

# It Is Finished

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[0:00] Have you been watching the Olympics? If you have, you've probably seen a lot of athletes crossing the finish line. Sometimes they crash, and the only way off the mountain is past that finish line.

And so they come in totally defeated and dejected. Sometimes they come in with joy, exhausted and triumphant. The great work of their life, for some of them, is now over, and they've won. And whether it's Germany or Austria or America, part of you is happy for them. They raced so well, and they've won.

Well, for the joy that was set before him, Jesus endured the cross, scorning its shame. And he crossed that finish line, and he did it with a shout of victory.

We just sang it. Finished was that victory cry. And you can read of that in John chapter 19. I would invite you there. John chapter 19. And we are going to read just three verses.

[1:10] We'll begin reading at verse 28. So John 19, verse 28. Don't think I need to set the context for you. Jesus is now on the cross.

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. And with that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. This passage takes place at the very end of our Lord's suffering.

He's now finished the work. He's now finished the race. And he needs a drink. And so from a choked throat that must have been nothing but a gasped whisper, he says, I am thirsty.

He has one last thing to say. And he needs a voice in order to say it. And he needs a drink to give his voice power. And so after he drinks a small bit, he says, It is finished.

[2:36] Sometimes we sing, It is finished. It is finished. Oh, what pleasure those words afford. Heavenly blessings without measure flow from Christ our Lord.

Well, we only have two points this evening. The first is what was finished. And the second we will see later. So what was finished? What did Jesus mean when he cried out those victorious words? Well, as we read the passage and its context, we see that it meant that the whole Old Testament message, the whole Old Testament scripture was finished, was completed, was fulfilled.

It was accomplished. And you see that in verse 28, knowing that now all was completed. That's the same word as finished. And so that the scriptures would be fulfilled. So what was Jesus thinking about as he suffered?

Well, I'm sure he was thinking about many things, but here at the end, he was thinking about the Old Testament. And with a victorious thought, he now saw that it was all fulfilled.

[3:44] It was all completed. Everything that was said about him has now come to its finished point. And so from the first to the last, from Adam to Zechariah, the law, the prophets, not a single promise, not a single prophecy, not a single psalm or sacrifice, not a single type.

From the Passover lamb to Solomon's temple, nothing was undone. It was all fulfilled in this one person.

So Jesus looked back on it all, and he knew at long last that the entire Old Testament was fulfilled. It was completed.

Now think about that. There are 39 books in the Old Testament, but there is only one person. Every story, every picture, every event is moving to him, moving to this moment, moving to this place, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on the cross, and now at long last, Jesus has completed his sufferings.

There is nothing to do but die, and he's crossing the finish line, and nothing of that whole Old Testament that was prophesied about this Messiah is left undone.

[5:04] So Charles Spurgeon said one time, I will give the Old Testament to any wise man, and I always say, take this. This is a problem. Go home and construct in your imagination a character that will fulfill all that's foreshadowed here.

So take the Old Testament, everything that it says about the coming Messiah, and you construct a character that will fulfill all of those things that we see here. So remember, he must be a prophet like Moses.

For Moses said, another prophet will come like me. And he must be a champion like Joshua. He must be Aaron and Melchizedek. Two different priestly lines.

He must somehow fulfill both of them. He must be David and Solomon, Noah, who rode on the waves, and Jonah, who went under the waves.

Judah and Joseph. He must be the lamb that was slain, and he must also be the scapegoat that walked away that was not slain. He must be the sacrifice, and he must be the priest.

[6:09] He must be the altar and the tabernacle. He must be God, and he must be man. He must be the suffering servant, and yet the glorious son of man that Daniel promised.

He must be David's son, and he must be David's Lord. He must be both God and sacrifice. Well, who could have figured that out?

Could you? Could we have ever figured out that? So the whole Old Testament, it comes to this place, to the cross, to Jesus on the cross, exactly here, and so Jesus is able to survey the whole Old Testament, the entire landscape, all the hills, all the valleys, and say it's all fulfilled.

It's finished. Well, it's more than that that was finished. All the Old Testament sacrifices were now finished, and that's what so caught the heart and the imagination of the author to the Hebrews, and he writes, the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves. For this reason, it can never, by those same sacrifices, repeated endlessly, year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. There were endless sacrifices in the Old Testament.

[7:31] Seven kinds of sacrifices, and just Leviticus in the first seven chapters, and then more beside that. All of these different kinds of sacrifices, repeated year after year after year, day after day after day.

So how many lambs? How many bulls? How many pigeons and doves were slain, and still sin remained?

So how many scapegoats walked out into the desert, signifying that sin was leaving the people, and yet sin remained?

How many gallons of blood? How many cutthroats? How many rung necks? And yet sin remained? And the worshipers knew it.

The worshipers knew the blood of animals can never take away sin. But Christian, here's a better place to stand. Here's a place where consciences are cleansed, where we can really enter into the presence of God with confidence.

[8:40] confidence. That is your privilege, to walk into the presence of God with confidence because of Jesus Christ and what he has done. So with this once-for-all sacrifice, Jesus finished all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

Well, he finished man's work to appease God's wrath. death. So Christ not only put to end all the sacrifices of the Old Testament from a different perspective, we could say that he put it into all the sacrifices of all the false religions, of all the man's ideas of sacrifices.

And what I mean by this, we heard about this last Sunday. You know, those rivers in India, those holy rivers where you can go down once every four years and you can have your sins washed away.

And there they go. Millions and millions of people into those rivers and yet sin remains. And so they come back.

But let one of those Hindus come to Christ and that puts an end to all the sacrifices. It puts an end of ever going to that river again because sins are washed away in Jesus Christ.

[9:57] We saw all those temples and all those places of worship and sacrifice and offering. And those are all men's ways of trying to be right. Trying to cover up what I am, what I have done, trying to hear that judgment ring from the throne that says, not guilty, not guilty in my sight.

That's all that. All that religion is man's effort to get God to approve of who I am and what I have done. But let any sinner, Muslim, Hindu, a so-called Christian who is coming to church, he is doing the right thing, he is doing what he is supposed to, he is giving his money in order to get God's approval to be right with him, let him come to Christ and all those sacrifices come to an end. The final and the last sacrifice has been made. So hear those well-worn words again.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, as a propitiation through faith in his blood. So who offered up this lamb?

Well, it was God. And he offered and he presented him as a sacrifice of atonement. What is atonement? What does that mean? It's found in Romans chapter 4, that word atonement or propitiation.

[11 : 28] Well, it means the turning away of wrath. It means the appeasing of God's righteous wrath against sin. So here is a sacrifice presented by God as a propitiation, as a way to turn aside his wrath.

Now men instinctively know that someone has to suffer for their sins. Either they do or a substitute must. And so they sacrifice and they sacrifice trying to appease God, but God is not appeased. Not one of those sacrifices can do, whether commanded by him or not commanded by him. Not one of those sacrifices can vindicate his justice. Not one of those sacrifices can appease God's law. The law of God. It's as holy and as vigorous and as righteous as God himself. It's as holy and unrelenting as God's justice.

And so every sacrifice, it examines and consumes and still demands more. But then the law comes to this sacrifice on the cross.

[12 : 50] And it came to Jesus and the law drinks and is satisfied. And God's justice is vindicated. He has hushed the law's loud thunder.

He has quenched Mount Sinai's flames. So that's what is finished. Not only the sacrifices but God's demand of justice.

The demands of justice. The demands of God's law were satisfied for those who trust in Jesus Christ. And so for them, the debt was paid down to the very last penny.

So Jesus Christ took the mortgage and he burned it and now we can cry, I'm debt free because of what Jesus Christ has done. And so Christian, rejoice.

Rejoice. It is finished. It is finished. There's nothing left of God's wrath for you. There's nothing left of that strict judgment, that unrelenting holy justice left for you because Christ endured all the pains.

[13 : 55] Christ took all the agonies that his people should have suffered and so it is finished. That's more than anyone can say in hell.

That's more than anyone in hell could ever say. When the damned have been there ten thousand years, as dark as night, with burning tongues and covered in shame, they will not be able to say it is almost over.

It is almost done. It's never almost done for the sinner in hell. But for those who are in Christ, there's not a drop of hell left.

There's not a shade of night left. There's not a penny to pay. There's not a single pain of hell to endure because Jesus paid it all. And all to him I owe.

Sin had left a crimson stain and he washed it white as snow too. So what else was finished? Well, Christ's obedience was finished.

[15 : 07] This was the final lap on his long race of obedience. And now he's come to the last moment. He obeyed his parents.

Infinite God submitted to a mom and a dad. And for 33 years he obeyed. He obeyed his heavenly father. I always do the will of my father.

He could say. If anyone has a sin in me, tell me what it is. He could say that to his enemies. And he went through Gethsemane and it was the hour of his greatest test.

Will he submit to death? And he says, not my will, but your will be done. And so it's on the end of that.

At the end of Gethsemane, he goes to the cross. And now it's at the end. And there's nothing left to do but to die. There's only one last act of obedience and that's to give up his life.

[16 : 07] He's lived in obedience and now he will die in obedience. Obedience. And as he dies in obedience to his father, he finishes our righteousness.

He finishes our righteousness and now he is a perfect substitute. He's exactly what you and I need as sinners. We need someone to die for us and we need someone to give us a righteousness because we have none of our own.

So what does God require? Not only sinlessness, not only innocence of sin, but perfect righteousness and that Jesus Christ gives to all those who trust in him.

So Jesus was like a woman. She's quilting together a quilt or sewing together a shirt or a blanket or something. She works and she works and at long last she snips the final thread and she's able to stretch it out and say it is finished.

So his long life, his 33 years of weaving a robe of righteousness and now it comes to an end and he snips it and it's finished and that's our righteousness.

[17 : 19] He snips the final thread and he says here Father this is for my people. I don't want my bride to be naked any longer. She will wear my righteousness.

I don't want her covered in shame. She will wear my glory. She will wear my obedience. And so here we are, Christian. Here we are, covered in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Beautiful to our husband. Beautiful to our father. And it's all because of him. We don't have to add a single pocket. We don't have to add a single sleeve.

We don't have to make any alterations. It's perfect and it's finished and Jesus gives it to us. Well, what else is finished?

Satan's power, the fear of death. Jesus came to destroy the devil. He came to take away the power of Satan over death.

[18 : 24] And he does it by taking the sting of death for us, by becoming sin for us. So death came against him. And death shot its fiery arrows into his heart.

And it pierced him all the way through. It pinned him to the cross. And he could not escape until he had drained the poison dry. But drain it, he did.

So now we can say, where, oh death, is your sting? Why? Because he took the sting for us. And he said it is finished. So what is death now?

It's a defeated foe. It's terrible in some ways. We do not minimize it, and we don't call it things it's not. It is an enemy. It is the final enemy.

But really, it is now, Jesus has rendered it nothing more than a nightmare. You wake up from a nightmare, and you shake it off, and you remember it no more.

[19 : 28] And one day, all of God's children will do that. They'll shake off death, and it will be a thing of the past, all because of what Jesus has done.

Jesus has taken captivity captive. He has crushed death to death. And so he looks over the bodies of his foes. He looks over the bodies of those who opposed us, and now he says the battle's over, it is finished.

And at the end of the battle, he takes a drink and says the battle is over, it is finished. Now, our second point, it must be very brief, and here it is. Here is a place to rest.

Here is a place to rest. So if you're lost, where will you stand when you come into judgment? judgment? It is appointed for man to die once, and then to face the judgment. So what will you come to God with?

[20 : 36] What will your defense be? And we don't want to put this in, I don't want to paint this picture as if that's just a problem for a long time in the future.

Even now you are in God's balances. even now you live and walk in his presence, and he judges, and he decides you. You are in the scales, and if you are lost, you are found wanting.

For you have not loved him with all of your heart. And that's what God requires. Because that's what his glory demands. That law is not arbitrary.

It is what his glory and his prestige and his honor and his power demands. That you love him with all of your heart. And you have not done that. And so you're in the scales, and you're found wanting. But soon he will bring you into his very presence. And then he will decide. And he will carry out his judgment. So what will you stand on?

[21 : 44] What are you standing on now? Where are you resting even now? What are you offering up to God as your defense? Do you have anything like Jesus? Do you have anything that compares to Jesus?

Do you have any righteousness that compares to Jesus' righteousness? Because God only accepts one righteousness, and that's perfect, and there's been only one perfect righteousness, and that's

Jesus' righteousness.

So do you have any that compares to him? Do you have a sacrifice? He was a complete sacrifice. He has a finished work. He has a complete righteousness.

He has the approval of God. He is God's way of salvation. What do you have that you will put in Jesus' place? What do you have that compares to him?

And whatever it must be, I must say, come off of it. Come down and climb onto a rock that is actually approved by God. A righteousness that God has vindicated, has declared righteous and acceptable in my sight.

[22 : 52] So go to him. Go to his finished salvation. This was so great about Christianity. We offer a gospel, good news of a finished salvation for sinners.

And he doesn't ask for worthiness. He asks for willingness. So do you need saved? Here is a savior. Do you want to be saved?

Then come and freely take. Christian, here is a place for you to rest too. Here is a place for you to rest.

Jesus has given you a complete salvation. Rest your soul here. Rejoice in what Jesus has done for you. So take a deep breath.

Your works for salvation are over. Now your good works are not over. I don't mean that. But your works for salvation are over. All the works are done.

[23 : 50] Everything you need, Christ has given you as a free gift. You didn't earn it. You couldn't have purchased it. You couldn't have done anything to make yourself worthy of it. Jesus loved you and gave you this gift.

So tonight, as we take the bread and the cup, take Jesus. Take Jesus for yourself. Take him and enjoy him. rejoice in what your lover has given to you.

Take him and enjoy him.