

## John 19:28-30

Good Friday, April 15, 2022  
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***After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.***

We've all seen it before—it's the last batter in game 7 of the World Series, the umpire calls "Strike 3!" and the winning team hurdles over the dugout fence and mobs the pitcher's mound. Or the final seconds in an NCAA March Madness Championship game, and the point guard hurls the ball into the air as the buzzer sounds and the ticker tape comes pouring down from the rafters. FINISHED! The training, the practice, the hopes, the dreams, the blood, sweat, and tears of a long season—FINISHED!

"But," you're probably thinking as you see where I'm going with this, "you can't compare those scenes to the scene here at the Cross of Calvary." And of course, you're right. Here, on the hill outside Jerusalem, is a scene more like when the Allies liberated the concentration camps in WWII, and the starved survivors could hardly believe the nightmare was over. This is more like survivors of a mine collapse, trapped underground for days and weeks, traumatized, but now finally brought through to the blinding light of the surface. People like those—they'd been pushed to the absolute limits of human endurance—and then, it was finished.

And yet even those life and death situations pale in comparison to what happened on Good Friday. Who can even begin to understand the torments of soul, the very pains of hell that the Son of God endured on the cross? Who can even begin to comprehend what He went through as He was despised and rejected by man *and* forsaken by God His Father—to say nothing of the physical torments of the actual crucifixion? Moreover, Jesus wasn't alive by the end of Good Friday when everything was finished. He didn't have the opportunity to collapse in a pool of tearful relief as He was embraced by family and friends.

No, when all was finished, ***"He bowed His head and gave up His spirit."*** On the cross, the Son of Man and Son of God died; the soldiers pierced His side to prove it. Then they placed Him in a nearby tomb. As one commentator described it, *"He began and ended His life in the same way—wrapped in cloths and laid in borrowed quarters."*

But even before He died, Jesus spoke three words of truth, perhaps the three most important words ever spoken: **It is finished.** We don't know if He shouted them in a loud voice or if He forced them out between ragged breaths. John was the one nearby who heard Him utter these words, the only Gospel writer to record them. Yet whether it was loudly or through gasps of breath, these three words have echoed throughout heaven and earth—and even hell!—and they continue to echo through time. Echoing through this sin-wrecked world, giving eternal hope and comfort to believers like you and me. **It is finished.** What's finished exactly? **Everything done for the Father's glory, and Everything done for us and our salvation.**

Now, the sign that Pilate had posted above the cross said, "Jesus of Nazareth. . ." and that was true. Jesus had grown up there in Nazareth, the Son of Mary and Joseph (or so it was naturally assumed.) ***"Isn't this the carpenter's Son?"*** (Matthew 13:55) the people had asked, and yet something told them

this wasn't your typical Nazarene carpenter. And their inkling was correct, for this one they supposed to be the son of Joseph was also the Son of God the Father. Even at the age of 12, Jesus was aware of who His true Father was and that *this* Father had sent Him to earth to do His business. And when the time came for Jesus' public ministry, beginning when He was about 30 years old, the Father in heaven publicly recognized the vital work His Son had been doing—living a perfect life free from any stain of sin. So, He called out from heaven at Jesus' baptism, ***"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*** (Matthew 3:17)

But following Jesus' baptism, the list of things His Father wanted accomplished grew. So, Jesus walked out of the water of the Jordan, straight into the desert to face the devil and be tempted for 40 days. Then Jesus began preaching, sharing the very words His Father had given Him to say. The same was true of His miracles which had been planned out by the Father in order to bring glory to His name. Jesus wasn't living as *He* pleased or just "doing His own thing"—He was on a mission from God.

You see, the reason why Jesus was sent from heaven to earth was to make His Father known. At the very beginning of this Gospel, John says that very thing, that Jesus' purpose was to make His Father known. You know, by nature we have such a dim view of who God is—you see this in all the religions of today's world. Born in sin as we are, we have a natural terror of God. Without knowing anything more about Him, God looks to us like nothing more than a looming shadow towering over us—dark, sinister, threatening, with no other details. That's all we could see, because as John writes in the first chapter of this Gospel, ***"No one has ever seen God."*** (John 1:18)

***"But,"*** he goes on, ***"the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, He has made Him known."*** In the person of Jesus, God stepped out of the shadows. And what do we see? We see a face of deep, deep love. We hear words of incredible comfort. We see a warrior who would stop at nothing to destroy the devil's work. We see a God who desires more than anything that He has an eternal bond of love and fellowship together with you.

On the cross, then, Jesus was revealing the Father's glory. We can see it only with the eyes of faith—this deep love that sacrificed His own Son, here we see God's power that destroys sin and death, here we see the heart of God beating and bleeding for our salvation. ***"It is finished!"*** All the Father's work that He gave Jesus to do so that a world of sinners might know Him as He truly is—the God who saves.

And on the cross, we see God simply doing what we are unable to do. The human mind (especially that of headstrong, self-determined Americans) can't wrap itself around this thought, as true as it is. More than that, the human mind doesn't *want* to wrap itself around this thought. We know from Scripture that we are born ***"dead in transgressions and sins."*** (Ephesians 2:1) Look around society and you see evidence of man's sin all over the place. Yet the greatest display of our sin, the greatest resistance to the will of God isn't confined to the dark alleys and the jails. Rather, it's found on your street, in the workplace, it's found in rich mansions and in poor neighborhoods.

What is this great sin? It is to spit in God's face by looking at the cross, looking at the Father's incredible sacrifice of love and to say, ***"No thanks, I'll pay my own way. No thanks, God, I'm basically a good person. I think I'll do just fine on my own."*** It's stubborn human pride that believes that *I* can

with my own sacrifices—by my own effort and good will and social niceties—that I am deserving of both God’s praise and life in heaven. This is what Satan planted in the human heart when he led the world into sin—“Make God accept you on *your* terms, not his.” And to the sinful mind, this all makes sense. In every other aspect of life, good work and good deeds receive praise and rewards.

Yet Paul says *this* about the sinful mind in his letter to the Romans: “***The mind governed by the flesh is death.***” (Romans 8:6) And it is. Ironically, the sinful mind doesn’t understand sin—not how serious it is, nor what punishment it truly deserves from a holy God. There is no quicker path to eternal death, no quicker path that takes you further from the glory of God than choosing to stand on your own goodness.

Here, on the cross, we see God’s way—the better way and the only way. And there on the cross, it was finished. **It is fished:** the suffering that Jesus had to endure for the sins of the world. **It is fished:** the full payment, complete punishment for your sins and mine doled out. **It is fished:** God will not punish you over your sins, because the punishment has already been paid. **It is fished:** Since God was the one who did it, we know it was done completely and perfectly. **It is fished:** Satan cannot use your sins to accuse you anymore. **It is fished:** your sins need not burden your conscience. **It is fished:** death no longer can haunt us. **It is fished:** hell has no power *over* you because Jesus Christ was crucified *for* you.

And we know for certain that it was truly finished, because in the Gospel of Luke, we’re told that Jesus spoke again to His Father. He said, “***Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.***” (Luke 23:46) God’s face was once again turned *to* His Son. The punishment over, the sacrifice accepted. Father and Son were at peace once more.

And for you, dear friends in Christ, this also means that *your* punishment is over and that God is at peace with *you*. God now lifts His countenance upon you and gives *you* peace. And because of this cross and these three words of truth, on that day when each of us finishes our earthly journey, we can gently bow our heads and also commend our spirits into our Father’s hands. For this God of all power and love will take us, will call us by name and bring us into His eternal joy. May God grant it to us in Jesus’ name. Amen.

***“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*** (Philippians 4:7) Amen.