

It is Finished!

John 19:1-37

Key Verse: 19: 30:

“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

God created a beautiful world where there is no sin and put mankind in it to be fruitful and have dominion (Genesis 1:28). But in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan’s temptation and stepped out from the kingdom of God into the kingdom of Satan and into darkness. God was so sad that this happened and could have destroyed mankind (Gen 6:6), but instead, He made a promise to send the Messiah and Savior of the World (Gen 3:15). This promised Messiah will destroy Satan’s work and rescue us from sins’ consequences. Jesus of Nazareth was born as fulfillment of this promise. After He was born, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the One born King of the Jews? We have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him (Mat 2:1-2).”

The Prophet wrote about Him, “He grew up before God like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by Him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed (Is 53:2:5).

This Jesus was nailed to the cross for our sins where he proclaimed, “it is finished.” I pray that God speak to our heart through this message and help us hear Jesus say – it is finished!

Part 1. Jesus was sentenced to die for our sins (1-16a)

Look at verse 1. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

The religious leaders of Israel arrested Jesus and sentenced Him to death. They had even determined his fate before he stood trial. Because the Jews had no authority to administer the death penalty (18:31), they brought Jesus before Pilate the Roman governor, and pressured him to execute Jesus. On that faithful night when Jesus was arrested, He went through five different trials standing before Anas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod and now he stood before Pilate for a second time. In verse 1 Pilate had Jesus flogged though he found nothing wrong with Jesus (John 18:38). Pilate was under pressure to execute Jesus because the Jewish High Priest Caiaphas had advised the people that it would be good if one man died for the nation (John 18:14).

Pilate attempted to release Jesus through a Jewish tradition that allowed one criminal go free at the Jewish High Festival – the Passover, but the people asked the release of a man called Barabbas instead of Jesus (John 18:40). Pilate succumbs to pressure and had Jesus flogged in hope that the people will pity

him and let Him go (John 19:1). He flogged Jesus mercilessly treating Him shamefully. In this way Pilate acted so unjustly by allowing Jesus whom he believed to be innocent to be abused and mistreated so inhumanly by his soldiers.

In 19:2, The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They mocked Jesus bowing down before Him and slapped Him in the face again and again. Jesus submitted himself to this pain and endured the shame for our sakes and to fulfill Scriptures, "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting (Isaiah 50:6)." He became a kernel of wheat and fell to the ground dying to produce many seeds (John 12:24). Stephen Krocheski mentions this principle in his testimony yesterday when he said he wants to be a kernel of wheat that falls to the ground to die and produce many seed. Let's pray for Stephen and ourselves to emulate Jesus by falling to the ground and dying so that we can all bear lots of fruit in the coming years. Jesus laid down His life voluntarily – it was not forcefully taken away from him, but he laid down His life so that He can take it up again (John 10:17). He has authority both to lay it down and to take it up again.

It wasn't Jewish hatred or Roman injustice that led to Jesus's death on the cross, but Jesus did this of His own free will after praying all night in the garden. Father I know that you hear me, take this cup from me...but not my will, but your will be done. Jesus intentionally obeyed the will of the Father by laying down His life as the good shepherd lay down his life for the sheep (John 10:11). It was not an easy decision to make, but Jesus obey the will of God to lay down His life because He loves God and He loves and wants to save us. So, he patiently endured all suffering, scorning the shame because He was looking forward to His reward in God. And though, soldiers whipped Jesus without mercy, mocked him and struck him again and again, spitting on Him and making a spectacle Jesus did not hold back or change His mind – he remained resolute and steadfast in his mission.

Look at verse 4-5. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

Pilate wanted to reason with the Jews and find a way to release Jesus. He should have released Jesus in the first place since he found no basis for a charge against Him. He should never have flogged Jesus if he knew Him to be innocent? What governor in their right minds punish an innocent person? Every Sunday Christian all over the world read the Apostle's Creed, and we remember that Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate – was crucified, dead and buried. Jesus suffered under His watch because he refused to do the right thing and to follow the way of truth.

While it is easy for us to stand in judgement against Pilate, we must examine our own hearts too for when we refuse to do the right things, we are as guilty as Pilate because of our deliberate sins and hardness of hearts. This is exactly why Jesus died on the cross. Our generation is gradually hardening - our hearts reject God words and His truth. This generation has gone from postmodern to post-truth. We have become like Pilate who wants to walk the middle ground without any absolutes – no moral compass by which we operate. Pilate thought he could appease the Jews by humiliating Jesus - beating him and mocking him and have him released afterwards but this was a grave mistake which he soon found out.

How did the Jewish leaders respond to Pilate's ploy? Did they appreciate that Pilate disgraced their enemy and returned to their homes satisfied? No! Look at verse 6. As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." Recognizing the religious leaders were blood thirsty Pilate attempted to shift the blame of Jesus' execution on the Jewish leaders. He didn't want to bear the guilt of crucifying an innocent person. Crucifixion was an extremely painful, slow and shameful death reserved for the worst criminals, for slaves, and for rebels; Jesus was none of these, and Pilate knew it. But the Jewish enemies of Jesus wanted not only to kill Jesus but also to discredit and humiliate him to the maximum extent.

When Pilate saw how stubborn they were, he dared them to usurp Roman authority, "You take Jesus and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." But the Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God." The religious leaders were probably appealing to Leviticus 24:16, "anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name they are to be put to death." But Jesus did not violate this law, for He spoke the truth about His divine nature (John 5:17; 8:58) though the Jews didn't believe it.

When Pilate heard the words of the Jewish leaders, he was even more afraid. He wanted to free Jesus by any means, but His previous compromise complicates any effort to remedy the situation. When Pilate demanded Jesus' identity and origin, Jesus was silent. Some commentators see this as fulfillment of Isa 53:7 which says, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

In his frustration, Pilate said to Jesus, "Do you refuse to speak to me? "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you!" Jesus replied, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." Jesus was not intimidated by Pilate's power because God's authority overrules all human authority. Jesus told Pilate that the one who brought Him to Pilate was guilty of the greater sin. Both Pilate and Caiaphas were sinning against God, but Caiaphas' sin was even greater.

Look at verse 12. From that time on Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." The Jewish leaders opposed Pilate's attempt to release Jesus and when they thought, Pilate may side with Jesus and let Him go, they blackmailed him by questioning his loyalty to the emperor. If you let this man go you are no friend of Caesar. Their strategy worked; because Pilate gave in to them, perhaps out of fear the Jews will report him to Caesar for releasing a man who calls himself a king.

Let's read verse 13 together. When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). Pilate sat on the judgment seat against Jesus yet he still wanted to get Jews to cooperate with him. "Here is your king." Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take Him away! Crucify him!"

Shall I crucify your king? Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar." The chief priests answered.

The religious leaders were being disingenuous? Jews despised Roman rule so how could these leaders claim any allegiance or friendship to Caesar? This was plain hypocrisy, but in their hatred for Jesus they were willing to claim allegiance to Rome and to Caesar.

Under pressure Pilate gave in to Jewish demand to have King Jesus executed on a cross though he knew Jesus was innocent of any crimes. The Bible consistently clears Jesus of sin. This is important because for Jesus to be the Lamb of God he had to be completely holy and set apart from sin. Therefore Jesus' sentence to death seemed even more unjust and wrong but Isaiah 53:10 tells us that it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer...it wasn't a mistake that King Jesus who is innocent of any crimes was condemned and sentenced to die. This is what the prophets have said would happen to the King of the Jews. The Messiah had to suffer and be rejected and die for the sin of His people. His sentence is not a mistake or the result of human hatred or compromise, but God sent Jesus into the world to be the Lamb of God to take away our sin – for this purpose Jesus must be condemned and sentenced to die in our place.

Part 2. Jesus was Crucified on a cross for our sins (16b-27)

Let's read verse 16 - 17. "Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. Carrying His own cross, he went out to the place of the skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle."

Jesus was condemned in the previous part. Crucifixion is very pain, shameful and cursed way to die. Gal 3:13b says, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." This is the kind of death that Jesus was sentenced to die, so Jesus carried His own cross to the place of execution (place of the skull). This cross was heavy and difficult to bear. We know from Luke's gospel that a soldier compelled Simon of Cyrene to carry this cross because Jesus kept falling under the weight of the heavy cross.

Everyone has their own cross. The cross is an indispensable part of the Christian life. It is difficult to carry the cross, not only because it is heavy to bear, but also because it is an instrument of death. Despite these Jesus was resolute to carry His own cross and in this way left us an example of patient endurance and faithful obedience to the will of the Father."

As Jesus was carrying His own cross to the place of the skulls, hundreds of people thronged the streets in Jerusalem to witness this unfolding drama. John poignantly captures the ironies inherent in this tragedy. Jesus' disciples had abandoned him and run to save their own lives (13:38). Carrying out their duty, soldiers gave Jesus marching orders, yet they were oblivious – even indifferent towards who Jesus is. Pilate knew Jesus is innocent, but didn't understand who He was. The crowd couldn't care about Jesus, nor His identity as Israel's Messiah. A week previously, they hailed Jesus as Son of David, and now they joined with their leaders to crucify Jesus. The priests were the most blind of all. They totally lost sight of everything good, seeking to kill Jesus and stop His teachings that exposed their sins and threaten their status. Although we were not physically there, we are not better than all these people and might have demanded Jesus' crucifixion like the crowd, compromised like Pilate, or saved ourselves like Jesus' disciples did if we were present at that time. These things show the sinfulness of mankind for all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). We all need grace and forgiveness from God.

John describes the crucifixion in only one sentence. There they crucified him, and with Him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle (Vs 17). Two criminals were crucified on either side of Jesus with

Jesus in the middle. As if they wanted to make Him the worst of the bunch. This fulfills the prophecy in Isaiah 53 where the Bible says he was numbered among transgressors (Isa 53:12). Apart from the shame, crucifixion is excruciatingly painful. Executioners nail limbs of those being executed to beams of wood and erect the crosses with bodies hanging on the cross beams and bar supported only by three nails. As the weight of the body pulling down on the nail it becomes excruciatingly painful. More than this, the way the body is configured on the cross, makes breathing increasingly difficult until victims die of asphyxiation (that is a lack of oxygen).

Look at verse 19-21. 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, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

Pilate's written notice was in the three prominent languages of the day – Aramaic the language of the Jews, Latin, the official language of the Romans and Greek the lingua franca of 1st century. Jesus' enemies thought they had finished him, but even in death, God proclaims Jesus king of the Jews. God communicates a powerful message in the languages of the day that Jesus is royalty – He is the King of the Jews and the Savior of the world. When the chief priests read the title, they were unhappy and approached Pilate in protest wanting Jesus' crime rewritten as a false claim to kingship, but Pilate refused to change this title of Jesus. He dismissed them by saying, "What I have written, I have written." It was not actually Pilate's idea, but it was God that made Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews!

Look at verse 23-24. 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 that said,

"They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."

So, this is what the soldier did.

The soldiers had no compassion toward the dying and were only concerned about what they would get from dying Jesus, it was the common practice for a soldier to get the clothes of those that were crucified, so while Jesus and the other two crucified men hung on the cross, a soldier divided his garment and cast lots to see who will get Jesus' clothes. A common theme that runs throughout this passage is fulfillment of Scriptures. Jesus' shame and suffering on the cross is by God's Sovereign will because someone must pay the debt of our sins but this debt is far greater than we can pay, but Jesus could because he had limitless credit before God Almighty – for he has no sin...He has life in Him and that life is the light of mankind (John 1:4)

Look at verses 25-27. 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, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son."

Four women stood in contrast to the soldiers. These women stood by Jesus until the end and became eyewitnesses of His crucifixion. The first woman mentioned is Mary - Jesus' mother. We can only imagine the incredible grief she had while helplessly watching her son suffer and die unjustly. Many years earlier

prophet Simeon accurately predicted in the temple – “A sword will pierce your very soul (Luke 2:35).” Mary was feeling that sword at that very moment and Jesus knowing her agony provided a means to comfort and protect Mary. Jesus directed his disciple John to take care of Mary. Even while suffering in agony, Jesus demonstrated his care for his mother and from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Part 3. Jesus died on the cross for our sins (28-37)

Later knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of 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.

Jesus waited until all things had been finished. Up until this time, he had not taken any drink to quench His thirst or numb the excruciating pain he was feeling. He quietly took all the pain, bore all sufferings and endured unbearable shame. But when everything was finished as Jesus hung on the cross with nail-pierced hands and feet, he requested a drink so that the Scripture may be fulfilled. Even in His execution Jesus resolved to obey and fulfill the Scriptures exactly. When He said, “I am thirsty,” A jar of 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. This fulfilled the words of the prophets in Psalm 69:21 which says, “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”

Look at verse 30. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Jesus’ focus was to finish his mission to fulfill the Scriptures and to see that God’s will is done even in His death Jesus was more concerned about God’s will being accomplished than to numb His pain. Jesus obeys Scripture to the point of death on a cross – He learned obedience from what He suffered (Heb 5:8). John 4:34 says, “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.” Jesus embraced the will of the Father in order that he may finish the work of salvation according to the promises of God in the Bible. He became the pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2)

His declaration – it is finished is a powerful conclusion to a glorious life. Jesus in all of glory is full of grace and truth. He is the light of the world...the Lamb of God and the Way to the Father! He finished what no one else could accomplish. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise (Rev 5:12)! The sting of death is neutralized, and the power of sin is broken. Jesus’ trials and suffering is forever ended! The reign of sin conquered and now is ushered in a new era of God’s kingdom reign among people. Jesus leaves us a good example of how to approach our mission given to us by God; I want to finish my mission by God’s grace even if it means I experience the fellowship of His suffering and become like Him in His death. Last night Bobae Song said I don’t like MD, but then she added, I am crucified with Jesus and no longer live but Christ lives in me...

Jesus said it is finished! By declaring it is finished, Jesus proclaims victory over sin and His control over His circumstances. With that He bowed His head and gave up his spirit. This is Jesus submission to God in death even as He had done to the Father in His life.

Thank God that Jesus finished the work of salvation! Because Jesus did this, we are free from our sins and can become children of God with heavenly inheritance in the kingdom of God! Our debt of sins is forgiven and names written in the book of life in heaven. Praise God for such marvelous grace of Jesus!

From verse 31-37, the religious leaders wanted to make sure Jesus and those crucified with Him die before the Jewish Passover ceremony. Because the next day was a High Sabbath, the Jewish leaders requested Pilate to expedite the death process by breaking the legs of those crucified. The soldier therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus and those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his leg. Instead, one of the soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw this has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

Why did Jesus die on the cross? Why did innocent Jesus suffer like this? Couldn't God save us another way? John notes that these things happen so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled: Jesus died on the cross because God's words must be fulfilled.

John mentions two verses of Scripture fulfilled even after Jesus died on the cross. "Not one of his bones will be broken (Ps 22:18)," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." These two events occurred after the death of Jesus and are preserved in Scriptures to confirm the certainty of Jesus' death on the cross setting the stage for His upcoming resurrection and resurrection appearances in John chapter 20 and 21. Sp. Chris will speak on this later this evening.

Jesus was pierced for our transgressions, so that the scriptures can be fulfilled." His sudden flow of blood and water is for us. He shed his blood and water not only for our forgiveness, but also for our sanctification. Jesus must finish the work of our salvation by His death and by His shed blood. Previously people sacrifice animals year after year and sin after sin, but this was a temporary measure until Jesus died on the cross (Heb 9:13-14).

Jesus death on the cross looks so painful, and so tragic. When we only think humanly we wonder of the death of Jesus on the cross is an unnecessary evil, but this is not the case at all. Jesus death is good news! It is good news for all sinners because the wages of our sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Ro 6:23)

In this passage, we learn that God loves us and that He prepared the way for our salvation through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on a cross. The death and resurrection of Jesus provides the way back to the Father. Forgiveness and restored relationship with God that bring us peace is possible only because Jesus finished the work of salvation on the cross. Jesus died in our place according to the Father's will to give us freedom from sin and to bring us into God's everlasting kingdom. May God help us see the Way of salvation through Jesus and walk in this way by faith. Amen!

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