

GOOD FRIDAY 2025
JOHN 19:17-18, 28-30
TETELESTAI!

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to John chapter 19 as we gather together on this Good Friday.

Let me say this because it will focus on what we will be looking at this evening.

We are told,

Michelangelo: the name brings to our mind great artistry, architecture, and sculpture. To say his name is to be reminded of the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican at Rome.

Yet time and again he left that work, tiring of it, to return to his beloved and native Florence - only to be coaxed back by the Pope, insisting that he finish that work.

When we think of his name, we think of those statues of Moses or David. What we may not remember, however, is that he left far more works unfinished than finished.

In the sacristy [religious housing] of a church in Florence, the unfinished masterpieces of Michelangelo were gathered together, and by count, he left more works unfinished than complete.

In my study at home, I keep a picture of the desk of the late and great Dr. A. T. Robertson, perhaps the most famous and influential scholar the Southern Baptist people ever produced. It was a photograph taken of his desk the day he died.

Our senior pastor and others in his class were there on that occasion, on September 23, 1934, when he walked into his senior class in the Greek New Testament at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Thirty minutes into the class he was stricken, and two hours later he was taken.

When they looked at the rudiments that were left on his desk, they found he had begun the masterwork of his life: a translation of the New Testament bearing his own name. He had translated as far as the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew's Gospel, and then he was taken, leaving across his desk unfinished notes, manuscripts, and papers.

The world-famous Cecil Rhodes, whose name was known across the continent, said as his last words, *"So much to do, so little done."*

We've read the mighty, triumphant shout of Jesus from the cross: *"It is finished."*

What do you suppose the most significant word in human history might be?

Was a word of wisdom uttered by a philosopher, Aristotle or Socrates?

Was it spoken by a poet who - in perfect rhyme and meter - arrived at just the right word?

Was it spoken by a statesman, Churchill or Roosevelt?

Or was it this word, which Jesus cried out from the Cross that has baffled and inspired for the ages: *"It is finished"*?

- <https://bit.ly/3Xaltsf>

It is that word that Jesus cried out from the cross of Calvary that gives us hope, assurance, confidence, as we will see this evening!

Let me set the stage for what we will be looking at and what happened to Jesus on this day we call Good Friday.

Jesus has been betrayed by Judas.

He has been arrested and has now gone through three religious trials.

The first was with Annas, who was not the High Priest at this time, but still held the power of the High Priest.

Then with Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas and he was the High Priest.

And they are trying to gather charges against Jesus so that they can send Him to Pilate to be put to death.

The problem for them, and there were many, was that no one was able to agree what He did wrong. The witnesses were contradicting each other.

And finally, Jesus was brought before the High Priest, Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin or the Jewish religious Supreme Court you might say. And it is here that they sentence Jesus to death because He being a man made Himself equal with God!

Listen to how this plays out in Matthew 26:62-68, **“And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?’”**

These are the Jewish religious leaders, including the High Priest, and they want to put Jesus to death, why?

Because, like we have seen, He being a man claimed to be God!

The problem for them is that throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus showed that He is the Messiah, He is Almighty God and He is not only able to heal the physically sick, but He is able to forgive them of their sins, which only God can do!

But they are angry at Jesus. They did not want to lose their position with Rome. You see, any turmoil, any uprising, Rome would clamp down upon them. The reason being is that if there was a problem in Jerusalem, it usually was related to their religious practices and it usually happened on the Temple Mount.

That is why they had the Fortress of Antionio there on the Temple Mount. If there was a problem, they had their soldiers right there to intervene!

So their solution to this problem is to kill it, kill Jesus. But they were not going to do it, they were going to leave it in the hands of Pilate!

And so they now bring Jesus to Pilate and He is going to face three civil trials.

One before Pilate, which got Pilate nowhere.

And once Pilate hears that Jesus is from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod, since he was in Jerusalem for the Feast days, Passover, he was in town.

At this second civil trial with Herod, all Herod wanted to do was be entertained by Jesus. He wanted Jesus to do some kind of miracle for him. But Jesus refused. Herod knew all about Jesus and no miracle was going to change what he thought of Jesus. To Herod, Jesus was a nobody. So Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate for the third and final civil trial.

And Pilate is afraid that the Jews might complain to Rome about him, so he knows Jesus is innocent and yet the Jews want to have Jesus crucified!

And, in spite of all that Pilate knew, even his wife warned him not to do anything to Jesus, for she was warned in a dream about this, he let the crowds of Jews, the Jewish religious leaders drive him to do what he really didn't want to do!

We also see that Pilate had Jesus scourged, which made his back like raw meat.

He was beaten. A crown of thorns was placed upon His head.

He was so badly disfigured by all that they did to Him that He did not look like a man anymore!

And here he is, hoping that these Jewish people and leaders would see this broken and bloodied man and have compassion on Him as he brought Jesus out before them and said, **"Behold the Man!"** John 19:5.

In spite of all that, in spite of what Jesus looked like before them, the Jewish religious leaders had no compassion on Jesus, and they said, **"... 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' ..."** John 19:6.

Now, as we read of all these injustices, and they were very unfair, even the Jewish religious trials were not done according to their law, we need to remember that from eternity past Jesus knew what it would take to redeem sinful man. Even before He created man, He knew that He would be the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world!

I am not saying that those in the crowd that were calling for His crucifixion or Pilate or the Roman guards were not responsible for their actions, they were. But God knew all that would take place ahead of time and now that hour had come!

But why did this have to happen in the first place?

Why did God have to become flesh, dwell amongst us and then go to the cross of Calvary?

The reason is simple – ***SIN!***

And what made God do this?

Again, the answer is simple – ***HIS LOVE FOR SINFUL MAN!***

I do understand that some feel that they are pretty good, not perfect but they do enough good to get them into heaven!

The problem with that kind of thinking is that it is – ***WRONG!***

The standard to get into heaven is not being pretty good or even good!

I do realize that all the religions of the world have a works-based salvation for them but not Christianity because Christianity is not a religion, it is having a relationship with Almighty God!

The reality is, the standard to get into heaven is being perfect, not having one sin in our lives from the time we are born until we die!

But that still would not help us, even though we could never do that. You see, we all have inherited this sin nature from Adam, so we already miss that mark of perfection, we miss the bull's eye you might say, for that word ***SIN*** speaks of missing that mark!

In fact, the Bible tells us in Psalm 14:3 that, **“They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”**

Also, in Ecclesiastes 7:20 we are told, **“For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.”**

I think that is very clear. Like I have said, we are not good; we have a sin nature from Adam, and we have plenty of our own sins!

Now some may argue those verses were in the Old Testament and not in the New Testament.

It is true, that is from the Old Testament, but we see it very clearly in the New Testament as well!

Paul tells us in Romans 3:23, **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

If we have sinned, and we have, then we miss that mark of perfection and we will not get into heaven!

God is holy, He is pure, there is no darkness in Him at all and God will not accept sin in His Kingdom!

Again, in Romans, Paul tells us in Romans 3:10-12, **“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’”**

And if you are still struggling with this, then listen to what Jesus has to say regarding who is good. In Mark 10:18 we are told, **“So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.’”**

Jesus is saying to this man, this rich young ruler, who calls Jesus **“Good Teacher”** and Jesus is trying to draw this man’s faith out. He is saying to him, ***“Only God is good and thus, are you calling me God!”***

Think of it like this. If God is good, then Jesus is saying you are not, mankind is not good, only He is good because He is God!

This is the problem for all of us. We are sinners and our sin has separated us from God. Not because I have said this, but the Lord has said it in Isaiah 59:1-2, **“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”**

We are in trouble and then God steps in and we are told in John chapter 3, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”** John 3:16-21.

The love that God has for us is seen in His action! He sent His Son not to condemn us, because we are already condemned!

He sent His Son into this world so that we may be saved!

And what do we need to do to be saved?

Jesus tells us we need to – ***BELIEVE!***

“Now wait a minute Pastor Joe. Even the demons believe, and they are not saved!”

That is very true. But this belief is one that leads to actions as we repent of our sins, which means we are doing an about face and turning to God, leaving the past behind and moving forward. We have asked Jesus to be Lord and Savior of our lives and that love for God is seen in the things we do and the things we say! Demons are not following God, but they know Jesus is God!

And yes, we are not perfect, but the desire to do good, not for salvation but for our identification with the Lord is there. And when we do wrong God brings conviction in our lives to draw us back for God will and does chasten His children and as Christians, we are children of God!

And that is what we are celebrating here tonight! That God has become flesh, dwelt amongst us and has gone to the cross of Calvary to pay the debt of sin we could never pay!

Once we do then our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more! Jesus not only paid the debt for our sins, but the penalty for our sins as He bore that upon Himself for us on the cross of Calvary!

Now here we are some 2,000 years after the crucifixion of Jesus took place, and I don't think many understand the brutality of this punishment, of this capital punishment I should say.

And keep in mind that Jesus was beaten, He was scourged, His beard was plucked out. And a crown of thorns was placed on His head!

And when Pilate brought Jesus out before the people, He was a bloody mess! He did not look like a King nor did He look like their Savior.

And remember what I said in regard to what Pilate said to the Jewish religious leaders, as well as the crowd of Jews who were there calling for Jesus to be crucified, **"Behold your King!"** John 19:14.

I think that Pilate had in his mind that if they saw how broken, the condition that Jesus was in, that they would have compassion on Him and let Him go.

But they did not! They wanted Him crucified and they wanted to have Barabbas released, an insurrectionist and murderer!

And I want you to listen to what was involved with a crucifixion, what took place, and it will give you a good picture of what Jesus went through, but we will never understand fully the pain that He suffered for us.

Not only the physical pain, but that separation from the Father when God the Father turned His face from God the Son as He bore the sins of the world from 12 noon until 3 pm when He gave up His Spirit!

This is what we are told of this form of capital punishment,

What is crucifixion?

A medical doctor provides a physical description: The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood.

The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood.

Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement.

The cross is then lifted into place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed.

The victim is now crucified.

As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain - the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves.

As he pushes himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet.

Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of his feet.

As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain.

With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled.

He fights to raise himself in order to get even one small breath.

Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside.

Spasmodically he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen.

Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber.

Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

It is now almost over - the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level - the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. . . Finally he can allow his body to die.

All this the Bible records with the simple words, “**And they crucified Him.**” (Mark 15:24).

What wondrous love is this?

- Adapted from C. Truman Davis, M.D.
in The Expositor's Bible Commentary Vol. 8

If you ever have a doubt about God's love for you, look to the cross because here we clearly see how much He loved us, and it is shown in what He has done!

Again, and I want to drive home this point on how horrible this type of capital punishment was.

The Roman historian Tacitus called crucifixion “*A torture fit only for slaves.*”

Also, one commentator made this statement regarding crucifixion. He wrote,

“Archaeologists discovered in 1968 the remains of a man crucified in Jesus’ era. The study of the remains revealed that the victim was nailed to the cross in a sitting position, both legs over sideways, with the nail penetrating the sides of both feet just below the heel. The arms were stretched out, each stabbed by a nail in the forearm.”

Dr. Nico Hass, Hebrew University anatomy professor described it as “*a compulsive position, a difficult and unnatural posture,*” meant to increase the agony of the sufferer.

The Romans wanted people to understand that if you fought against Rome, you would lose, and the consequences would be unbelievable!

That is why Calvary was on a hill so people down below and those who were on the hill could see these people being crucified as they walked by. It was to be a deterrent to committing criminal acts against Rome!

Now let me share our text this evening with you, I bet you thought I would never get to it, but here we are!

In John chapter 19, beginning in verse 17, we are told, **“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.”**
John 19:17-18.

Keep in mind that Calvary was located outside the city, just as the Scriptures tell us.

We are told in Hebrews 13:11-13, **“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”**

Also, the idea here is this. Paul is telling us that they need to make a clean break from Judaism and for us today; we must make a break from whatever is holding us back from Jesus and meet Him where He is at!

In Galatians 3:13-14 we are told, **“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”**

How did He do this?

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

You see, He became sin for us, paid in full the penalty for our sins so we can have the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives!

And what I love about our Lord, even in this condition that He was in, He reached out to the prisoners, one on each side of Him, and offered eternal life to them. A life with Him.

And we know what happened here.

One understood that he was a murderer, that he deserved death, and he cried out to Jesus to save him, to remember him.

The other rejected the offer that Jesus gave to them, and he died in his sins while the other entered into eternity with the Lord!

And the same is true today.

The Holy Spirit is working on the hearts of people, to bring them to Jesus for that saving faith, and people have a choice to make.

They can mock and make fun of Jesus or feel that they can just work their way into heaven, they can be good enough to get in! And, as we have seen, you can't!

Or you can receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior by repenting of your sins and asking Jesus into your life!

The moment you do that you have come to saving faith.

That is the love of God for sinful man, He does not give up on us, but it truly is our choice in the matter!

Remember what Jesus said in John 12:32-33, **“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” This He said, signifying by what death He would die.**

And here we are, some 2,000 years later and people today are looking to Jesus, who was lifted up on a cross to pay the penalty for their sins and come to saving faith!

But it is a difficult choice to make because you have to, by faith believe that God has done this for you and then you receive it by faith!

Remember what Jesus said in John 3:14-15, “**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.**”

This is the story of Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night and was asking about eternal life. And for Nicodemus, he did not get it yet.

So Jesus takes him back to a story that took place in Numbers chapter 21.

In doing so He is showing Nicodemus how to be born again, and He is saying that this story that took place in Numbers chapter 21 points to Him, to Jesus and what He is to do.

You may remember the story; the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness after being set free from their bondage in Egypt and they once again were complaining. God therefore sent a judgment upon them, serpents.

And as the people were bitten by these serpents they began to die and Moses steps in and intercedes for the people. God responds by telling Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it upon a pole in the camp. Then, when anyone is bitten by these serpents, if they look to this bronze serpent on a pole, they would be healed. If they didn't, they would die.

Now this bronze serpent on a pole we see portrayed with the serpent wrapped around the pole but I don't think that is how it was made. The pole itself was vertical and the serpent I think was horizontal on that pole and it made a picture of the cross!

Now for many, they heard what Moses said, and they thought it was the stupidest, most ridiculous thing in the world to do. They needed a medic or some anti-snake venom, not to look upon this serpent on a pole.

Thus, when they were bitten, they died!

Others, when they were bitten, looked upon this bronze serpent on a pole by faith and they were healed, they lived!

Now what in the world does that have to do with Jesus?

Everything!

You see, bronze in the Scriptures speaks of judgment and the serpent speaks of sin.

Thus, this bronze serpent on a pole spoke of the judgment of sin and Jesus is saying that when He is lifted up, placed on the cross, all our sins will be judged as He became sin for us and paid in full the penalty for our sins.

In Isaiah 45:22 we are told, “**Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.**”

And Paul said in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

Thus, all who look upon Jesus, receive Him will live and all those who reject Him, think it is foolish to look upon someone dying on the cross for our sins, will die!

You see, as you look by faith at the cross of Jesus, receive Him, you are born again!

Now let's jump down to verse 28 where we are told, **"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."** John 19:28-30.

John skips over those three hours of darkness that covered the earth, from noon till 3 pm. This is when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus and the Father turned His face from the Son!

John focuses on the short time before Jesus gave up His Spirit!

We are told that the soldiers gave Him sour wine to drink. He was thirsty, dehydrated.

They probably tied a sponge to the end of a rod with hyssop and pressed it to His lips. (Hyssop is a plant, also used at the Passover - Ex. 12:22.)

This is not to be confused with the vinegar mixed with gall, which had been offered to Him earlier (Matt. 27:34). He did not drink that because it would have acted as a pain reliever.

He must bear our sins in full consciousness.

It was then, after He paid in full the penalty for our sins, we see that He cried out ***TETELESTAI*** in the Greek, or **"It is finished."**

The work of redemption was completed, the price had been paid!

Many miss the point of this word, tetelestai.

Tenney tells us, ***"The verb telew (teleo, 'to finish') was used in first and second centuries in the sense of 'fulfilling' or 'paying' a debt and often appeared in receipts. Jesus' statement 'It is finished' (tetelestai, tetelestai) could be interpreted as 'Paid in full.'"***

Exactly, our debt for our sin was paid in full by Jesus. There is nothing we can do to add to that, it is completed!

It is as Paul said in Colossians 2:13-15, “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

We were all spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins before we came to Christ!

Think of it like this.

We were not sick in need of a doctor, but we were dead in need of a Savior, in need of Jesus – we needed resurrection not resuscitation!

And thus, God stepped in; paying in full the penalty for our sins and brought our spirits back to life so we could have fellowship with God once again! We were – ***BORN AGAIN!***

All our sins; past, present and future sins have been nailed to the cross of Calvary, they have been paid in full.

Now that phrase, “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us” can be confusing.

Let me try to explain what this was all about.

When a prisoner back then was released from prison, serving his sentence, on a piece of paper that had his crimes on, the words – ***TETELESTAI*** were written!

In other words, he paid his debt for the crimes he committed.

What that meant was that if someone caught you outside of prison, you had documentation that the debt was paid, and you are no longer in bondage to the crime you have committed.

That is what Jesus has done for us; He paid in full the penalty for our sins as I have said!

But what about this sin?

TETELESTAI!

But you don't know what I did here, how can I be saved!

TETELESTAI!

Think about how just a few words can change everything in our lives.

In a courtroom, when these words are spoken – “***Not guilty!***” It changes everything!

When you propose to your girlfriend, and she says – “***Yes!***” It changes everything!

But there has never been a word that has been spoken that has impacted every person on this planet more – ***TETELESTAI!*** Those words spoken by Jesus to us.

At this point, when Jesus said that word and gave up His spirit, we are told in Matthew 27:51, “**Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.**”

Keep in mind that at this time in Jerusalem, at the Temple, the priests were preparing to offer the evening sacrifice.

And as they were, this veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom and not from the bottom to the top!

This woven fabric, layered one layer on top of another, measured some sixty feet high, some thirty feet wide and anywhere from twelve to eighteen inches thick!

In fact, this veil was so heavy that it took three hundred priests to hang it!

What is the point of this veil?

That sin had separated man from God! You could not enter into the presence of God, into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was, and God dwelt above the Mercy Seat!

The only one who could enter into the Holy of Holies was only the High Priest, and only once a year. He alone could enter into the Holy of Holies, past this veil, into the presence of God on the Day of Atonement!

But now that veil is torn in two and the point of that is so important.

Sin had separated man from God but now that separation was opened up by Jesus who paid in full the penalty for our sins and restored our relationship with God the Father.

That is what Peter said in I Peter 3:18, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

In Isaiah 1:18 we are told, **“‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’”**

The Living Bible puts it this way, **“‘Come, let’s talk this over!’ says the Lord; ‘no matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can take it out and make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you white as wool!’”**

This is a rational choice on our part. Once we see ourselves as sinners separated from God, our only hope, our only answer is Jesus, the Savior of the world. And it doesn’t matter how bad you were, you are cleansed by Him, washed as white as snow!

Not only that, but God forgave us of all our transgressions, all our sins.

We have to remember that we are forgiven or saved by grace through faith in Jesus!

That is what Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-10, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”**

You see, we are saved by **GRACE**, it is not something that we deserved, it is not something we worked for, it is a free gift extended to us by God, and we receive that gift by faith!

It is so simple and yet, when man gets a hold of things, he makes it so difficult! It is not of works; it is by **GRACE!**

As I have said, this **“handwriting of requirements”** was the debt a person owed, and the debt of sin condemned us to Hell, it **“was against us.”**

And God has come, taken all our sins, nailed them to the cross, and they are completely taken away, and the paper which contained all our debts has written on it **TETELESTAI** or paid in full!

Again, but what about this sin or that sin?

TETELESTAI!

Jesus completed the work for us and all we must do is receive the free gift by faith!

And then Paul tells us in Colossians that Jesus has **“... disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”** Colossians 2:15.

What is Paul speaking of here?

Think of it like this. Satan and his demonic forces as Wiley Coyote!

Okay, you know what I watched as a kid!

And if you remember, he is always after the Roadrunner and he has great plans to catch him but, in the end, it is Wiley Coyote that falls off the cliff, gets smashed or blown up, he always fails!

Satan thought he won when Cain slew Able, but not so!

Satan thought he won when he thought Haman would wipe out all the Jews, but he lost!

Satan thought he had the world against Jesus, so much so that they put Him to death and at that point there must have been celebrations in the world of darkness.

But ***“Beep-beep!”***

Jesus conquered death and by paying the penalty for our sins, He gave us new life in Him, and the victory of the Devil was over, he did not win!

His *ACME* product of destruction didn't work again!

Thus, Jesus stripped them of their power over us; the sting of death is gone because Christ has given to us the victory!

Don't fall prey to the defeated enemy; give your life to the ultimate King, Jesus Christ!

Also, notice that life was not taken from Jesus, but He freely gave it up, as He said in John 10:17-18, **“Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

Again, this was not defeat for Jesus, this was victory, and we do need to understand that!

Morris tells us, ***“Jesus died with the cry of the Victor on His lips. This is not the moan of the defeated, nor the sigh of patient resignation. It is the triumphant recognition that He has now fully accomplished the work that He came to do.”***

All that Jesus came to do, to save man from His sin, to restore that fellowship with God the Father that had separated man from God, it was now completed!

As Meyer tells us, ***“From the gates of Eden the blood of sacrifice had begun to flow, augmented by the confluent streams of the years. From that moment, however, not another drop need be shed. The types were finished now that the Antitype had been realized.”***

Absolutely!

But the problem for many is that they see Jesus finish the work that He came to do but we must finish the work, complete it to save ourselves. If we don't then we won't be saved. And I know I have touched on this already, but so many struggle with what we must do to be saved, and the work was completed by Jesus, it is a grace gift!

You see, we are not saved by grace plus works but by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

Some call this ***“Cheap Grace!”***

I don't think it is cheap at all. It cost Christ His life to save me!

But how do I know that the work is completed by Jesus?

In Mark 16:19 we are told, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, **“So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.”**

The event spoken of here does not take place in Galilee, but some 70 miles away or so, in the area of Bethany by the Mount of Olives, some 40 days after His resurrection.

And now we see that the Lord is now seated at the right hand of the Father, the place of authority and honor.

Also, the priest would never sit down, there were no chairs in the Temple for the work was not completed.

But now Christ, our Great High Priest has sat down.

Why?

Because the work is finished! He paid in full the penalty for our sins by His shed blood!

As I close this evening, let me share this true story with you and you will see what I mean by saying it is all about the cross!

We are told,

The mother of a nine-year-old boy named Mark received a phone call in the middle of the afternoon. It was the teacher from her son's school.

"Mrs. Smith, something unusual happened today in your son's third- grade class. Your son did something that surprised me so much that I thought you should know about it immediately."

The mother began to grow worried.

The teacher continued, ***"Nothing like this has happened in all my years of teaching. This morning I was teaching a lesson on creative writing. And as I always do, I tell the story of the ant and the grasshopper."***

"The ant works hard all summer and stores up plenty of food. But the grasshopper plays all summer and does no work. Then winter comes. The grasshopper begins to starve because he has no food. So he begs, 'Please Mr. Ant, you have much food. Please let me eat, too.'"

Then I said, *“Boys and girls, your job is to write the ending to the story.”*

“Your son, Mark, raised his hand. ‘Teacher, may I draw a picture?’”

“Well, yes, Mark, if you like, you may draw a picture. But first you must write the ending to the story.”

“As in all the years past, most of the students said the ant shared his food through the winter, and both the ant and the grasshopper lived. A few children wrote, ‘No, Mr. Grasshopper. You should have worked in the summer. Now I have just enough food for myself.’ So the ant lived and the grasshopper died.”

“But your son ended the story in a way different from any other child, ever. He wrote, ‘So the ant gave all of his food to the grasshopper; the grasshopper lived through the winter. But the ant died.’”

“And the picture? At the bottom of the page, Mark had drawn three crosses.”

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Now, as simplistic as that picture may be, it points us to a reality of what Jesus has done for us.

He has taken our sins, and He has paid for them all. The death of the innocent to pay for the sins of the guilty!

That is what we have been looking at this evening, these words that Jesus said from the cross of Calvary – ***IT IS FINISHED!***