

It is Finished

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bibles, turn with me this morning to John's Gospel, chapter 19 and verse 30. And I'm going to preach just a single verse this morning. In fact, I'm not even going to preach all that verse, just three words within that verse.

And I'm going to be preaching this morning on the cross. The title of the message is, It is Finished. Jesus, I don't know if you've ever thought about this or not, but he was a man of exceptionally few words.

When I read James and he tells us we ought to be slow to speak and quick to listen and slow to anger, I get it that Jesus was such a man of very, very few words.

The more words we speak, the more we get ourselves in trouble. His longest sermon is found in Matthew chapter 5, 6, and 7, the Sermon on the Mount, obviously. You can read that in less than 15 minutes.

And the truth of the matter is, his longest message was shorter than most of our shortest messages. Right? Jesus just didn't use a lot of words in saying what he ever said.

[1 : 05] Interestingly, when he hung on the cross for six hours from 9 in the morning to about 3 in the afternoon, he only spoke 44 words that are recorded in English.

He had seven statements he made. And just before he died, I mean just seconds before he died, the sixth saying he made, and it's one word in the Greek and three words in the English, and it's that expression, it is finished.

And that's going to be the subject of our discussion this morning. And as I said a moment ago, it was one word in the Greek, *tedlestai*, and those who heard it, if they understood what he said and thought about it, they should have grasped the meaning of what he was saying.

But when we read it in English, there's little ambivalence about that. We read that and we just wonder what was he in fact saying.

Coming at the very end of his life, in fact, he's going to say this in just a moment or two, less than probably 60 seconds or two minutes, Jesus passes from this life until the next.

[2 : 15] And so in that context, I can understand how some would read the English words and would wonder what in the world was he in fact saying. You would think at face value in the English, he's certainly saying to us, well, it has come to an end.

My life is over. I'm getting ready to die. I'm going to exist no longer. You could even have a fatalistic view of what he said, that this is it.

There's nothing more after this. Many have read these words and they've tried to say, well, what he's saying, and maybe even some in the crowd interpret it this way, he's telling us that this plan, this scheme he's had to become the Messiah has failed.

Make no mistake about it, Jesus was a revolutionary. In the very beginning of his ministry, he does a radical thing. He has John the Baptist baptize him.

And then suddenly he calls these 12 men who come to his side and they walk with him and live with him each day of his life for the three and a half years that he's engaged in ministry.

[3 : 28] He has campaigns, a preaching campaign in Galilee and in Judea. There's a period of time where he's very, very popular. And then the second year, he begins to be rejected and people begin to abandon him.

By the third year, there's even a lesser crowd that are following the Lord Jesus Christ. And so as he says, *Ted Lestai*, it is finished.

Many probably thought, or some might have thought, he's admitting defeat. He's saying to us, this plan to revise Judaism has failed.

This plan to reform how we worship God, it has gone up in smoke because after all, one had sold him out for 30 pieces of silver, one less than 24 hours earlier had denied even knowing him three times, and all the disciples initially had fled in the garden as he was arrested.

So what in the world was Jesus saying when he said, it is finished? I wanna briefly tell you three things I think he was saying. Can I tell you something? It was not at all a cry of defeat.

[4 : 45] In fact, it was probably the most victorious statement Jesus had ever made. What he was saying to begin with is this, Father, I have completed everything you've sent me to do.

It is, in sense of the work, it is finished. It is completed. Everything you ever said regarding my life, I have fulfilled in my birth, life, and now even in my death.

I don't know if you know it or not, but there are over 300 prophecies regarding the life, the birth, the death, and the subsequent resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And everything that God ever predicted about Jesus, Jesus fulfilled in his lifetime. How many of you have ever been out west to the Badlands?

Can I see a hand? If you've ever visited the Badlands, raise your hand. If you've been to the Badlands, and that's not a lot of you, I'm surprised, you need to go to the Badlands sometime. Go to Yellowstone. How many of you have ever been to Yellowstone?

[5 : 56] A lot more of you. On the way to Yellowstone, go to the Badlands. When you go to the Badlands, you'll find about six miles from the Badlands, a drugstore known as Wall's Drugstore.

How many of you ever heard of Wall's Drugstore? Because a lot more of you heard of Wall's Drugstore, right? If you get within 200 or 300 miles of the Badlands in South Dakota, you're gonna know about Wall's Drugstore.

I've actually researched this. They have over 300 billboards advertising Wall's Drugstore. They're more than 200 miles away from their location.

You know why they do that? Whether you're coming from the west or the north or the south or the east, they want you to come visit them at Wall's Drugstore.

And so they put signs up beginning over 200 miles away and then every 50 miles or so away and then every 25 miles away and then 10 miles and 8 miles and 7 miles and 6 miles and there are barrages of signs so that you've gotta be blind not to know that Wall's Drugstore is right here close to the Badlands.

[7 : 08] Now think of this for a moment. You're God and you're going to send your son into the world. God is going to leave heaven. He's gonna take on human flesh and he's gonna walk among men.

And he's gonna convince men that he is God in human flesh and he's come to save them from their sins. How do you pull that off?

Imagine today you're out at lunch and you turn to someone and say, hi, I'm Ralph Carter and who are you? Well, I'm the son of God. Can you imagine how difficult it is to get anybody to believe that you're who you claim to be?

So God in his infinite wisdom, hundreds and hundreds of years before he ever sent his son, begins to put up billboards.

Hey, here's a bit of information about my son that only he will be able to fulfill. And then there's another sign and another sign and another sign until ultimately there are 300 in all.

[8 : 15] Listen for just a moment to these following prophecies. Did you know in Micah chapter five and verse two, hundreds of years before Jesus was ever born, God predicted the very town in which Jesus would be given birth, the city of Bethlehem.

In Isaiah chapter seven and verse 14, again, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God said he's going to be born of a virgin.

The scripture said in Isaiah 53 and verse 12 that he would die among criminals. In Psalm 22 and verse 18, that soldiers would cast lots for his garments.

Now I want you to see what all these prophecies have in common. There's no way a person even aware of these prophecies can orchestrate these on his own. You can't control where you're born. You can't control to whom you're born. You can't control what happens after you die or what will happen to your clothes by those who are persecuting you. In Isaiah 53, nine, the scripture says, he would be buried in a rich man's tomb.

[9 : 28] And of course, in the New Testament, we find that comes to pass in Joseph of Arimathea. In Psalm 22, 16, it was predicted they would drive nails through his hands and through his feet.

And then finally in Isaiah 50 and verse six, he would be beaten and spit upon. Can I tell you something? Everything that God ever said would mark his son, not to mention the hundreds of miracles that he performed, all said one thing.

This is without question the son of God. So Jesus was saying, Father, every word of prophecy regarding my life has now been fulfilled.

But there's a second thing Jesus was saying. It was also a cry that indicated that all the anguish and suffering was now completely over.

Now, I hope I can drive this point home so that you get it perhaps better than ever you have in your life if you don't understand this. Jesus, you need to know, was fully God, but he was also fully, completely man.

[10:43] If you had this notion in your mind that he was God veiled in human flesh, you have a wrong impression of who Jesus was.

It's not like God donned a man suit and that here in his essence, he is really and truly God, but he's just dressed up like a man.

That's a wrong idea altogether. He is completely and fully 100% man. He is completely, fully, 100% God.

It baffles our mind, but I'll tell you something. If you think of him as anything less than completely a man like every one of us in this room, you have the wrong impression of who Jesus is.

Real flesh adorned his bones. Real blood coursed through his veins. The nerve endings for Jesus were exactly like the nerve endings in your body.

[11:52] He had real DNA just like you have real DNA. He experienced real thoughts and emotions just like you have thoughts and emotions.

He knew everything that we endure as human beings. In fact, the writer of Hebrews says that. He was a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, but he was a high priest because he could identify with every single one of us, a man in every sense just like we are.

Can I tell you something? When he walked in the rain, he got wet. When he was in the elements that were cold, he felt cold. When he was in blazing hot sunshine, he felt heat.

If someone struck him, he felt pain. His nerve endings felt those nails just like your nerve endings would have felt the nails.

He knew sadness just like you know sadness. He knew joy and elation just like you know joy and elation.

[13:00] He knew what it was to be tired. He knew what it was to be energetic. Everything you've ever experienced in your life, Jesus experienced as well.

And so I've heard some folks foolishly say at times, the suffering he endured on the cross wasn't such a big thing to him. That's utter foolishness. Listen to what Mark says in Mark 14, 34.

This is the night before he died. He's on the rock of agony praying and he says, my soul is swallowed up in sorrow to the point of death.

Jesus did not look forward to the cross at all. In fact, he prayed, Father, if there is any other way, let this pass from me.

Can I tell you, I believe all the demons of hell were unleashed that day that Jesus died on the cross and that men did things they would never have thought about doing any other time in their life.

[13:59] They absolutely brutalized our Lord. It began at that first trial in the high priest's home. They took their fist.

The King James Version says they buffeted him. Not a good word for us because it's not one we're familiar with. You know what that literally means? They took their fist and they pummeled his face. You ever seen a man hit around the eyes or nose or mouth? Instantly, blood begins to flow. The eyes swell shut. Isaiah says this, He has no form or comeliness that we should behold him and desire him.

Isaiah goes on to talk about the fact that he has no comeliness that we should even recognize him. You know what I think he's saying? They beat Jesus to such a bloody pulp that had you known him well, you could have stood at the foot of the cross and looked and you would not have recognized him.

They took a crown of thorns and meshed it into his brow. They didn't gingerly set that on his head as you see in the movies. They no doubt in their anger and meanness poured it into his brow and you know how facial cuts bleed?

[15 : 19] The blood must have flowed from his face into his eyes and his mouth. It stained his clothes. It was in his hair. He was a bloody beaten mess.

Finally, when they sentenced him to die, they scourged him. They took a cat of nine tails and they tied up his arms and hit him around the waist and when they would pull it back, it would literally pull away the skin.

Many people died from disembowelment through scourging. He makes his way to Calvary. They lay him on the ground. They take those spikes and they place them in his hands and they drive those through his hands.

Can you imagine the pain he felt? His nerve endings are the same as yours. Can you imagine how it would feel to you? And they drove them through his hands and through his feet and then they hoisted him up on that cross and dropped it into a hole.

His skin must have torn. I can hear him screaming now. Can you? The pain must have been agonizing. And so Jesus, when he cried, it is finished, I think we're saying this, Father, I paid the price for man's sins.

[16 : 30] The suffering is finally coming to an end. He endured suffering on the cross like we cannot imagine. But I want to tell you something, the suffering wasn't just physical.

It was emotional. It was spiritual. It was mental as well. Now, there is a painting that has been done of Jesus standing in his father's carpentry shop as a little 11, 12-year-old boy.

And the painting depicts Jesus standing there with his hands on each side of the door frame. And the son is coming through the door of the shop.

And as the son hits his body, it casts a shadow on the far wall of the carpentry shop. And the shadow it casts is the shadow of the cross.

Can I tell you something? For six hours, he hung on the cross in physical agony. But for 33 and a half years, he lived in the shadow of the cross.

[17 : 38] While others were laughing at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, Jesus is living in the shadow of the cross. When the disciples are bantering over who will be greatest in the kingdom, he's living in the shadow of the cross.

For 33 years, he lives knowing there's a death sentence on his head and that the noose is getting tighter day by day by day.

And the time will quickly come when he will be called forth to pay for humanity's sins. When Jesus died on the cross and when he uttered, it is finished, I think he was saying, all the physical mental anguish is over.

I'm gonna tell you, everything they could do to humiliate Jesus, they did on the cross. The scripture says when he was being questioned by some of the political leaders, some of the soldiers, they had their way with him.

They placed a crown mocking him on his head. They put a robe of scarlet on his shoulders. They shoved a scepter into his hand. They bowed and they mocked him in worship.

[18 : 55] They took their open hand and they slapped him across the face. Can I tell you something? You do more damage when you punch someone in the face with your fist. But the open hand slap is far more humiliating.

It leaves a stain, an imprint of a man's hand. Can you imagine they slapped God in the person of Jesus in the face? But not only that, they got up closer and they spit in the face of the creator.

But worst of all, and we don't talk about this much in church. We never see it depicted. When he hung on the cross, crosses like this one, you've seen them in the baptistry.

We'll put someone on a cross. They have that little towel, apron across their lower section. They didn't treat Jesus that way.

They stripped him of all of his clothes and there before his mother, he hung naked before the world as he paid for our sins. They did everything they could possibly do to humiliate the Lord Jesus Christ.

[20 : 03] There's one final thing I want you to see that I think he was saying when he said, it is finished. He was signaling that his mission was complete, that payment for man's sins had finally been successfully made.

Now listen carefully. That single word, tetelestai, that I told you about earlier, that's a commercial word. It was a word that was used by merchants, by traders, by bankers.

It meant that a business transaction had been completed, that a debt had been paid. I don't know about you, how you pay your bills, but my wife and I, we didn't start out this way, but about 30 years ago, we came to the place, we started not using money anymore.

And so everything we buy, virtually everything I buy, 99.9% of everything I buy, I put on a credit card. We pay it off at the end of every month so we don't ever have to pay interest on it, but at the end of every month, that bill comes and we pay it.

You know why I do that? Because it gives me the opportunity to track everything I spend in a number of areas and my credit card company even categorizes it for me.

[21 : 22] So I can look at the end of the year and I can say, here's to the penny how much I spent in gas. I've got all those receipts right there before me. And so it's convenient for doing taxes and things like that.

In Jesus' day, in biblical times, they didn't have printed receipts. When you borrowed money from someone, the one who was loaning the money would write on a parchment, this person, the one who is going to pay the debt, is going to pay so many payments on this basis, at this price, and here's the ultimate note.

And the one who was loaning the money held the note until the debt had been paid. And when the debt had been paid in full, the one who owed the money would come and make that last payment and he would get the signature of the person to whom he'd owed the debt on that sheet of parchment.

You know what he did with that parchment then? He would take it sometimes if it was something of public interest and he would nail it to the doorpost of his home so that folks coming by his house could look and say, well, you know what?

He paid off that piece of land. He paid that debt he owed. His credit is still intact. I want you to listen to what the Apostle Paul says.

[22 : 42] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn with me and actually see this for yourself. Look with me to Colossians chapter 2. It's one of the most incredible verses in Scripture.

Colossians chapter 2, verse 13 and 14. I'm going to give you a chance to find that. You need to mark this in your Bibles. Mark 2, or excuse me, Colossians 2, 13.

And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he, speaking of Jesus, made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses.

Now look up for just a minute. Isn't that a wonderful thing? He says, Jesus came when you were dead in your trespasses and sins. He made you alive. He talks about that in Ephesians. And he did so by forgiving all of your sins.

But wait a second. How can you prove your sins have been forgiven? You ever thought about that? What proof do you have that God has forgiven your sins?

[23 : 51] Well, look at verse 14. He erased the certificate of debt with its obligations that were against us and opposed to us and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.

Jesus' lifeless body on the cross is God's receipt for man's sins having been paid in full.

I want to show you one other passage of scripture. Go with me quickly just a few pages to the right to the book of Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 1.

Have you found that? Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 1. Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he has appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe.

He is the radiance of his glory the exact expression of his nature and he sustains all things by his powerful word and after making purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

[25 : 14] Did you hear that? Do you understand what he's saying there? You know what high priest never did in the Old Testament era? They never sat down when they were going about their most important task which occurred on the day of Yom Kippur they would go into the Holy of Holies.

Many priests went in the Holy Place but only one on the day of on the day of Yom Kippur the Day of Atonement he would open that veil and he would pass through that veil leaving behind the Holy Place and he would go into the Holy of Holies and there he would atone for men's sins for a period of one year.

He wore little bells around the bottom of his garment and they tied a rope to his leg because he was fearful that while he was in there he might do something he shouldn't have done and would have

been struck down dead and so they listened for those bells to constantly ring and if the bells ever stopped ringing they knew that he'd stop moving he'd fallen dead and they would be prepared to pull him out.

Jesus does something no high priest has ever done. He's seated at the right hand of the Father and you know why? Because he made a one time sacrifice that paid for our sins for the balance of eternity.

His work is done it's completed and there's nothing left to be done for you to be forgiven but for you to receive him as your Savior and Lord. And the English of Angelus was preaching in London he'd had a crusade under this big tent for a week.

[26 : 47] People had come and many had been saved this one young man had come night after night after night and every night he fell under conviction knew he needed to make a decision. Well the last night came he really was in an internal battle but he let the invitation come and go without ever having stepped out.

He left and went to his home and he'd been gone about two hours from when the Spirit of God so got a hold of his heart he couldn't stand it and he jumped up and he ran out the door and he ran back to the side of that revival.

They were already taking down the tent in fact all that remained to be done was to pull up a couple of tent pegs. The evangelist who had preached the meeting was there and he changed clothes and he was pulling up the tent pegs to leave and go to the next city.

When the young man came to him standing behind him he said sir I came to this revival every night for the last seven nights and I know I need to be saved. Tell me what can I do what can I do in order to get my salvation and the evangelist didn't even look up from his work.

He just said still with his back to the young man it's too late I'm sorry. The young man couldn't believe what he heard. He thought man the meeting has only been over two hours and so he appealed to the evangelist again this time walking in front of the evangelist he said sir it's only been two hours since the meeting has ended surely it's not too late.

[28 : 10] He says yes you're too late you're not two hours too late you're two thousand years too late. You see everything that could ever be done for you to be saved has already happened.

Jesus paid for your sins I want to tell you today in this world we live in people have this crazy notion that because I'm a sinner the only way I can have my sins for you is for me to rectify my sins by doing something good.

I'll go join the church I'll be baptized I'll start giving my money I'll be regular and faithful in my attendance I'll be a good person can I tell you something you'll never be good enough for God you just never will and the only way you come to have salvation is to come to the place that you recognize man I'm just a sinner and there's nothing I can do about that I can't change my stripes I'm who I am I'm a sinner but God loved me enough that he sent his own son to die for me and his death on the cross is payment for my sin and all I need to do is to claim that gift God has given to me by coming to him and saying I have sinned against you I repent of my sin I turn my life over to you from this day going forward I want you to be my savior and that can belong to anyone in this room I don't care how bad you've lived how sinful you are if today you would trust Christ as your savior and Lord he would give you eternal life beginning this very moment today wouldn't you like to have that

I'm telling you Jesus paid it all all to him I owe sin had left its crimson stain but he'd washed it white as snow amen you come as we stand and sing our hymn of invitation s■ om you ayl