

May Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us and grant us His peace.
Amen.

“It Is Finished!”

- I. Words of triumph for Jesus.
- II. Words of comfort for guilty sinners.

Dear Christian friends,

“It is finished.” Those three words take us to about **3:00 p.m.** that first Good Friday. The three hours of SMOTHERING DARKNESS were over. **These words** are Jesus’ sixth word from the cross. They were quickly followed by Jesus’ **seventh**, FINAL word from the cross – ***“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”***

Jesus had been on the cross for **six hours**. **Very soon would come** the SWEET RELIEF of death to His tortured body. **Very soon there would be** the SWEET PEACE of heaven for His soul. Jesus is about to die. He KNOWS that **and He wants all to know** that **He dies** NOT IN DEFEAT but in TRIUMPH. **So after receiving** some ***“sour wine”*** to SOOTHE His **parched throat** Jesus speaks the words, ***“It is finished!”***

THE TRUTH is that those three words – ***“It is finished!”*** – those are 1)words of triumph for Jesus and 2)words of comfort for guilty sinners.

I. Words of triumph for Jesus.

THREE words of truth – ***“It is finished.”*** In the original Greek it’s **actually** ONLY ONE word - **tetelestai**. Literally that word means to REACH THE GOAL – the END of a journey or **project**. “You’ve MADE IT,” so to speak. “You’ve arrived at the GOAL – there’s NOTHING MORE to do. ***It is finished.***”

In the **original Greek** this is also an interesting and important VERB TENSE. The **tense** of a verb indicates the time of the **action** – PAST – present – future. The Greek here uses a tense we DON’T HAVE in English. It’s called the PERFECT tense and it EMPHASIZES that something was done – **completed** – IN THE PAST and it still stands COMPLETED. It was finished in the past and it’s STILL GOOD – still applies – **today**.

Let’s use this PICTURE. You can finish building a house **in the past** but then comes the work of MAINTAINING the house – the upkeep – **painting** – a **new roof** – new **furnace** – repairs need to be done. That happens with SO MUCH in this life but it **just DOESN’T APPLY to what Jesus** ***“finished”*** that first Good Friday. **Time – our sin** – hasn’t taken ANY TOLL on what Jesus ***“finished”*** on the cross. Neat point, isn’t it?

“It is finished” reminds us that Jesus had come here ON A MISSION. That mission is so beautifully described in the Bible. ***“God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him.”*** There’s Jesus’ familiar words that He ***“came to seek and to save that which was lost”*** – that He ***“did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*** That mission is now - ***“finished”*** and STILL ***“finished”*** – not needing any TOUCHING UP.

“Knowing that everything had now been finished, and to fulfill the Scripture, Jesus said, ‘I thirst.’” Everything ***“now finished”*** – the Scriptures ***“fulfilled.”*** ***“Fulfilled”*** that promise of a ***“virgin giving birth to a Son called Immanuel”*** – GOD WITH US. Jesus didn’t look like ***“Immanuel”*** hanging on that cross. The sign above His head reads, ***“Jesus of Nazareth”*** – but Jesus is more than JUST A MAN **from Nazareth**. Jesus is the eternal Son of God born our brother. Jesus is ***“in very nature God”*** yet “FOR US and for our salvation” ***“He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!”***

Everything ***“now finished”*** – ***“fulfilled”*** the Scriptures that Jesus is ***“the LORD our Righteousness.”*** That word righteous reminds us that CONTRARY to what the **world** and our **sinful natures** think God decides right and wrong **and** God has CLEARLY spelled out right and wrong with His 10 Commandments. **Those commandments** are not hints from God – it would BE NICE if we would try to keep a few of them **at least once**

in a while. Each commandment is a DIRECT ORDER from God that He fully expects us to obey – starting with that **very first** one that He ALWAYS COMES FIRST in our hearts and lives.

We owed God a **“righteous”** life where we always did what was right IN GOD’S EYES. Born “dead in sin” – cursed with a **stubborn, selfish** sinful nature we COULD NEVER live a **“righteous”** life – we were condemned to hell’s eternal punishment. But God sent Jesus to be **“our Righteousness.”** Jesus took the place of **all people** under God’s law and He actually did live a **“right life”** – perfectly loving and **obeying** His heavenly Father – EVEN TO **“drinking the cup”** of God’s wrath and dying for our sins. **“It is finished”** – the GOAL has been reached – God’s law has been PERFECTLY obeyed for us by Jesus.

Everything **“now finished”** – **“fulfilled”** ALL those promises of Jesus paying for all our sins. Standing at the cross LEARN WELL that God couldn’t and didn’t shrug off our sins as NO BIG DEAL. Stand at the cross and MARVEL that God **“did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all.”** God took our **sin** and **guilt** OFF OF US and put it all on Jesus and punished Jesus in our place. **“Fulfilled”** now is Isaiah’s prophecy that Jesus would be **“pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities”** – that **“the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all – by His wounds we are healed.”** **“It is finished”** – the GOAL has been reached – all sins of **all people** of all time – PAID IN FULL by Jesus that first Good Friday.

Jesus mission had reached its GOAL. All was **“finished.”** There was nothing more for Jesus to DO or SUFFER. It was TIME for Jesus to die – NOT IN DEFEAT but **in triumph**. So He speaks those WORDS OF TRIUMPH – **“it is finished”** – and stands finished STILL TODAY. That means – **“it is finished”** – are also...

II. Words of comfort for guilty sinners.

Do you see yourself a GUILTY sinner – a person who has broken God’s **commandments** – defied God’s **will** – a person SO DESERVING of God’s rejection and **hell’s punishment**? Our proud sinful natures REBEL at that. “I may not be PERFECT but I’m not that bad. God needs to LIGHTEN UP and accept me for **who I am.**”

We stand today at Jesus’ cross – in the thick darkness we hear Jesus cry out, **“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”** Seeing Jesus’ BATTERED BODY **hanging lifeless** on the cross our excuses RING HOLLOW. I should have been ON that cross! I should have been **“forsaken – abandoned”** by God! God should have TURNED HIS BACK on me – turned a DEAF EAR to all my cries – for time and for eternity. Yet it was Jesus who UTTERED that cry so we would never know what it’s REALLY LIKE to be **“forsaken”** by God. We can hear that cry but we can’t fully understand the HELL BEHIND it. That Jesus has now spoken, **“It is finished.”**

What words of COMFORT! Our salvation – our forgiveness – they are ACCOMPLISHED **historical facts!** Forgiveness is not merely a POSSIBILITY – a GOOD CHANCE. Forgiveness full and free is a BLESSED FACT! The letter to the **Hebrew Christians** emphasizes just that with its REPEATED **“once for all”** comment about Jesus’ sacrifice. **“Once”** – there’s no need to REPEAT anything. **“For all”** means everybody – INCLUDING you and me. IF we had to add anything to what Jesus **has already done** THEN JESUS LIED when He said, **“It is finished.”** And Jesus NEVER lies!

“It is finished” MEANS we can be absolutely sure we are forgiven. And God wants us **absolutely sure!** The same Jesus who said, **“It is finished”** once again invites us to **“take eat – take drink”** the VERY body and blood He gave into death on the cross **“for the forgiveness”** of all our sins. With Holy Communion Jesus PERSONALLY PROVES to us that all really is **“finished.”** We are NO LONGER guilty sinners but FORGIVEN sinners!

“It is finished.” What words of COMFORT for us. With Jesus as our Savior we HAVE PEACE with God – **“the peace of God that goes beyond all understanding.”** **“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you,”** Jesus tells us. SO **“do not let your hearts be trouble. Do not be afraid.”** Life now isn’t PERFECT or EASY. Life now isn’t **always** FAIR **Life now** can be pretty COLD – HARD – CRUEL and we often can’t do anything about it. But no matter what we CAN BE SURE God loves us. Just go stand at the cross and hear Jesus say, **“It is finished.”**

Life wasn’t always easy or fair FOR JESUS. **Why should we expect** to be TREATED DIFFERENTLY? **Why** should we go wallow in SELF-PITY? We have Jesus! We have Jesus’ cross and **empty grave**. Having Jesus

we can SAY WITH PAUL, ***“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”*** Having heard Jesus’ CRY OF TRIUMPH – ***“It is finished”*** – we can exult with Paul, ***“In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

“It is finished” – what words of COMFORT. We can now die in peace JUST AS JESUS did. **Jesus died** knowing that the VERY MOMENT He died He would be ***“in Paradise”*** – safely home at His Father’s side. What COMFORT! You and me – ON our deathbeds – we can say, ***“It is finished. My life is COMPLETED. By God’s grace I’ve REACHED the finish line. Heaven is my home.”*** With Jesus – our Savior we can echo Paul, ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me and ... to all who have longed for His appearing.”*** With Jesus as our Savior we die NOT IN DEFEAT but in eternal triumph.

“It is finished!” Then, bowing His head, Jesus gave up His spirit.” Jesus was dead but He would not STAY dead. It’s not Easter yet but we HAVE JESUS’ PROMISE of Easter. Then we’ll have THREE MORE precious **words of truth**. See you on Sunday! Amen.