

“It is Finished”

Almost 2000 years ago, these words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ as he hung on that rugged cross. These are perhaps the most profound words our Lord ever spoke. These words are without a doubt the most misunderstood today. There is no question that Jesus came to provide atonement for sinners. He came to die for our sins, to suffer in our place. Does this mean anything to you? Jesus Christ changed the course of history. No one person has had such a dramatic effect upon the world as Jesus Christ.

If we claim to believe in Jesus Christ and not understand what His mission was, it is of little value. What was it that Jesus said was finished? The writer of Hebrews says, *“Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, Here I am--it is written about me in the scroll--I have come to do your will, O God.”* (Heb 10:5-7). Animal sacrifices were never sufficient to take away sins (Heb 10:3). God had something greater in mind. He had a plan that would not only be sufficient for man, but would also satisfy His justice. Therefore, God instituted animal sacrifices as a picture of what He would eventually do in Christ to accomplish reconciliation. Paul said (Gal 4:4) that when the time was fully come, God sent His Son to redeem man. Jesus knew of the great task that lay ahead of Him, He knew of the sufferings and deaths that were His and His alone to bear. What was His attitude? He knew that the Father would not be propitiated with animal sacrifices, so He said *“Here I am.”* He did not run, or shrink back, but presented Himself for the service of God for us. He had come to do the will of the Father and wanted to do it.

Jesus Christ was fully aware of the task that was ahead and often spoke of His death. The very thought of this death brought about shock and terror to the disciples. A good example of what Jesus knew is found in Matt 16:21-23: *“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Never, Lord! he said. This shall never happen to you!”* I can’t remember anywhere our Lord was rebuked except here by Peter. At least he had the tact to take him aside first. But, how wrong Peter was to rebuke the Lord! How little he understood of the plan of God. Even though he correctly answered the question earlier about whom He was. He had no understanding of what the Christ would do. Peter had turned from advocate to adversary (Satan) in less than 5 minutes. The words Peter spoke had great implications. Satan also knew the mission of the Christ and clearly did not want

Christ to fulfill the purpose He had come into the world. If Peter's words were true, not one person could be saved. The scriptures would not have been true and the world would have been robbed of its Savior. How do you know when Satan is at work? Satan attacks the Word of God. Satan sets himself against the Scriptures, twisting them, distorting them, denying them, opposing them, and disregarding them. Jesus knew that He was being attacked by Satanic thinking and remained true to the plan. Do you know when you are being an adversary of God?

Jesus clearly understood why He came into the world and what He was supposed to accomplish. Jesus knew that as He walked this earth that prophecy was being fulfilled, that He was the one spoken of in the Scriptures, and that He was the lamb that would be sacrificed on the alter of God. His determination is spoken of in Luke 13:31-33: "*At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you. He replied, God tell that fox, I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal. In any case, I must keep going.....for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!*" Jesus was determined to let nothing stop Him. Nothing could keep Him from the very purpose for which He came into this world, not fear of death, not fear of suffering and certainly not fear of Herod. This does not sound like the Jesus that is portrayed in Hollywood's movies, the timid, shy, cowardly, weak man who spoke in faint tones. This is the Jesus I know who was brave, strong, and fearless--striving to reach the goal set before Him. He was relentless in pursuing a goal that would accomplish reconciliation for mankind, but would cause great suffering and even death to Himself. He had such great commitment of soul, so great a resolve that could not be moved or distracted.

Now that we know what Jesus was thinking, we can understand what He meant when He said "*it is finished*" (John 19:30). Jesus Christ was judged for the sins of the whole world. It happened just the way God said it would and Jesus acknowledges that it was accomplished, it was over, and it was done. Sin's price was paid in full that day. There is nothing anyone can do to change the fact that all sins were paid. If it could be changed, who would be the main one wanting it to be changed? Satan, for it was at the cross he and his angels were defeated (Col 2:15). When we say that sins are paid, that includes the sins of every person that ever lived, or would ever live. God does not want "*anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance; This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth*" (2Pet 3:9; 1Tim 2:3, 4). God wants all to be saved so He made provision for all. He judged all sins in Christ. "*He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world*" (1John 2:2; see also John 1:29; 2Cor 5:14, 15; 1Tim 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2Pet 2:1; Heb 2:9).

Because our sins were judged in Christ, God knows each one of us personally. God in His omniscience knows all the knowable. He knows your every thought perfectly. Nothing in all creation is hidden from Him. Some cannot simply believe that God knows about all their sins, even the ones they did not commit yet. But He does know. We were not born when our sins were judged in Christ, yet God knew that we would be born, and knew exactly every sin we would ever commit and perfectly disposed of them in Christ. So then, since God has done this and it cannot be changed, it is reality. We are called upon to believe it. We cannot add to it or take away from it (Ecc 3:14). The atonement is a fact of history that is forever etched in time and it is finished. Your sins are not the issue anymore with regard to salvation. God settled the sin problem. If you make an issue of your sins or the sins of others with regard to salvation, you deny the truth. You are focusing on sin when you should be focusing on Christ. Your attitude about your sin cannot affect what God did. We were all sinners in Adam, and therefore enemies of God (Rom 5:8, 9). Christ still died for us, our sins were still judged. Our attitude did not then, and cannot now affect the atonement.

As the Lord of Glory stood before Pilate, beaten beyond recognition, bloody and dripping with the spit of His abusers, Pilate presented Him to the mob of people assembled below in the courtyard. His soldiers put a purple robe on Him and pressed a crown of thorns on into His scalp. Pilate had repeatedly tried to declare Christ's innocence but the Jews did not care. Even Pilate knew Jesus had done nothing worthy of death and wanted to set him free. After they scourged Him, they brought Jesus out, and Pilate said "*behold the man*" (John 19:4, 5). But when they saw Him they kept saying "*crucify him, crucify him.*" After Pilate tried more to free Him, the Jews persisted and finally got their way. I can imagine Jesus as He pressed His way down the narrow streets to the place called Golgotha or literally "the place of the skull." They mocked and treated Him worse than a common criminal. Crucifixion was considered the most horrible form of death there was. They nailed His hands and feet to a cross and thrust it in a hole in the ground between two thieves.

On the cross Jesus cried out at least seven times: "*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:24). He turned to one of the thieves and said "*I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43). Caring for His family He said "*Here is your mother*" (John 19:26, 27). At exactly 12:00 noon, darkness covered the earth (Matt 27:45). As our sins were judged he kept screaming, "*Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?--which means My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*" (Matt 27:46). Then He cried, "*I thirst*" (John 19:28). Then He said, "*it is finished*" (John 19:30). And the last words were "*Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit*" (Luke 23:46). Although this was a very distressing

time for those who loved Jesus, they could take comfort in His words, “*Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me*” (John 14:1).

On the third day Jesus Christ was raised from the dead just as He promised. Our Lord suffered tremendously for us. Words cannot describe the physical and mental anguish of soul He experienced. His life was spent in service, self denial and obedience. When I think about what our Lord did, and what it means, I am overwhelmed. I would never want to diminish what was done, or in any way play it down. I want to tell others of this marvelous plan of salvation available to all. I realize that if Christ had not taken my place, I would be lost, hopelessly lost. Therefore, my life will be spent thanking and praising Him. I will be eternally grateful to God my Savior and Lord.

The purpose Jesus came into this world and what He accomplished is of utmost importance. The finished work of Christ is the issue now for the world to ponder. This is the heart of the gospel message. There are those who try to limit the work of Christ to believers only; there also are those who would make sin an issue in regard to salvation. I believe they are enemies of the cross of Christ. When they make an issue of sin they are saying that Christ’s judgment for sins was not enough. It is an *insult* to the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They are really saying you cannot simply depend on what Christ did and expect that sin will be defeated. They say it is just not enough to simply believe and be saved. I believe what the Bible says, I believe in Christ and He said “*it is finished.*” Salvation is paid for and offered to everyone absolutely free, you do not have to work for it, and you will never be deserving of it. Salvation is by “*grace through faith, and that, not from yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works lest any should boast*” (Eph 2:8,9). So, no one will be disqualified from salvation because they did not obey some commandments or failed to do good works. And sins are not the issue either, no one will be lost because their committed some terrible sin or sins, before or after salvation, for they are all paid.

Well then, the only issue is for you to simply believe in Jesus Christ. Can you believe in Him? Can you trust in Him alone? Not depending upon anything you have or can do, not depending on your commitments or promising God you will be obedient or you will do this or that, not depending on your giving up some sin or sins you think God especially hates, and not depending on your religious activity whatever it may be. Can you simply look away from yourself and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone? If you want to see what God says about salvation, why not consider His Word. Take some time to see for yourself that this is what God wants you to do regarding salvation. John 3:15-18, 36; 6:28, 29; 20:31; Acts 16:31; Rom 1:16; 3:27, 28; 4:2-8; Gal 3:16; 2Tim 1:9-12; Titus 3:5; 1John 5:1, 9-13. The choice is yours.

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