

Seven Last Words From The Cross:

It Is Finished!

Maundy Thursday - March 24, 2016

John 19:28-30

Our text for meditation, from John's Gospel, the 19th chapter, verses 28-30. 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. (John 19:28-30 ESV) So far the text.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus declares, "It is finished!" What is finished? He is finished, He gives up His spirit. In other words, He dies. Is that what He means?

These words of Jesus from the cross have important meaning to you and to me and to every Christian. In fact, they have incredible meaning to everybody who is not a Christian, if they would only believe them – for without faith in this Word of Christ, there is only hell and torment waiting for the unbeliever.

Last Wednesday we focused on the fact that Jesus was True Man. We also briefly noted that Jesus was True God. However, it was God in *human flesh* who had to live under the law **as a man** to fulfill the law for us. It was God in *human flesh* who had to be obedient **as a man** to the point of death, suffering **as a man** for our guilt and God's wrath against sin.

In our text today, we can see that as God in human flesh, Jesus, the Christ, is intimately aware of His situation. He was not some man lost in delirium, as some watching beneath the cross that day figured when He cried out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabbachthani."

"It is finished," He says. He has fulfilled the Scriptures, that which was foretold of God's Messiah, in all things. In Peter's first sermon after Christ's resurrection, he said, "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:22-23 ESV) A little later in that sermon he proclaimed, "But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled." (Acts 3:18 ESV)

Τετέλεσται – the most beautiful word in all of Scripture, means, "it is finished."

Jesus, knew that He had accomplished all that the Father had required of Him. God had sent Him into the world, born in human flesh, to accomplish salvation. He had to be born at a specific time so that the right people were in place who had calloused, cold, and hardened hearts, the kind of people who would crucify an innocent man just to keep their own positions and power safe. It was these who arranged and manipulated others so that Jesus was put to death – as the Father planned. He had to endure all that was required by the Father to make atonement, or satisfaction, for your sin, my sin, and the sins of the whole world.

Jesus had prayed in the garden on this evening after instituting the blessed meal of His Divine grace. He took some disciples with Him. "Sit here, while I go over there and pray." And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My

Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

Jesus knew what was coming and what it was going to accomplish, and in this word He proclaims, "It is finished," He states that all is completed. He has fulfilled the requirements of the Law and suffered to pay for the sins of all mankind, enduring what we have deserved. He has done everything so that all might be saved. It **IS** finished!

Paul says it this way, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5 ESV) Of course, there are some who do not believe Jesus' sixth word from the cross. In fact, many Christians deny this word of Christ which says, "It is finished," even as they proclaim the Jesus indeed spoke it.

They deny this Word of Jesus' by claiming they must do their own part to gain salvation. They believe that salvation is in some small way contingent on their life, their works, their holiness, their doing better as they live out their life.

If God's intention were that men must do something to gain salvation, then Jesus could have lived perfectly and only suffered partially. If that could have worked, then the Father could have answered Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane by saying, "Not a problem son, you won't have to do it all, I'll let you know when you've done enough so that each individual can finish what remains." Then, when God the Father gave Him the cue, Jesus could have proclaimed different words, and no longer from the cross. He could have miraculously been standing before the cross completely healed and said, "You Pharisees, Chief Priests, teachers of the Law, see now how I **do** come down from the cross, just as you said I should to prove I was God's Son? I have done my part, now, you finish your part." But, the Jewish leadership already thought they were earning their share.

Even as the church leaders beneath the cross that day thought their works were earning their salvation, it is also a temptation to us. It is a temptation to deny Christ's word, "It is finished," and to rob God of His work. If we believe our work is necessary even just a little bit, to gain salvation, it is nothing more than an attempt to empty the cross of its power to save. This is a grievous sin!

In order to believe Jesus' word from the cross, to have faith that it is finished on the cross, to believe that in Christ our salvation is accomplished – this too is God's work. Christ gives us His Holy Spirit who works faith in us. By Spirit wrought faith we trust His Word, that salvation is indeed accomplished for us.

These words of Christ should be the greatest comfort. We have to proclaim with Paul that even when we know what is right to do, we fail to do it. We fall short! We miss the mark! We sin! But that is not the end, there is more.

Hear the word of Christ, "It is finished." His perfect life, given up to suffering the pains of hell, in being forsaken by the Father, and in suffering the pains of torture and death, has paid the price demanded by your sin and mine. It is finished! Forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation were purchased by Very God of Very God, begotten of the Father from all eternity, God the Son, on the cross with His suffering and death.

It is finished! On that day, Christ purchased the great gifts. His love moved Him to endure the pains of the cross. Today, the gifts He purchased with His suffering and death on the cross, accomplishing the work of your salvation, He delivers to you..

It is finished! Hear His word! Take comfort in it. His speaking to you, gives you the greatest gift of all, the forgiveness of sins.

It is finished! His body broken and His shed blood are delivered to you in the meal set before you. He feeds you Himself, giving you to drink of His salvation, strengthening your faith and giving you your inheritance of eternal life.

It is finished – Christ has accomplished it all for you – salvation and heaven are yours. Amen.