

It is finished!

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. Before I start on the reading, just something that came into my mind as we were just preparing! that wonderful recognition of what Jesus has done for us.

! I think it was in 1869, but I might be wrong on that date. I was there, but I can't quite remember it. A man called Thomas Bowman Stevenson was walking through the streets of London with his friend John Major, and he saw a child, a boy of about 10, who was begging and pickpocketing and living on the streets.

And when Bowman Stevenson spoke to the boy, he ran away, and he said, someone should go after that boy.

And they did, and they followed him, and they found a group of 30 boys living, sleeping rough on the flat roof of a bakery.

And Thomas Bowman Stevenson set up the children's homes, which was then called National Children's Homes, and is now called Action for Children. And as we were, as I was praying and just reflecting on the communion service, God says to Jesus about each of us, someone should go after them.

[1 : 4 3] Someone should go after them. And that's what he's done. He pursued us. And he found us. In whatever state we were at, I don't suppose many of us were living with 30 others on the roof of a bakery, but in whatever state we were, he pursued us to salvation.

And this morning, that's the wonder of the cross. And we'll come on Sunday, sorry to spoil the story, but you've read it before.

To Jesus resurrected. Let's read some words from John's Gospel, John chapter 19, words that you'll know well. I'm going to read up to verse 18, and then the back end of the passage of the chapter.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, Hail, King of the Jews.

And they slapped him in the face. Once more, Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered here, Look, I'm bringing him out to you to let you know I find no basis for a charge against him.

[3 : 0 3] When Jesus came out wearing purple, the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, Here is the man. As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, Crucify! Crucify!

But Pilate answered, You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him. The Jewish leaders insisted, We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. Where do you come from? He asked Jesus. But Jesus gave him no answer. Do you refuse to speak to me? Pilate said.

Don't you realize I have power to free you or to crucify you? Jesus answered, You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.

Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin. From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free. But the Jewish leaders kept shouting, If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar.

[4 : 14] Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar. When Pilate heard this, he brought out Jesus, sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the stone pavement, which in Arabic is Gabbatha.

It was the day of preparation of the Passover. It was about noon. Here is your king, Pilate said to the Jews. They shouted, Take him away. Take him away.

Crucify him. Shall I crucify your king? Pilate asked. We have no king but Caesar, the chief priest answered. Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him.

And with him two others, one on each side and Jesus in the middle. And then verse 28. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished and so the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I'm thirsty.

[5 : 27] A jar of wine vinegar was there. So they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he received the drink, Jesus said, It is finished.

With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Many of us have read that passage many times, heard it read many times.

It's really powerful. It's really powerful. Just the first slide, please. Whoever's doing the slides, Josh. Thank you. Crucifixion is a desperately cruel punishment.

And we just hear the narrative. It's a rather well-written narrative from John here. But the narrative of what happened to Jesus.

Being mocked. Having a crown of thorns placed on his head. That was the gentle placement. The shove down of thorns. His head will have been pouring with blood.

[6 : 39] And they came and slapped his face. And in other gospels, it said they spat at him. I don't know whether you've had that happen to you or had it happen to me.

It's a horrible thing. It's a very assaulting thing. And they mocked him. And then they decided eventually that they would crucify him.

That they wouldn't set him free because the crowds, the baying of the crowds was to crucify him. And they made him carry his own cross to the place of crucifixion.

And there they crucified him. It was a desperately cruel punishment. Utter humiliation. Utter humiliation.

Utter humiliation. Absolute agony. And total ridicule. And mocking. It's hard to move past that on Good Friday.

[7 : 43] Because it was all done deliberately. It was done deliberately. And it had to happen to fulfill the prophecies.

But the people who did those cruel things did it deliberately. The cost. Just the physical and emotional cost.

Let alone the separation from the Father. And the spiritual cost. But the physical and the emotional cost was enormous. Next slide please. Tetelestai.

Bless you. Thank you. Tetelestai means it's finished. It's a well-known word. Everyday word in Greek. Apparently.

It's something that you would hear a lot. You'd hear it in the market. You'd hear it in family homes. You'd hear it in the workplace. You'd hear it all over. It's a sort of, yeah, I've done that now.

[8 : 45] I've completed that. That task is done. Have you ploughed the field to telestai? Have you done your homework? No, they wouldn't say it. It's never finished, is it? Have you done whatever?

Have you done your chores? Have you paid for these goods? Tetelestai means finished or paid in full.

And as Jesus was hanging on the cross, nailed to a cross, and he knew the end was near, and he was thirsty, and he took some vinegar on a sponge to quench his thirst.

I don't suppose it would have quench his thirst much. And then he said in a loud voice, it is finished.

And he died. And be in no doubt that he died. But he cried out his last words were, it is finished.

[9 : 57] Next slide please. Now, this has been characterized in some things I've been reading as almost a cry of surrender. Oh, all right then.

I've done my best. I tried my hardest. This isn't somehow a victory for the Roman oppressors and the Roman occupiers.

Nor is it just a cry of despair from a man about to breathe his last and die. This cry of it is finished is a profound victory cry.

I have done what I have been called to be done. I have fulfilled my earthly work. The victory cry that Jesus gave has such eternal consequences.

He's done what he needs to do. And even in his pain, even in his agony, even in his humiliation, he was able to say, I've done it.

[11 : 15] I've done it. So don't see it is finished. Don't see Good Friday. Don't see the death of Jesus, the crucifixion of Jesus as defeat.

As a victory for the wrong side. For the oppressors. It was a victory cry. Jesus won. Even on the cross.

And the it is finished has eternal consequences. Next slide, please. So what's Jesus finished?

Just a few things. And I was looking through and thinking I could fill a couple of hours with that. But let's have a look at one or two of them. Let's go somewhere else, said Jesus in Mark chapter 1.

So I can preach there also. That's why I've come. He came to preach the gospel. He came to tell people about the kingdom of heaven.

[12 : 16] He came to tell people about the wondrous truth of the love of God. And our place within that wonderful family.

As we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. For I have come down from heaven. Not to do my will. But to do the will of him who sent me.

John chapter 6. I came to do God's will. I came to do the will of the Father. I came to do what I have been asked to do.

The Garden of Gethsemane. Please can you take this cup from me. But not my will but yours. Pray Jesus. I have come that they may have life.

A life to the full. John chapter 10. A verse I think that we misunderstand very often. If we are Christians.

- [13 : 17] We get the best of life. And the world tells us that we get the worst of life. All those rules. All those things you can't do. All that behavior that you can't. No, no, no, no.
- We get the best. Jesus has come to give us fullness of life. I have come to the world as a light.
- So no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. John chapter 12. They're some of the things that Jesus came to do. So when he said it is finished.
- I've done it. They're the things that he did. They're some of the things he did. He did a lot more, didn't he? But they're some of the things he did. Preach the gospel.
- Obey the Father. Bring fullness of life. And bring light into darkness. And there's a sermon in each one of those.
- [14 : 15] And there's reflection in each one of those. And maybe if you would like to. Just reflect on that over the next weekend. Reflect on some of that stuff. Preach the gospel.
- Do the will of the Father. Bring fullness of life. And bring light into the darkness. It is finished. Said Jesus.
- I've done it. I've done what you asked me to do. Next slide please. Jesus. So Jesus completed his work on earth.
- He died. He rose from the dead. He spent a little or a few weeks back on earth. Before going back to be with the Father. He completed his work.
- He'd done his job. He's done it. But we each have a job of work to do. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost.
- [15 : 14] Luke chapter 19. At the end of the story of Zacchaeus. My favorite character in the New Testament. Jesus was handing on the baton of that work to us.
- We can't be Jesus. We can't be perfect. But those things that Jesus came to do. We have now been asked to do.
- Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize in the name of the Father and the Son. And of the Holy Spirit. Matthew chapter 28. Go and do what I've done. Go and get on with the jobs that I've started.
- And I have completed my bit. But here's the baton. We pass it on to you. For those of you who are part of this church.
- We have received the baton. From 120, 130 years. Of others. Who have worshipped here. And in due course.
- [16 : 18] We will pass on the baton. To the next generation. Of faithful brothers and sisters. Who will carry on this work. We're the people.
- Who choose. To pick up that work. And the reason we do. And the reason we can. Is because Jesus on the cross said.
- It is finished. I've done my bit. But you need to do your bit. We have not yet completed.
- Our work. Because our work. Is the work to continue. The work of Jesus. Next slide please.
- Mike Yakanali. Nelly. Spirituality. Isn't about being finished and perfect. Spirituality is about trusting God. In our unfinishedness.
- [17 : 17] I rather like that. We're not perfect. We're not finished article. We won't be until the day. We move into heaven. But in our unfinishedness.
- Which I'm not entirely sure is a word. But we'll have it anyway. In our unfinishedness. God uses us. Each of us here. To bless us.

To encourage us. But also. To change the lives. Of the people that we come across. Someone should go after that boy. Someone should go after.

Add your own name. Add your own situation. Jesus is saying to each of us. We have a responsibility. To. Continue.

His work. I should have said about. Tom of Bowen Stevenson. By the way. That he was preparing. To go and be a missionary in China. And he. Stayed in London.

[18 : 17] And elsewhere. He was a Christian man. Called by God. To do an amazing work. Next slide. And so this Good Friday.

Give great thanks. That Jesus could cry on the cross. To tell us die. Give great thanks. That he could give.

His last words. His last victory cry. It's finished. I've done it. This isn't the end of the story.

Please come back on Sunday. But when you come back. And if you don't come back. Wherever you are. Please be ready to take up the baton.

Of the call of God on your life. To do his work. And to change the world. One smile. One conversation.

[19 : 15] One act of kindness. One piece of generosity. One prayer. One truth. One hold. At a time. That's our job.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.