

We come this morning to the third saying of our Savior from the cross, as recorded by John. Thus far, we've seen a word of affection (vv26-27), a word of anguish (vv28-29), which brings us this morning to v30, and a word of victory.

Now, as I mentioned last week, though John only mentions these three sayings, there are in fact at least seven sayings uttered by our Savior on the cross. It's been rightly suggested, that a man's final words are of great importance. Our Savior was in His final hours of life and thus, no doubt, chose His words carefully. These would be His last words before death. They are words of great meaning and deep significance.

The saying before us in v30, is in Greek one word, which is translated into three English words – "It is finished." The word simply refers to something brought to completion. A completed or finished task. Something brought to its intended end or goal.

Thus, the question becomes—What does our Savior mean by "IT is finished"? What did He bring to completion or fulfillment? What did He finish?

- I. The OT Prophecies were Finished
- II. The OT Sacrifices were Finished
- III. The Devil's Binding was Finished
- IV. The Wrath of God was Finished
- V. The Father's Work was Finished

I. The OT Prophecies were Finished

1. This is the obvious place to begin—in fact, the same word rendered "finished" in v30 is rendered "accomplished" in v28.
2. V28—"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst."
3. Thus, it's evident, that at least in part, when our Savior says "It is finished" He means—OT prophecies were finished.
4. Lk.18:31—"All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished (finished)."
5. The first promise of Christ and His cross-work was given in Genesis 3:15, immediately after our first parents sinned.
6. Gen.3:15—"He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"—that is, Christ shall defeat Satan through suffering.
7. And then throughout the remainder of the OT, this prophecy is repeated with greater clarity until it's fulfilled on the cross.
8. Perhaps we could say, this first prophecy was the fountainhead, from which all of the OT prophecies came, and they all ended in the cross.
9. Now, this doesn't deny there are other prophecies that are not yet fulfilled—for example, that concern His second coming.
10. But what I am asserting is this—it was at the cross that every OT prophecy that foretold His death was fulfilled
11. It was then on that Friday afternoon, that our Savior fulfilled every prophecy that foretold His atoning work—it is finished.
12. CHS—"When He said, It is finished, the whole book, from the first to the last, in both the law and the prophets, was finished in Him. There is not a single jewel of promise, from that first emerald which fell on the threshold of Eden, to that last sapphire-stone of Malachi, which was not set in the breast-plate of the true High Priest."

II. The OT Sacrifices were Finished

1. By this I mean, the entire OT sacrificial system, with all of its daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices for sin.
2. Though the sacrificial system was organized and formalized at Mount Sinai, it actually began after man's fall.
3. We can hardly imagine brethren; how much blood was shed through the sacrificial system—millions of animals.
4. This was a graphic reminder that sin had to be atoned for, and that the animal sacrifices, could never take away sin.
5. Dan.9:26-27—"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering."
6. Daniel 9 contains a beautiful prophecy of the coming Messiah, His crucifixion, and several important results of that crucifixion.
7. In fact, there's at least seven results mentioned—He will finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in an everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and be anointed.
8. At least two of these, concern our present point—"He shall make an end of sins, and bring an end to sacrifice and offering."
9. These have reference to finishing the sacrificial system, by offering up His single sacrifice that took away sin.
10. It's for this reason, Matthew tells us, after Jesus died—"the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (27:51).
11. If you remember, the veil was that thick curtain that separated the two rooms in the temple. It symbolized our separation from God.
12. And so the temple was torn from top to bottom, underscoring the fact that it was God who removed this separation.
13. And when did He remove it? When our sins were put away. And when was this? When Jesus finished His work.

III. The Devil's Binding was Finished

1. It was on the cross that our Savior bound Satan—it was here that the Seed of the woman, crushed the serpent's head.
2. Many, if not most of you will know, that the binding of Satan has been a hotly debated subject through the years.
3. And yet it seems rather apparent from holy Scripture, that Christ, through His cross, both defeated and bound Satan.
4. Gen.3:15—"He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"—this is actually a judgment given to Satan.
5. Mk.3:26-27—"And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house."
6. Col.2:15—"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."
7. Heb.2:14—"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."
8. Rev.20:2-3—"He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...so that he should deceive the nations no more."
9. Oh, my dear friends, if the cross is viewed rightly, it was far from a defeat, but was actually the means of victory.
10. Through the cross, our Savior crushed the head of the serpent, triumphed over principalities and powers, and bound Satan.

11. John Stott—"What looks like the defeat of goodness by evil is also, and more certainly, the defeat of evil by goodness. Overcome there, he was himself overcoming. Crushed by the ruthless power of Rome, he was himself crushing the serpent's head. The victim was the victor, and the cross is still the throne from which he rules the world."
12. Thus, to be more specific, the binding of Satan means, He defeated Satan, so as to secure the salvation of His people, scattered throughout the world.
13. Before the cross, the majority of the nations were in darkness—enslaved and deceived by the lies of the Devil.
14. And yet, after the cross, what happens—a small group of disciples take the gospel to the four corners of the world.
15. What made the difference? Well, Christ, the Stronger than the strong man, bound the strong man, and then plundered his goods (the nations).
16. Now, Satan's rule over mankind must be viewed in two ways—(a) as a usurping on his part, and (b) a judgment on God's part.
17. (a) A usurping of Satan—Satan deceived man and thus wickedly usurped an authority over man that he doesn't deserve.
18. (b) A judgment of God—by this is meant, God allowed man to fall under Satan deception as a punishment for his sin.
19. These can be illustrated in Pharaoh, who wickedly enslaved the nation of Israel, which ultimately, was a judgment from God.
20. Thus, because the cross was the means of redemption, it's the means through which we are delivered from Satan.

IV. The Wrath of God was Finished

1. It was on the cross that our Savior drank empty the cup of His Father's wrath—He made atonement for our sin.
2. Personally, without excluding all the rest, I believe this is more to the very heart of what our Savior meant by saying "It is finished."
3. He had been drinking the Father's wrath for the previous three hours, and now that wrath has been fully satisfied.
4. And this really brings us to the very heart and core of the cross—what exactly happened that day on the cross?
5. Well, as many of you know, throughout the history of the church, there have been various answers given to this question.
6. Some have suggested that the cross is merely an example of selfless love—that is, it's only an example to imitate.
7. This is the most common view within groups of professing Christians, who have a more liberal view of Scripture.
8. But, historically, the cross has been understood as a penal substitution, whereby God's holy and just wrath is appeased.
9. The Biblical word that embodies this view is propitiation, which refers to the act of placating or appeasing anger.
10. That Christ's cross was a propitiation, that is, the means to appease God's wrath, is the clear teaching of Scripture.
11. 1Jn.4:10—"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."
12. It was because the Father loved us, that He sent His only begotten Son, to satisfy His righteous wrath, in our place.
13. Thus, we must be careful when we think of the Son satisfying the wrath of the Father, as if the Son if all love and the Father all wrath.
14. It's best to look at this way—God Himself, because of love, satisfied His own wrath, in the Person of His Son.

15. A.W. Pink—"Now the suffering is ended. The cup has been drained. The awful storm of God's wrath has spent itself. The darkness is ended. The sword of Divine justice is sheathed. The wages of sin have been paid. Divine holiness has been fully satisfied. With a cry of triumph—a loud cry, a cry which reverberated throughout the entire universe—the Savior exclaims, It is finished."

V. The Father's Work was Finished

1. The Father gave His Son a work to do, back in the eternal covenant of redemption, a work that He now finished.
2. Jn.17:4—"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do"—in eternity past.
3. Now, this doesn't deny that our Savior had yet to be buried, rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, and sit on His throne.
4. But all of these are now presupposed by our Savior—the grand or central work of His was finished, and so, in a sense, are all related works.
5. From eternity past, the Father and Son covenanted together, and the Father gave the Son a work to do, which the Son agreed to.
6. He came into this world as a Man, lived a perfect life, died a substitutionary death, all in fulfillment to the work given Him by His Father.
7. V30—"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, It is finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His Spirit."
8. He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit—surely brethren, this too underscores the willingness of His death.
9. His work is finished. He bows His head and gives up His Spirit. This means He died. He really and truly died.
10. Response 1—Let us embrace it—by this I mean, let every poor sinner embrace Christ and His finished redemption.
11. Dear friends, if everything is finished, then you don't need to add anything to Christ's work, who only need to embrace it.
12. In fact, if you attempt to add anything to His finished work, you end up corrupting it, and making it of no effect.
13. For example, Arthur Pink tells a story about a Christian farmer who witnessed to his unsaved neighbor who was a carpenter.
14. The farmer asked the carpenter to make him a gate. And so he went over to his neighbors to get the gate when it was finished.
15. He asked the carpenter to come over later in the day to be sure that he had properly installed the gate and that it was working properly.
16. When the carpenter came over, he saw the farmer standing over the perfectly working gate with a sharp axe in his hand.
17. The carpenter asked him—"What are you going to do with that axe?" "I am going to add a few cuts and strokes to your work" was the response.
18. "But there is no need for it," replied the carpenter, "the gate is alright as it is. I did all that was necessary to it." The Farmer took no notice, but lifting his axe he slashed and hacked at the gate until it was completely spoiled. "Look what you have done!" cried the carpenter, "you have ruined my work!"
19. "Yes," said the farmer, "and that is exactly what you are trying to do. You are seeking to nullify the Finished Work of Christ by your own miserable additions to it!"
20. Dear friends, to add anything to Christ's finished work is to ruin it. It needs nothing. It is perfect in and of itself.
21. What are somethings that people attempt to add to Christ's finished work—let me briefly suggest a few things.
22. (a) Works—that is, many sinners desire to add their works or good deeds to Christ's work. But this is to ruin His work.

23. (b) Sorrow—by this I mean, some sinners haven't embraced Christ and His work, because they are waiting for a certain degree of sorrow for sin.
24. It's almost as if there are saying—Jesus work is enough I have to it a certain degree or measure of sorrow for sin.
25. Now, surely brethren, sinners should sorrow for sin, and no sinner ever came to Christ rightly, without some sorrow for sin.
26. But here we must be very careful—sorrow and remorse for sin, though important, can never atone for our sins.
27. Hymn (Augustus Toplady)—"No he labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands; could my zeal no respite (break) know, could my tears for ever flow, all for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and thou alone."
28. (c) Faith—by this I mean, there are some who want to make a savior out of their faith—there hope is in their faith.
29. But remember, faith in and of itself is nothing—it's only the means whereby we come to Christ and lay hold of Him.
30. Response 2—Let us cherish it—by this I mean, let every Christian find comfort and safety in the shadow of Christ's cross.
31. Did Christ finish His work of redemption? Then He will of coeternity finish His work in your heart by His Spirit.
32. Remember, Christ bought upon the cross our entire salvation, from the beginning (regeneration) to its completion (glorification).
33. Oh my dear Christian friend—Do you see Christ finishing the work entrusted Him by His Father—Do you see Him completing His task?
34. Well then, be assured, He will complete the work of applying that salvation to the hearts of His beloved people.
35. Response 3—Let us study it, James Boice—"If Christ is Christianity and if the final week of Christ's life is its center, then the center of that week is the cross."
36. I truly believe every Christian would be greatly benefited if they gave themselves to study what the cross accomplished.
37. Response 4—Let us imitate it—that is, if Christ finished His work, then let us imitate Him and finish our work.
38. Now, remember what I've said many times—Christ's work of redemption is first to be embraced, and only then, imitated.
39. Dear Christian, this world is filled with all sorts of difficulties, and every Christian will have to endure through it.
40. 2Tim.4:7—"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"—Christ finished His race, let us finish ours.
41. Response 5—Let us proclaim it—by this I mean, let us as God's people, tell the whole world—IT IS FINISHED.
42. This is what we are commissioned to proclaim—we are to go into the world and tell every person—It is finished.