

## "It Is Finished!" John 19:28-30

### Introduction

I commented a couple of weeks ago how interesting the providence of God is. As we find all around us the world remember the birth of Jesus, our study in John has us immersed in the details of the crucifixion. And we've noted that the details of all of the gospel writers is given not some much to the physical pain of the cross (although as we will see today there is some of that) but rather to other little details of the hours of this day – details that serve to highlight for us all the more the nature and work of our beloved Savior.

Jesus spoke seven times while He was crucified. Certainly not the *last words* of Christ since He spoke many more times after His resurrection – but the last words before and during His death.

We've already consider the significance of several of these things. We considered the implication of His words of forgiveness – *Father, forgive them for they no not what they do*. The door to forgiveness for anyone is through the cross. To know that Christ stands ready today to forgive, not only should give us hope but should also make us ready to forgive those who have hurt us.

Jesus spoke to the thief on the cross. *Today you will be with me in paradise*. No other possible words and no better recipient of those words could have done more to convince us of the sufficiency of the cross. If Jesus could transform that crook on his just death bed, then no one and no sin is beyond the

reach of His grace. In Christ, your greatest sin, your greatest regret can be washed and its sting removed.

Then He spoke to His beloved disciple and His mother. He commended them to one another. Christ never misses a detail. He knows our greatest and smallest needs. You can trust Christ to care for you.

Today we come to the end of John's account of Jesus' death. There are a few more details that follow, but here, in this passage Jesus dies. And again, in His final agonizing words, we behold more of the wonder of Christ. Everything we needed He has accomplished. Nothing was left undone. It is because of this great truth that we can have the ultimate peace and assurance that comes by His grace.

### [John 19:16-30]

We sang the prophetic words of Psalm 22 this morning. *My God, my God, O why have You in my distress forsaken me? O why so far from giving help, and from my agonizing plea? All day, my God, I cry in vain; by night, yet no relief I gain.* That Jesus prayed these verses tells us something of the agony of His soul. Of course to see the detailed fulfillment of prophecy also gives us confidence in the Scriptures. It also gives us a window into the heart of Jesus, even as He bore the sins of the world. His mind was meditating on the Word of God.

It was fitting that the sky had turned to darkness in the middle of the day. It was a heavenly commentary on the realities of the atonement. In these hours, *He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf.* The sin of all of God's people was fully upon Christ. This picture ought to move you to realize that

any sin you have committed; any sins you have been fiercely battling; and sin you committed this week, at that moment in history were placed upon Jesus.

Obviously, if you want to understand the true and greatest agony of the cross, don't look to the nails, don't look to the beating, don't look to the crown of thorns, look here, look at these few hours on the cross. The true agony of the cross is captured in these words; *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* (Matthew and Mark record these words.) You can feel the pain in them. It's no longer, *My Father*, now it is, *My God*. The Father and the Son are separated for the only time in eternity. The judgment and wrath of God is focused on His son. And the anguish is indescribable. We talked about this before, but we need to remember that while our first thought of suffering is rightly upon Jesus Christ as the sin bearer, it was not just the Son who suffered. Imagine the Father turning His ear away from the pleading cry of His only beloved and begotten Son. It was agony for the Father. It was agony for the Son.

In these words of Jesus, you learn the depth of his sacrifice to save you. You are the one who deserves God's wrath and judgment. You are the one whom the Father ought to ignore. It is your sins that bring death and separation from God. Yet Jesus had you in His eye – you on His heart – His love was focused upon you as He willingly laid down his life in your place. And because He did, you don't ever need to fear that you will be abandon. You don't ever need to fear that you will be forsaken. You don't ever need to wonder if He hears your prayers. If your life is truly in Jesus Christ, then the Father is with you. The Spirit of God dwells within

you. He will rescue you from the pit. He will be with you always, even to the end of the age.

John tells us what happened next in verse 28. *I am thirsty*. Again, Jesus takes the Scriptures and fulfills their true and deepest meaning. These words are taken from Psalm 69:21.

Psalm 69 is another clear Messianic Psalm. It's hard to read that Psalm and not think of Christ's work. It speaks of His bearing our reproach. It shows how He was cut off from everyone for our sakes. It speaks repeatedly of the suffering of the cross. And in the middle of that description are these words: *Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none. And for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* \

John records this statement of Jesus on the cross to remind us of the humanity of Christ. On the cross, thirst was an unbearable reality. As Jesus' life drained away, his body cried out for relief. Here is the one time our focus is turned to the physical of the cross. Jesus cried out from the depths of his humanity, *I am thirsty*. And so we are reminded that Jesus was a man. He had to come to earth as a man in order to give us life. The first Adam had failed to keep the requirements of God for eternal life. So Jesus didn't come only to die, He came first to live. He came to fulfill the commands and law of God. Jesus never sinned. He did identify with us in our weaknesses. He did experience our limitations. He did taste temptation. But he never failed. He never yielded to sin.

And so as He hung there on the cross with great thirst on his lips and great pain in His body, we remember and are comforted in knowing that He

understands us. He sympathizes with us in our weaknesses. Jesus knows you from the inside out and still He invites you to come to Him in the times of your greatest need. And He promises to meet your needs.

After this, John tells us Jesus spoke three simple words. *It is finished.* Those words were not words of surrender. They were not words of compromised. They didn't indicate a desire or willingness to give up. It was not an admission of defeat or an attempt to cease the agony. Sometime we use this kind of phrase like this. *I quit! I've had it. No more. I'm done. I'm finished.* But that's not the meaning here.

It was more like what some students might have said this week after their finals were complete. *I'm done! I'm finished? It's over?* Now, I don't want to suggest any kind of giddiness here or make light of it. Just the opposite. These are perhaps the most important words Jesus spoke from Golgotha. Whenever we expend ourselves for something, the end of it brings great relief. But the words of Jesus were not just a statement of fact; they were actually a pronouncement of victory. Jesus was not referring to the end of His life – He was pronouncing the accomplishment of all that the Father had sent Him to do.

What exactly was finished? He'd humbled Himself and become a man. He was sent to fulfill the law in all its detail – to live a sinless life. He'd done that. He learned obedience; He learned to sympathize with man in His weakness. He'd been tried and tempted. He'd suffered the affects of living in a fallen world. He had revealed and explained the Father. He ushered in the Kingdom of God. He loved the world. He'd healed the sick and bound up the brokenhearted. He'd set captives free. And

then finally, at the end of it all, He did the greatest and the most necessary thing of all. He took the sins of His people down through the and into the age to come – He took those sins as though they were His own and He suffered the wrath and judgment of God for us. He'd done it. He'd done it all. And now it was over. *It is finished.*

*It is finished*, are the words of victory. They are the words of accomplishment. They are words that should encourage us to press on to the end. The Christian life is not an easy life. There are many stumbling blocks, many discouragements, and many challenges. But we are called to persevere to the end. We are to fight the good fight, finish the course and keep the faith. If you are in Christ, you will make it to the end. He will keep you and finish what he has begun. So have hope and press on. But remember that you will only be able to finish well if you are connected by faith to the finished work of Christ.

After all of these words, Jesus spoke but one more time. John doesn't tell us the last thing Jesus said on the cross, but Luke does. Mustering all of the strength that was left in His dying body, Jesus said, *Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit.* What John tells us is that Jesus *bowed His head and gave up His spirit.* In this act, in these words, we see the restoration of the unity between the Father and the Son. It is no longer, *My God, My God.* It is once again, *My Father.* The price had been paid, the sin had been atoned, the veil was torn, the Father and the Son were one.

Those words also show us the voluntary nature of Christ's death. Jesus wants all to hear – *Into thy hands I commit My spirit – Jesus gave up His spirit.* No one had forced Jesus to die. He'd

gone to the cross on His own. The Good Shepherd had laid down His life for the sheep. That's the only way the justice of God could be satisfied.

In this final breath we see the restoration of peace and rest to our Savior. It was over. The work was finished. Jesus was going home to His Father. What was it the writer to the Hebrews said? *Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.* Can you hear in these words the echo of joy?

The events and the words of the cross changes lives. Luke tells us the centurion standing at the foot of the cross was changed. He believed. The hostile, hating crowd went home beating their breast. Closet Christians went public.

And in the culmination of all that was evidenced that day on the cross, three days latter, Jesus was physically and bodily raised from the dead. In the splendid climax to the atonement, validating all that Jesus had said and taught, He walked out of the tomb and revealed Himself as the living Savior and Lord.

But today we simply want to see that it was finished. Jesus did everything you need for salvation. He is worthy of your whole life. All of your trust, all of your faith, all of your hope should be deposited in this one Person. Jesus is Lord and He lives. Have you bowed your knee to Him? If you have not, or are not living for Him, then today is the day. Will you give yourself to Him? And then rest in Him. Know that the One who did it all, who finished the work, is able to keep you safe. He is able to keep you from stumbling. He will make you perfect when He comes again.