



It is Finished

John 19:30

- 1. His Body**
- 2. His Mission**
- 3. Our Redemption**

While upon the cross, Jesus gave us seven sayings. He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He spoke to one of the criminals who was being crucified with him: “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus also made sure that his mother would be taken care of after his death, telling his mother, “Woman, behold your son,” and telling John, “Behold your mother” (John 19:26-27).

When Jesus was bearing the full brunt of God’s wrath, he cried in deep anguish, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). In his deepest suffering, Jesus said, “I thirst” (John 19:28), showing his humanity.

The last two of his sayings go together. When his work was done, he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). Shortly before he died, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). “Having said this, [Jesus] breathed his last” (Luke 23:47).

Tonight, I want to focus upon one of those sayings: “It is finished.” The natural question is this: what is finished? I think that there are three layers to that answer.

1. His Body

First, there is the layer of his physical life. In saying “It is finished,” Jesus is saying that his life was done. Moments later, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46), and “having said this, [Jesus] breathed his last” (Luke 23:47).

Jesus suffered all that the cross brought his way. His suffering began in earnest in the garden of Gethsemane, where “his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). He was under great tension, knowing full well the suffering that would soon take place. Only hours before he had said:

John 12:27-28

“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”

What began as earnest prayer in Gethsemane ended when Judas betrayed him with a kiss (Matthew 26:47; Luke 22:48). Jesus was arrested by the Roman band of soldiers and the officers of the Jews (John 18:12). He was bound and led away like a criminal (John 18:12-13). All the while, his disciples, who had pledged to follow Jesus to the death (Luke 22:33), scattered into the night (Mark 14:27; Zechariah 13:7).

Jesus faced two trials: a religious trial and a Roman trial. Before his own countrymen, he was slandered by false witnesses and accused of blasphemy. “They spit in his face and struck him. Some slapped him” (Matthew 26:67).

When standing trial before Pontius Pilate, he was declared innocent: “I find no guilt in him” (John 18:38). Yet in an effort to appease the crowd, Jesus was given into the hands of soldiers, who pressed a crown of thorns deep into his skull and struck him with their hands. Even Pilate’s constant refrain, “I find no guilt in him” (John 19:4, 6), was not enough to quiet the crowds, who kept repeating like a frenzied mob, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

So Pilate handed him over to the Roman soldiers to crucify him. This began with Jesus being stripped bare and flogged with a whip, at the end of which were sharp rock and bone, meant to tear away the flesh.

In his bloody, weakened state, Jesus was compelled to carry his crossbeam to the place of crucifixion, a task for which he was too weakened by the beatings to complete. It took another man, Simon of Cyrene, who was seized by the Roman soldiers and compelled to carry the crossbeam in his place (Luke 23:26).

Then Jesus was stripped of all his garments and nailed to the cross with long iron spikes that pierced his hands and his feet. The cross was lifted up into place, where Jesus would suffer in the hot sun. While upon the cross, he hung there by his

hands and feet, and every breath was a struggle, each lift of his body to open his diaphragm causing great pain.

Eventually, the physical exhaustion was too much. He could not continue. That is when Jesus said, “It is finished.” It was his physical life that was finished, for soon after saying this, Jesus “breathed his last” (Luke 23:47), and his body was dead.

2. His Mission

But there is another layer to “It is finished”: his mission. Everything that Jesus came to accomplish upon the earth was finished.

In his last prayer before his suffering, Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father: “I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do” (John 17:4). Jesus lived in the ever-present reality of his submission to God’s will: “The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works” (John 14:10). Everything that the Father had sent Jesus to say, he said. Everything that the Father had sent Jesus to do, he did.

Jesus trained his disciples. The twelve immediately come to mind, but there were more. At one point, Jesus sent out seventy-two disciples that he had trained to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 10:1-20). There were also women who closely followed Jesus, like Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3). Within the twelve, there were the three who were especially close to Jesus, Peter, James, and John, who had a front seat at some of the most extraordinary events in his life, when he raised a child from the dead and when he was transfigured upon the mountain.

He trained these disciples in how to preach (Matthew 10), in how to pray (Matthew 6), in how to serve (John 13), in how to love (John 13:1), in how to lead with humility (Mark 10:45). These disciples were his plan to evangelize the world, so impacted by him that they could not help but speak of him.

Not only did Jesus train his disciples, he also taught everywhere. He taught the multitudes in the open air, preaching the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and teaching the parables of the kingdom (Matthew 13). Jesus preached in the synagogues, whether in his hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4) or in other towns. He was a welcome guest in homes, where many would crowd around him to hear what he would say (Mark 2:1-12). He often spoke openly in the temple to any who would listen (John 18:20). Furthermore, Jesus had many one-on-one opportunities

to speak truth, like with Nicodemus (John 3) or the woman at the well (John 4).

But the ministry of Jesus went beyond merely teaching and training. He also healed the multitudes. “That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick” (Matthew 8:16).

Consider the various diseases that Jesus cured. He cleansed those afflicted with leprosy (Luke 17:11-19). He gave sight to the blind (John 9). He gave speech and hearing to the deaf and mute (Mark 7:31-37). He restored a withered hand (Luke 6:6-10). He healed paralytics (Mark 2:1-12). He broke fevers (Matthew 8:14-15). He stopped chronic bleeding (Mark 5:25-34). He raised the dead on several occasions: Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-43), the widow’s son (Luke 7:11-17), and Lazarus (John 11).

Jesus did various other miracles to show his power: he calmed storms (Mark 4:35-41), fed the multitudes (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:32-39), and turned water into wine (John 2:1-11).

Through it all, he opened his arms wide to sinners: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Through it all, though tempted by Satan himself, Jesus never sinned, nor was deceit found in his mouth (1 Peter 2:22).

Jesus was able to do all of these things because he was God made flesh, who revealed the glory of the Father and made the invisible God known.

Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me” (John 4:34). He said, “I have finished the work you gave me” (John 17:4). Then finally, upon the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). His mission was accomplished.

3. Our Redemption

But there is a third layer, and perhaps the most important of all. Jesus finished our redemption.

His death upon the cross was far more than simply another crucifixion. His death was the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament sacrifices. When he died, the sacrificial system died with him. The book of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament sacrifices were mere “shadows” of the sacrifice that Jesus would be. “It

is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). But Jesus, the true and perfect Lamb of God (John 1:29), was able to take away our sins.

Which means no more sacrifice is needed. Jesus was the “once-for-all” sacrifice to end all sacrifices. He did not have to do it again. Nothing more can be added to his sacrifice. Nothing can improve it.

His atonement was complete. Our sin was fully paid for, not partially. The debt of our sin was canceled, not deferred to a later date. Upon the cross, the payment was made in full.

Note here that by dying, Jesus did not merely make salvation possible. No. He secured our salvation. He made the payment.

Colossians 2:13-14

You, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Our sin was nailed to the cross. If we are believing, the sin that we committed yesterday was nailed to the cross. If we are believing, the sin that we will commit tomorrow was nailed to the cross.

This means that God’s wrath was satisfied at the cross of Christ. It was there that justice was upheld, as Jesus became our substitute, the innocent for the guilty. “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“It is finished.”

God has reconciled us to himself through the cross. He has restored the relationship that was broken at the fall. At his death, the veil of the temple was torn in two, signifying the access that we now have with God.

This is our celebration this evening. We remember the finished work of Jesus. His body was finished: his physical life ended. His mission was finished: his work on earth was completed. Our redemption was finished: the price for our sins was paid

in full.

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