

# Holy Week 2018

*When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished,"  
and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.  
(John 19:30 ESV)*

*Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands;  
and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."  
Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"  
(John 20:27-28 ESV)*

## It Is Finished

Good Friday

March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

John 19:1-42

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## **Introduction:**

I'd like to invite you to open your Bibles this morning to John 19. We'll read the whole chapter and then we will focus in on the final words of Jesus as recorded by John in verse 30. Hear now the Word of the Lord.

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. 2 And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. 3 They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. 4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" 6 When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." 7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. 9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

12 From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." 13 So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" 15 They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

16 So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, 17 and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom,  
24 so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things,  
25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.  
28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." 29 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. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.  
31 Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 35 He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. 36 For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." 37 And again another Scripture says, "They will look on him whom they have pierced."  
38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. 39 Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. 40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19:1–42 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord – thanks be to God!

I think it would be fair to say that verse 30 of this chapter contains the three most beloved words in Holy Scripture.

It is finished.

That is the Gospel in a nutshell!

Every other religion talks about what you must DO in order to be saved – Christianity talks about what Jesus DID and that makes all the difference in the world.

Christianity is not about you.

It is about Jesus.

It is about what HE DID that you never could.

Christianity is not about help – it is about salvation! It is about God in Christ taking on flesh and living and dying for us.

It is about what Christ accomplished on our behalf and therefore this verse is Christianity in miniature and it is entirely appropriate that we spend our time this morning attempting to fathom its infinite depths.

What did Jesus mean exactly when he said with his dying breath; it is finished?

## **It Is Finished**

First of all I think we can say with great confidence that he meant that everything he had been sent to do by the Father had now been accomplished.

### **1. It is finished - he has done everything the Father sent him to accomplish**

Jesus often seemed to be working from a very specific position description. He knew exactly what he had commissioned to do. He said in John 6 for example that he had been sent to do the Father's will.

I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. (John 6:38 ESV)

Specifically he said, in several places that he had been sent to speak specific words. He said that for example in John 12:49.

For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment— what to say and what to speak. (John 12:49 ESV)

Isn't that interesting? We sometimes make a huge distinction between the Red Letters of Jesus in the New Testament and the Black Letters of God the Father in the Old Testament – but Jesus makes no such distinction. He says that all of his Red Letters were given to him by the Father. He doesn't make anything up. He just says what God the Father told him to say. So the Red Letters are really Black. They are the words of the Father to you and to me.

Jesus also came to do certain specific works. In John 5 Jesus said:

For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. (John 5:36 ESV)

So apparently Jesus came with a certain list of things he was supposed to do. He was supposed to heal the sick and feed the hungry and comfort the mourners – and he did those things just as he was commanded to do. The works of Jesus – the Red Letter works, we might say – were also commissioned by God the Father.

And then lastly Jesus spoke a great deal about the commission he had been given to gather and preserve a people unto eternal life. He said in John 6:

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:40 ESV)

So it sounds like the Father designed a means of salvation that would attract certain, specific people – people that God had in mind from before the foundation of the earth – that’s what Paul says in Ephesians 1.

The Father sent Jesus with a plan – with a very specific “to do” list. And having accomplished that plan and having done everything on the list, Jesus breathed his last.

The second thing we are safe in assuming is that Jesus intended to communicate that the ceremonial law had now been fulfilled in him.

## **2. It is finished - the ceremonial law has been fulfilled in him**

John has been preparing us for this since the very first chapter of his Gospel. In John chapter 1 John the Baptist pointed at Jesus and said:

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29 ESV)

This is the one we’ve been waiting for! This is the one that all of those Old Testament rituals looked forward to. All those sheep and lambs and bulls and goats and pigeons and dietary

procedures – all of that was so much prophetic PAGEANTRY and it is OVER NOW – the show has come to an end - it is accomplished now in the death of Christ upon the cross.

If the early church was clear on anything they were clear on this.

Jesus is the END of the ceremonial law.

We don't care anymore whether you eat pork or shell fish. We don't care whether you are wearing clothes of mixed fibres – if you are wearing polyester pants this morning we bless you in Jesus' name. You are welcome here. And you don't need to have brought a goat or a lamb or a pigeon or a bottle of olive oil. Because Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All of that is done.

It's over.

Its finished.

It has been accomplished through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ upon the cross – thanks be to God.

Thirdly when Jesus uttered the words IT IS FINISHED he clearly meant that all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament had now landed on him and had been fulfilled in him.

### **3. It is finished - all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament have landed on him**

We know that because of the immediate context. In verse 28 – just two verses before Jesus said the words “It is finished” John says that:

Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” (John 19:28 ESV)

So Jesus recalled, as it were, one last prophesy or type from the Old Testament that he wished to fulfil before dying. Therefore he said: “I thirst”.

Now of course we want to know what Scripture he was fulfilling there and most scholars suggest that this is done in reference to Psalm 22:15 which says:

My strength is dried up, like a potsherd; and my tongue is glued to my throat; and thou hast brought me down to the dust of the death. (Psalms 21:15 LXX-B<sup>1</sup>)

I love what Matthew Henry says here, he says:

Hitherto, all had been accomplished, and he knew it, for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along; and now he called to mind one thing more, which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears that he was the Messiah, in that not only the scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly eyed by him. By this it appears *that God was with him of a truth*—that in all he did he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care *not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets.*<sup>2</sup>

David’s life in the Old Testament functioned as a sort of prophetic outline for the Messiah. His life established a pattern of anticipation and here Jesus remembers something that has yet to be precisely fulfilled. He remembers that David, though he was the true heir to the throne and though he was the anointed one, nevertheless was wrongly suspected by Saul and wrongly persecuted by Saul such that he suffered terrible deprivations in the wilderness and in those deprivations he spoke of a great thirst.

So Jesus – the Son of David – that all might be precisely fulfilled said, “I thirst”.

Jesus is painstaking in his attention to the types and prophecies of Scripture. He fulfilled them all.

Fourthly, it is finished in the sense that Jesus has perfectly fulfilled his familial responsibilities to his human mother Mary.

#### **4. It is finished - his responsibility to his human mother has been fulfilled**

Again this comes from the immediate context. Look at the text we are talking about in your Bible. Now look back up the page just 4 verses. Verse 26 says:

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek LXX numbers this differently than our English translations. In the ESV this is Psalm 22:15.

<sup>2</sup>Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Unabridged)*, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004), paragraph 36711.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (John 19:26–27 ESV)

One of the last things Jesus did before he said the words “It is finished” was to ensure that his mother was properly provided for after his death. Some of us feel like this is an intrusion of the mundane upon the majestic. We have been talking about the Great Cosmic Work Of Christ – why then bring up this rather human and pedestrian detail? And the answer is that in the human story – which Jesus has fully entered into – the mundane and the majestic are not so easily separated.

Great men – and great women – must also make their beds in the morning. They must take out the trash. Walk the dog, pay their taxes – and of course, they must keep the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment. The Bible says:

Honor your father and your mother (Exodus 20:12 ESV)

The Apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit of Jesus said:

if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8 ESV)

So of course, Jesus took care of his mother. He wouldn't tell you to do something that he wouldn't do himself.

And that reminds us that the cross of Jesus Christ is not JUST an atonement – if it is ever appropriate to say ‘just an atonement – it is that of course – but it is more than that – it is also an example.

Jesus is showing us how to live and how to die. And he knows that when people die one of the ways they love is by seeing to the needs of their family. It is loving to ensure that those who depend on you will be well provided for.

Life insurance is love.

A well written will is love.

Those details may seem mundane to you but they are part of the majesty of the cross.

And then finally and climactically when Jesus said, “It is finished” he was speaking about the end he had made of human sin.

## **5. It is finished - he has made an end of transgression and sin**

The precise sequence of events associated with the death of Christ is easier to understand if you read John after you read the Synoptics – Matthew, Mark and Luke. Colin Kruse puts it this way, he says:

To understand the significance of these words we need to remember that in Matthew and Mark the offer of wine vinegar followed Jesus’ cry of dereliction, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Matt. 27:46–49; Mark 15:33–37), which signalled the fact that he was bearing in his own person the awful consequences of human sin.<sup>3</sup>

So when Jesus in John 19:28 said: “I thirst” he had just previously said:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46 ESV)

Meaning, that was the EXACT MOMENT when Jesus took the full weight of human sin upon himself. That was the exact moment when in his human nature Jesus BECAME SIN and bore the full blast of God’s righteous wrath on our behalf.

That was the moment when in fulfilment of prophecy, Jesus made an end of transgression and sin.

Do you remember that prophecy? Its in Daniel 9:24. The prophet said that after a certain period the Anointed One would come:

to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24 ESV)

That’s what Jesus did!

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<sup>3</sup>Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 4 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 364-365.



He did all of that!

He put an end to sin! He FINISHED THE TRANSGRESSION – HE ATONED FOR INIQUITY and he brought in an everlasting righteousness in this PRECISE MOMENT. This is the moment when all of that happened – when all of that was accomplished for every man, woman and child who has faith in his name.

Thanks be to God! – IT IS FINISHED.

Have you ever thought of that? That is the most exciting moment in all of Scripture. Right here at this precise moment all the sins of God’s people – past, present and future were uploaded as it were – TRANSFERRED – not copied – but transferred to the account of Jesus Christ.

In this digital age I can’t help but picture that like a file transfer on my computer. Have you ever uploaded files from your computer onto a thumb drive? That’s what is happening here. Every sin that you have ever committed – or will ever commit – or that I will ever commit – was at this moment being transferred to Christ’s account – to his body on the cross. On your computer you can monitor the progress of the transfer. A little box will tell you that 25% of the file has transferred.

50% has transferred.

75% has transferred.

92% has transferred.

And then finally you see that blessed news: 100% of the file has transferred.

That was the exact moment when Jesus said:

“It is finished” (John 19:30 ESV)

100% of your sin, my sin, past present and future – the whole weight of the sins of God’s people – the sins of every man, woman, boy and girl who ever confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour – was at that moment from beyond time transferred in full to Christ’s account.

100%

On Christ on the cross such that at that moment he died and bore it all.

God transferred the sin to his account – to the thumbdrive of his human life – and he destroyed it there in Christ on the cross.

It is finished!

It is no more!

As far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us!

It is finished!

He has cast our sins into the sea.

He has cancelled the record of our debt ‘that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross’<sup>4</sup> through the body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! IT IS FINISHED!

It is finished!

That’s the Gospel my friends. That is the Good News! Thanks be to God!

**Response:**

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<sup>4</sup> Colossians 2:14 ESV

Now how are we to respond to that?

Let me suggest 5 words – they all start with ‘r’ so they should be easy to remember.

First of all “**receive it**”. Right? Receive it. It is finished – as in you don’t have to do anything further. Jesus did it. Jesus PAID IT ALL – ALL TO HIM I OWE. Jesus didn’t pay some of it – Jesus paid all of it. So you don’t have to build a stairway to heaven – because Jesus already did.

You just receive it.

You just pray and you say: “Jesus I am a sinner. I have a debt I cannot pay. I have an obligation I cannot fulfill. So I receive now what you have done for me. I receive the gift of your life. I receive the gift of your death. I receive it! Through faith I take hold of it. Now take hold of me I pray in Jesus’ name”. That’s what it means to become a Christian! You receiving what God gave in Christ for your salvation. That’s the Gospel! That’s grace! So receive it. Right now. Receive it.

Then also “**rest in it**”. Don’t go out from here and think that you need to pay Jesus back – you can’t and you won’t. Just rest in it. Sit in it. Let it heal you.

And keep coming back – right? ‘**Remember it**’. That’s our next r-word and its very appropriate for today. We are going to gather around the table in just a minute. To remember. We’re going to do that because we forget. We leak. The Gospel leaks out of us and we immediately begin to default to our preset works-righteousness mindset. We are all pagans and legalists by nature. So we need to come back here again and again to remember – that it is FINISHED. Jesus paid it all. Thanks be to God!

And that’s our next r-word anyway – ‘**rejoice!**’ A Christian is by definition thankful. You’ve heard me say many times that the other word for communion is the Eucharist – the thanksgiving. Christianity is mostly about being thankful and glad in our salvation. We are happy – we are rejoicing because – Jesus paid it all. He did it. We have it and it can never be taken from us. That’s reason for rejoicing.

So we're pretty excited and hopefully if you are visiting with us today you can see that – you can read that in our faces; hopefully you can see that in our lives. That's our last r-word today. We **'reflect it'** – we respond to the cross of Jesus Christ is by “reflecting it” to others. We are supposed to be cross-carrying folks Jesus said. Obviously he meant that in a spiritual, metaphorical sense. We don't seek literal martyrdom rather we seek to offer our lives as a **LIVING SACRIFICE**. We seek to give our lives as a total love offering to God as an act of worship and response.

That's what Paul said about his life.

I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:6–7 ESV)

The life of faith is a life of service – to God and to others.

Because we follow the example of Jesus Christ.

who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:6–8 ESV)

That's our Savior! That's our example – and this is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God!

Let's pray together.