

Good Friday, March 25, 2016
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It is Finished

John 19:28-30 After this, Jesus, knowing that **all was now finished**, said (to fulfill the Scripture), 'I thirst.' 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. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, '**It is finished**,' and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

This is the only place in Scripture where this word appears - Finished!

What did Jesus mean when He said "It is Finished?"

Let's begin by identifying what the "it" is.

The Father's will. Jesus willfully limited Himself by becoming human, lived, died, and was resurrected from death in order to fulfill God the Father's will.

The death of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment in history of the very mind and intent of God. Jesus Christ was not simply a martyr. His death was not something that might have been prevented. His death was the very reason He came. He came to make forgiveness possible, and redemption our reality. That was, and always has been the Father's will.

We cannot build our case for forgiveness on the idea that God is our Father and He will forgive us because He loves us. That contradicts the revealed truth of God in Jesus Christ. It makes the need for the death of Jesus unnecessary, and the notion of redemption as being redundant.

God forgives sin only because of the death of Christ. God could forgive people in no other way than by the death of His Son, and Jesus is exalted as Savior because of His death.

The greatest note of triumph ever sounded in the ears of a startled universe was sounded on the Cross of Christ— "*It is finished!*" This is the final word on and for redemption.

We cannot allow ourselves to believe that Jesus Christ stands with us, and against God, out of pity and compassion, or that He became a curse for us out of sympathy for us.

Jesus Christ became a curse for us by divine decree. That was God's will.

John 10:37-38 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

Jesus came to perfectly do the will of His Father, so people could understand that He and the Father were one (John 10:30). Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Matthew 5:17 says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them

Jesus obeyed the Father by being the perfect fulfillment of the Law of God and the prophecies regarding the Messiah. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Luke 12:51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division

Jesus did not come to preach a message of coexistence, tolerance, or ecumenism. Jesus made it clear that you are either with Him or against Him. Such truth was then and is today the most divisive message the world has ever known. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me

Jesus came as the singular, the only way to be reconciled to God. He came to save people. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

John 18:37 Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world--to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice

Jesus came as fully God and fully Man to be the incarnation of the Truth of God. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Romans 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it--the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

Jesus, Himself, His dying was the means by which God's intense anger toward our sin, our fist-shaking rebellion against Him could be satisfied, appeased.

Jesus came to make propitiation for our record of sin against God. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Romans 5:6-11 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die--but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation

Jesus came to make reconciliation between God and man possible. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish

Jesus came to die for and to purify His Bride. Jesus the groom died so He could marry the Church. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Philippians 2:5-11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

Jesus came to glorify His Father through His life, death, and resurrection. Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father.

Jesus Declared His Work Finished!

That's the "it" (the work God the Father had given God the Son to accomplish on earth). Now let's take a look at what Jesus meant when He cried out that He had **finished** the work.

There was nothing more to add--nothing more to be done by God, man, or religious institutions. The undeniable, factual, historical, and eternal work of Jesus Christ has been completed--it is complete--and will forever remain completed. "IT . . . IS . . . FINISHED!"

Jesus finished the work given to Him by His Father, which culminated at the cross. At the cross, the gavel of the Supreme Judge of the Universe crashed upon His mighty bench when God the Father poured the full extent of His wrath against sin upon His innocent Son.

"It is finished!" At the cross, the Great Exchange took place. The eternal debt owed for the sin of mankind was paid in full. God the Father looked upon His perfect, precious, and priceless Son as if He had lived the filthy, detestable, sin-stained lives of fallen mankind. And, for those who repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, God the Father looks upon them as if they had lived His Son's perfect, precious, and priceless life. That's what the gospel means when it says we are now **justified**.

"It is finished!" At the cross, God kept His promise to crush Satan's head through the bruising of His Son. The power of sin and death was vanquished once and for all time.

"It is finished!" Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross forever made mankind's own efforts to please God, and our own attempts to be reconciled to God, impotent and blasphemous. He did what we could not do for ourselves.

Blaise Pascal is believed to have said, "There's only two kinds of people in the world - the righteous who understand themselves to be sinners, and the sinners who believe themselves to be righteous"

The sin debt I owe to God was and is *paid in full* by my Lord and Savior, my Master and King, Jesus Christ, when His innocent blood was shed on the cross on my behalf!

The death of Jesus was the foundation, the basis and the means of the **gospel**

The whole story of the Bible is the **gospel**, and it is this:

We read in Genesis 1 and 2 that God created the world, everything in it, and told the first man and woman "Be fruitful and multiply, and subdue the earth"

Genesis 3, however tells us that mankind's perfect, intimate relationship with God was broken by sin. Death entered the equation. Hope was gone.

But God made promises, about how He would reserve for Himself a recovered people

The rest of the Old Testament is about our sin, and mankind's need for God's recovery plan

Then, at what the Bible says was "the right moment" in history, Jesus obediently allowed Himself to become a human, with all of the human limitations, to a dirty, hopeless and broken world, so He could be our perfect sacrifice. In the midst of our broken, sinful world He lived a perfect, sinless life.

He died, so we could be forgiven, and He created for Himself a new people, the Church...where we can again return to Genesis 1 and 2, and be fruitful and multiply (proclaim the gospel to others) and subdue the earth (positively impact our broken culture for God's Kingdom glory.)

And the gospel story points ultimately to when Jesus will return to this earth with the hosts of heaven, with His glory in full display, where the people of God, who have been purchased at great price will live with God, and God with His people in His fully realized and manifested Kingdom forever into eternity. That is the ultimate hope in the gospel.

Jesus exchanged His life for ours. The purchase price for our living was His dying. Those of us who believe He finished the work assigned to Him by the Father, that what was accomplished at the cross is forever complete also know that we now belong to Him.

There is the story told, probably more legendary than true, that Abraham Lincoln one day went down to the slave block in the Capitol city, and there noticed a young girl up for auction. Moved with compassion, he bid on her and won. Upon purchasing her, Lincoln told the disbelieving girl that she was free.

In her surprise, she said,
What does that mean?
It means you are free, he replied
She asked, Does that mean I can say whatever I want to say?
Yes, my dear, you can say whatever you want to say
Does that mean I can be whatever I want to be?
Yes, you can be whatever you want to be
Does that mean I can go wherever I want to go?
Yes, you can go wherever you want to go
At that, the girl, with tears streaming down her face, said
Then I will go with you

Heidelberg Confession, Question One

What is your only comfort in life and in death?

That I am not my own, but belong - body and soul, in life and in death - to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from enslavement to sin and the tyranny of the devil.

He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

The sacrificial death of Jesus is our gospel confirmation

That he rose again and defeated death is our gospel hope

It is Finished! It's been accomplished. Jesus died. He lives. We live for Him.