

It Is Finished

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles tonight to the Gospel of John, chapter 19. We have a great appreciation, I think, for a job finished and a job well done.

We like the feeling of satisfaction that comes with knowing that the task has been accomplished. And we know something of the frustration of a job that isn't done, that isn't yet finished.

How thankful we are, for example, to be in our new church building. And yet we find ourselves wishing that it was all the way done.

That we could use the bathrooms just down the hall here. That other things that aren't finished were finished. We appreciate something when it's done, and it's done well.

Many times in our day it's rare to find someone who will finish a job and do it well. I'm not saying the folks working on the building are guilty of that. But often times people are unreliable and unfaithful.

[1:00] And so we find it refreshing when we give someone a job to do and they finish it. Whether it's our children taking out the trash. Or when you've hired someone to do something around your house and they do it.

And you're pleased with the finished product. That sort of thing makes us glad. It's satisfying to us. But often people do fail us. They let us down.

They don't do what we were hoping they would do. They don't finish the job that has been given to them. Or at least not to our satisfaction. And so, what a blessing it is for us to find that Jesus is not like us.

That what He does, He does well. And He finishes that which He has been given to do. You see, His Father gave Him a job to do.

The redemption of His chosen people. The salvation of lost and dying sinners. And when Jesus came to the end of His life, as He hung dying on the cross, He was able to say, in truth, it is finished.

[2:09] And it was finished. He had done it. He had completed it. And He had done it well. He had faithfully carried out the work that had been given to Him by His Father.

Notice what He says here in the context. Here in John 19. We'll begin reading in verse 16. In verse 30. Read through to verse 30.

John 19.16. This is God's Word. Finally, Pilate handed Him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

Carrying His own cross, He went out to the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. Here they crucified Him. And with Him, two others. One on each side.

And Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city.

[3:11] And the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. The chief priest of the Jews protested to Pilate. Do not write the King of the Jews, but that this man claimed to be King of the Jews.

Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining.

This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Let's not tear it, they said to one another. Let's decide by lot who will get it. This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which said, They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother. His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw His mother there and the disciple whom He loved, standing nearby, said to His mother, Dear woman, here is your son. And to the disciple, here is your mother. From that time on, this disciple took her into His home.

[4:15] Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I am thirsty. A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

When He had received the drink, Jesus said, It is finished. With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. It is finished.

It just takes three words to say in English. In Greek, it's all one word. I don't think I've ever preached a sermon on one word before. I suppose there's a first time for everything, because that's the word we want to consider tonight.

It is finished. As we gather to remember our Lord's death, to be spiritually nourished as we partake of the Lord's Supper tonight, we want to consider this statement, It is finished, and see two things. What is finished? And why does it matter to us that it is finished? So what is finished? Jesus could have meant many things by what He says here, and all of these things are likely encompassed.

[5:31] His suffering is now finished at that point. The Old Testament sacrificial system finished. The fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning Him finished. Or many of the prophecies concerning Him finished.

The work of redemption finished. Just likely, Jesus at the very least had in mind there the view, or had in view the work of redemption, which His Father had given Him to do.

That work that had been tasked to Him by His Father. Go and save my people. And He did. He accomplished that work. And that's where we'll focus our attention tonight.

Earlier, as the disciples gathered around the table for the first celebration of the Lord's Supper, and their last remembrance of the Passover, the night before Jesus was crucified, the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus prayed in John 17, 4, I have brought you glory.

He's praying to His Father. I've brought you glory on earth by completing. Very similar word to the one He uses here in John 19. I've brought you glory on earth by completing the work that you gave me to do.

[6:46] And right here in the context in verse 28, we see that Jesus knew all things had been completed. His work was finished. What work had He finished? It was the work His Father had given Him to do.

John 4, 34, My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work. And what Jesus is saying here on the cross is that He has finished that work.

John 6, 38, For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but to do the will of Him who sent me. You see, we believe that there was a covenant made between the Father and Son in eternity. We call it the covenant of redemption. An agreement between the Father and the Son where the Son agreed to do the work of salvation. God decreed to save a people for Himself.

And the Son agrees to carry out that work of redemption by a perfect life and atoning death and resurrection from the dead. That was the work that had been given to the Son.

[7:48] That was the work about which Jesus could say, It is finished. It is completed. It is accomplished. The salvation of God's people. The redemption of the elect. And so, just after He says in John 6, 38, I've come from heaven to do the will of Him who sent me.

He says this, And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given me, but raise them up at that last day. For My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Glorious truth that Jesus came, that none of God's children might be lost. That all who look to the Father, that all who look to the Son, might find salvation in Him.

God sent His Son into the world to save sinners, the chosen people to be called His children. He sent a Son that none of them might be lost. And what a glorious thing.

Excuse me, what a glorious thing then. As Jesus hangs on the cross, He's able to say it is finished. That work the Father gave me to do. Excuse me, of saving His people, that work is finished.

[9:01] He accomplished it by keeping the law that we failed to keep.

He suffered and died in our place, suffering the punishment that we deserve to suffer. God pouring out the wrath we deserved on His own Son. That's what we remember here tonight.

The death of Christ. Christ. Accomplishing that work by rising from the dead, by the power of the Spirit. Conquering death. Removing its sting for all who trust in Him. It's not news to you if you've been coming here for any period of time.

But what a good thing for us. The Lord knew we would need to remember. And so He's given us a sacrament, an ordinance by which we can do that very thing. Remember the completed work of Christ.

And so if you tonight are trusting in this Christ, if you have looked to the Son, and are resting in Him, then Christ has finished that work.

[10:06] You can rest in that tonight. He's finished that work on your behalf. Just before He breathes His last on a cross, He's able to say, it's done.

But you say, what about His resurrection? What about His burial? Then the resurrection, the ascension? Those things aren't finished yet when Jesus said that. At this point, these things are as good as accomplished.

Jesus has come to the point of death, and nothing can stop the resurrecting power of God through the work of the Spirit. In fact, of course, God's purpose can't be thwarted at all.

The Son knows that if it has been decreed, it will come to pass. And so, it is finished. Even back on the night in which He was betrayed, we read in John 17, He could say that the work was finished then, knowing that God would bring these things to pass.

Well, that's what's finished. The redemption of God's people. Your salvation. That work has been accomplished. So, why should that matter to us? In the second place tonight, what does it matter to us?

[11:14] In the first place, why it matters, it means that we are secure. We who are in Christ can't be snatched out of His hand. If it's a finished, complete, perfect work, then those trusting in that work, trusting in the One who did that work, can have complete confidence.

Are you tonight a sinner, trusting in the work of what Christ has done on your behalf, then know that that work has been accomplished and your trust is not misplaced.

Listen to how J.C. Ryle puts it. We rest our souls on a finished work if we rest them on the work of Jesus Christ the Lord.

We need not fear that either sin or Satan or law shall condemn us at the last day. When we look at our own works, we may well be ashamed of their imperfections, but when we look at the work of Christ, we may feel peace.

And so we don't have to go about wondering, feeling guilty, fearful, ashamed. We go through life with peace and confidence in the finished work of our glorious Savior.

[12:25] Savior. And it's true, not just on a generic level of God saving all of His people, it's true for you individually that God has come to save you.

If God has completed His promised work of redemption for all of His children, He will faithfully apply that work by the work of the Holy Spirit to each one of His children. We who are so poor at finishing what we begin can take great comfort in God who is faithful that He will finish what He begins.

Philippians 1.6 Being confident of this, that He who began a good work and you will carry it on to completion. Completion. That's that word.

Finished. Or that related word. Until the day of Christ Jesus. It's because of Jesus' work finished at the cross that God will be faithful to finish the work begun in each one of us personally.

He's not going to just bring you partway and then leave you hanging and not bring you safely home. He will bring you all the way home. He will finish that work. Just as surely as Jesus finished the work of redemption, your salvation will be completed as well.

[13:38] So what comfort there is here for the Christian. What confidence. What a glorious thing we remember tonight in the death of Christ. We come to be spiritually fed. That's good spiritual food.

That you are secure. That nothing can snatch you out of God's hand. Because the work that He's done is finished. You're as safe now as you will be in heaven in glory.

There's a line in one of the hymns that we've learned recently. More happy, but not more secure.

The glorified spirits in heaven. The glorified saints in heaven.

More happy, yes, because they're not still weighed down with temptation and trouble in this life. But they're not more secure. You're just as safe as they are if you're in Christ.

It matters to us because it means that we're secure. It also matters because it means that we can contribute nothing to our salvation. It's important to be reminded here of our complete inability to bring anything at all that's pleasing to God and anything that can gain us acceptance with our God. [14:47] The work is done. It's perfect. It doesn't need anything added to it to try to contribute to it as to imply that what Jesus did isn't good enough. That it's not a perfect, finished work.

What folly, when we try to add our good works to Jesus' perfect work, may we rest in Him tonight apart from any work or boasting of our own. It's also important for us because it gives us hope for each day.

The fact that the work of Christ is finished, is complete, is enough to get us out of bed in the morning and to give us strength to face each day. It's what enables us to overcome each obstacle as it arises on our path.

I don't have to earn favor with God today. Jesus has done it. I will seek to please Him in all that I do, but I can't add to that work, that perfect work of Jesus. And when I do slip and fall and sin, I know that sin has been paid for by the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

I know that when I go to the cross to find forgiveness, I will find it. I know that I don't have to bear that guilt each day. Now that's not a license to sin.

[15:59] It won't encourage you to sin if your heart is in the right place. Some would accuse us of that. Well, if you think you're always secure and can always find forgiveness, then you'll just carry on in your sin.

No, we who know what it is to have the perfect finished work of Christ on our behalf will want the opposite. We'll want to live for Him. We'll want to praise Him. We'll want to honor Him.

And all that we say and do will be devastating to us when we sin against Him. It's not a license to sin. But what a glory to know that when we do, we come and we will find forgiveness because of what Jesus has done for us.

The worst trouble you face tomorrow cannot undo what Christ has done. It's finished. It's complete. Whatever happens to you tomorrow or the next day or next week or next month or next year, whatever happens in the world around us, upheaval, governments collapsing, our own nation could fall.

And yet Jesus' work is still finished. And you are secure. Come what may. When you wonder if you'll make it through the day, you can remember that He who began a good work will complete it.

[17:11] We need not fear. Come what may. Because it is finished. John Calvin goes so far as to say, it was chiefly for the purpose of giving peace and tranquility to our consciences that He pronounced this word, it is finished.

Revel in that peace. Find great comfort in it. Praise God for it. Don't deny yourself that comfort by wallowing in unnecessary worry and guilt and fear. The work is finished.

If you don't know tonight what it is to be trusting in this Christ and the finished work that He has done, you can be just as secure as the saint that's sitting next to you tonight.

You can be just as secure as the ones who have gone on to glory. The work is done. All that remains for you is to come and to trust in Jesus. To put your faith in Him.

To believe in Him. You know the truth of the Scriptures. You know the Gospel. You've heard it again and again. You might even believe it to be true. You believe that Jesus came and died for sinners, but you still haven't trusted in Christ.

[18:21] You still haven't said, God, give me that gift of faith. Make that work of Christ apply to me. But right here, right now, tonight, you can pray to God where you sit and you can beg Him to come and change your heart and to give you that gift of faith.

And what a glorious thing that anyone who comes to Him will not be cast out. Any who come in genuine repentance and faith will be received.

And God will take you into His hand and nothing will be able to grasp you out of His hand. You'll rest secure. You'll be able to go home tonight and lay your head on your pillow and for once in your life, for the first time in your life, be able to go to sleep in perfect peace.

Because you're trusting in this finished work, this glorious Savior who has finished the work. Are you tired tonight of fear and doubt, guilt and worry?

You can leave it all behind by trusting in the Savior. The work has been done. Why won't you come and trust in this glorious Savior? Come to Jesus and find their sure refuge.

[19 : 32] Dear saints, what we remember tonight in our Lord's death is cause for great rejoicing and confidence. What should our response be?

Praise God. Thank the Lord. Praise Him for what He has done for us. What a marvelous thing we remember tonight. May our hearts be filled to overflowing.

understanding that Jesus has done it and so it is done. We rest ourselves tonight in the completed work of our Lord and Savior. So as we partake of these elements that are before us tonight, symbolizing the body and blood of Christ, let us remember that they are a picture of a complete and perfect salvation that is ours through faith in Christ.

A finished work. And so may our faith be strengthened tonight. May our courage be renewed. I love how the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism puts it.

Listen to it. What is your only comfort in life and in death? That I am not my own but belong body and soul and life and death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

[20:44] He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood and has set me free from 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.

We couldn't confess that tonight. We couldn't affirm that tonight if Jesus' work was incomplete, if it wasn't finished. But the work is complete and what we've just read is true.

So when Jesus says, it is finished, we say, praise the Lord. That work is finished. And so let us take our hymnals and sing of this glorious truth in hymn 187.

The hymn that takes this saying of Jesus, it is finished and praises our God for it, exhorts us with it. Let's sing it together to God's praise.

[illegible]