of redemption. I want you to turn over, if you would, to Hebrews 10, verse 14.

Hebrews 10, verse 14, as you think about what all had been accomplished on the cross. Hebrews 10, verse 14.

For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us, for after saying, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declared the Lord, I will put my law in their hearts and write them on their minds.

Then he adds, I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

[16:38] I don't know about you, but I get cold chills, literally, reading that passage. Why? Because it is clear in the Scriptures that the work of Christ in our redemption is absolutely satisfied and concluded.

The broken sinner who comes to faith in Christ has an eternal and irreversible salvation because Christ satisfied the guilt and shame or the penalty for my sins and he has given eternal salvation to all who believe in him.

And so if you're sitting here this morning and you are genuinely the child of God, you have come to him by faith, you've confessed your sins, you've believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you can say along with Jesus, it is finished.

There's no question of how your story ends. I like that. I love that. And often when I am in communication with other people comes the opportunity of asking them that little practical question, and so God were to ask you how you should get into heaven or why he should let you in, I'm amazed at how often I hear people tell me, well, I'm hoping he will.

I'm not positive but, you know, I'm hoping my good, hey, listen, Christ satisfied the judgment I deserved and I am resting in his finished work.

[18:04] Going back to John chapter 19, I want you to pick up now and the remainder of what we find here in the text and look at verse 30. It says that after he'd received the sour wine, he says it is finished and he bowed his head and he gave up his spirit.

Christ chose when he would die. Christ chose when he would die. Unless Jesus comes back first, every one of us here are going to die.

It's a fact. Every one of us here are going to die. And apart from those who tragically choose to commit suicide, the rest of us are really not going to have much to do with the moment of our passing.

Do you follow that? One thing or another, it's going to happen when it happens. In Job chapter 14, verse 5, it says this, since his days are determined and the number of his months is with you.

The point that Scripture makes is this, is that God God is the one who chooses. Earlier in the book of Job, Job said this, the Lord gives and the Lord takes away.

[19:15] Blessed be the name of the Lord. When I die is not up to me. And I can tell you as a pastor of some 35 years, I've watched over the years individuals, particularly as they reach their older ages, they would like to go sooner.

I mean, after all, remember what Paul said? To live is Christ, to die is what? It's good. I tell you, one of the more unnerving things I say to people that don't know me better, when they ask me how it's going, I say, any better than I'd be dead.

It's like, oh no, really? Yeah, yeah. I tell you what, when I go up, it's going to be great. All of us have no real control over when we die.

And I want you to recognize that when Jesus did what he did, Jesus chose the moment of his death and he made his deity absolutely clear.

Look at the passage again. He bowed his head and gave up his spirit. When his work was done, he chose the moment that he would pass away.

[20:30] I want you to turn back just for a moment to John chapter 10 and we want to look at John chapter 10 verse 17 and 18. For this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.

I lay down my life. Verse 18, no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up.

This charge I have received from my Father. I want you to stop and realize that his death for our sins was entirely voluntary.

One thing that Jesus had said repeatedly to his disciples is that his death was going to be of his own choosing. It was something that he had determined beforehand to accomplish and the time and the way in which it all played out was something that was entirely according to God's plan and God being in control of it, Christ being God, happened according to his plan.

You know, it's very interesting when you stop and think about how many times people wanted to kill Jesus and they didn't accomplish it. They wanted to do it. One time, remember, they took him up to the edge of a cliff, they were going to throw him off and what happened?

[21:49] Jesus just walked out between them, gone. And repeatedly, they planned for murder or whatever else and it didn't come about. And so here, Jesus makes it clear, the scripture makes it

clear that Jesus died according to the plan that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had and he died exactly according to their own plan.

I want you to recognize he chose to do it for us. Turn, you're there in John chapter 19, keep your finger there for a moment but go if you would to Philippians chapter 2. Look at Philippians chapter 2 verse 7 and 8.

Actually, let me pick up if I may in verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves that is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself of no reputation, made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

Remember when Pilate, earlier in John, was a little irritated that Jesus wasn't responding as Pilate thought he should and he let him know, don't you know I have the power to crucify you or to let you go and what was Jesus' response?

Hey, nah. This is something that you've been given the ability to do and were it not for the plan of God, in essence, this would not take place and earlier, Jesus had made it had made it clear that if this matter, if this was a matter of my kingdom, my subjects, my servants would fight and I can call legions of angels to accomplish the deliverance that I would need if that was my plan.

[23:52] So here we are, we recognize that Jesus chose the moment of his death and I want you to realize this morning that when you stop and meditate upon what Jesus did, I want you to understand he chose to die in your place.

Let me ask you a question, how can I be warm and indifferent to that issue? Do you follow that? You deserving to die for your sins, God was willing to send his son and his son was willing to die in your place.

Thoughtfulness about the reality of what Christ has done for us invariably warms our heart and causes us to love him more.

Let me come to one other thing that's very interesting actually in John. You pick up there if you will as we work our way through in verse 31. Since it was the day of preparation so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath for the Sabbath was a high day the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken that they might be taken away.

John actually spends considerably more time dealing with this issue of the authenticity of the veracity of the death of Christ than he actually deals with the fact that he died.

[25:22] Pretty interesting. We find that his death is confirmed very clearly. John dedicated seven verses to giving us a detailed look at our Savior's death.

In one sense he spent more time on helping us understand the facts of his death than he actually did on what happened at the crucifixion. That's not an accident and it deserves our attention.

You ask yourself why is it there? Why is that much text given to the subject and what's its significance? I am struck for a moment by the absolute cruel hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders.

They had no problem with a completely trumped up judgment. They had no problem lying about Jesus.

They had no problem in hatred desiring his execution. They had no problem with all of the wickedness of their heart but when it came to this business of Jesus hanging on the cross past sundown they really went off on the Old Testament law.

[26:33] Stop just for a minute. How many of you realize that your hypocrisy and my hypocrisy when it displays itself has righteous indignation in very narrow bands of appointment?

Do you follow that? Oh we get righteously indignant about A, B, C but the rest of the issues in our life we're not so troubled by. Here were the Pharisees. Here were the scribes.

Here were the religious leaders. And they were all about what it had to say in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 22 and 3 where a man who was executed was not to hang on the tree beyond sundown.

Get him down. So do you know how they wanted that accomplished? Look at the passage. They come to Pilate and ask that their legs might be broken that they might be taken away.

Kind of a subtle way of saying we want you to take a large club and smash their shin bones so that they cannot bear their weight and as a result they die quicker.

[27:38] They don't suffer any less. In fact in some senses they suffer a little bit more. Their suffering is not as long. And as you look at this you find that here they were asking that Pilate would have soldiers go out and take this large club and smash the legs and shatter the shin bones or I

doubt the femur.

No one seems to indicate that. But that way they would die quicker. That was very merciful wasn't it? I mean something about that. Just have your shin bones crushed by an absolute giant club. You die quickly. Here they are. Oh their righteousness they don't want these guys hanging too long and you know so what happens? You look there it says so the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him and when they came to Jesus verse 33 and saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs.

Now if you were to go to one of the synoptic gospels I believe it is Mark when the report comes back to Pilate from one of the common soldiers hey Jesus is dead.

he doesn't buy it and he makes a centurion double check the fact. Now by the way in Roman military decorum if you ask a centurion to verify it and it came back and he didn't get you the accurate facts guess what the consequences were?

[29:12] Not pretty. So here's the centurion double checking and he says yeah he's dead and by the way how do we know he died? He was already dead. You look there in the passage but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once there came out blood and water.

It's interesting that Christ's death was confirmed by a spear thrust. I'm not talking about just tapping on his body to see if he responded.

It was a spear thrust thrust up into his chest cavity up into his heart probably and when that happened out came blood and water. Now I don't want to it's very interesting when the scripture doesn't give you the exact fact one of the things that sometimes happens in commentaries is people go off on speculation about what does that really mean?

I got to tell you there are at least probably two different medical theories about what the blood and water are referenced to but the scripture suffice it to say we know Jesus was dead.

So ask yourself the question is it important that Jesus actually died? How many of you have friends that are Muslims? Let's try this how many of you know people that are Muslims?

[30:36] How many of you know that the Muslims believe that Jesus actually didn't die on the cross? Pretty significant. How do we know that Jesus died? Well a soldier took a spear and thrust it up into his chest cavity and out came blood and water.

What's the significance of that? I want you to look in your Bibles now you're there in John but I want you to turn over if you would to Romans chapter 6 Romans chapter 6 verse 23 here's what we know is the reason that Jesus died for us for the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's get this clear Jesus died to pay the penalty for my sins Jesus died to pay the penalty for my sins Jesus died for our sins to satisfy the judgment of God against sin furthermore he died to satisfy the righteous judgment of God against sin that God had deferred or he had not dealt with immediately.

Turn back if you would to Romans chapter 3 verse 25 and 26 whom God put forward what's that saying God took his son and moved him to that center point of the issues of all of life and eternity and God put his son on the cross why as propitiation by his blood to be received by faith this is to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins are you not glad that God delayed his judgment of you for your sins are you not glad for that he could have judged you immediately on the moment of the first sin that you committed and where would you have spent eternity condemned for all eternity do the angels understand God being forbearance forbearing in relationship to sin the answer is no not at all but God was patient and he was forbearing and he did not judge our sins immediately but he had

Jesus come to be our substitute Jesus died for our sins because God had been patiently waiting to deal with our sins and how did he deal with them by having Jesus die in our place here's the wonderful fact that just flows out of this passage God was willing to send his son the Lord Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for our sins upon the cross to offer salvation and complete forgiveness to all who will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and so the practical question is this this morning number one have you come to the place where the spirit of God has been convicting you of the reality that you deserve the eternal judgment of God for the sin of your life and if you have come to that point the question is this have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ in whom alone is salvation and complete forgiveness there is a fact it says in the scriptures that appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment if you're sitting here today and you have not come to the point where you have recognized your sin

[34 : 25] I would ask you do you need any more empirical evidence or do you need any more practical evidence to convince you that you have a dark and nasty heart if you do not need any more evidence the practical question that follows is this is have you come to the place where you have cast yourself upon the mercy of Christ and you have asked him to forgive you and to be your savior here's the truth Jesus died for your sins and it is unconscionable it is extremely offensive to God for us who know the darkness of our own heart to be indifferent to the penalty that sin brings because God sent his son to be our savior and to say I'm not interested is pretty irritating by the way

God will delay his judgment but I want to assure you of this to be indifferent to his offer will ultimately if you refuse his gift will amplify the consequence of his judgment against you and I would plead with you as it says in 2nd Corinthians be reconciled to God now let's close in prayer our father God this morning we are thankful for the work that the Lord Jesus Christ did on our behalf that he willingly came to be the sacrifice for our sin and that all who believe in him may have complete forgiveness and redemption in his blood I pray for those who are here today that know the Lord Jesus Christ that this morning as they consider what Jesus has done for them that their hearts would be lifted up and they would delight in him and look forward to the day that they will see him let that be something that stirs our heart to delight and satisfaction in the Lord Jesus Christ and I pray for those that are here today that do not know Christ that even today your spirit would be working even as we come to a close of this service drawing them to the cross to believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and faith in his finished work we ask this in Jesus name amen