

Reading: John 19:16-37

Theme: 6th saying from the cross ‘It is finished!’

Today we come to this 6th saying of Jesus on the cross (v30) “It is finished.” One writer, Krummacher, says “*These are the greatest and most momentous words that were ever spoken upon earth since the beginning of the world.*” They are not words of defeat, for Jesus does not say “**I** am finished”, but He proclaims triumphantly “**It** is finished.” This is a saying of triumph, of victory! It announces to the whole of history, creation and the universe the triumph of the cross, the complete work was done and would remain so!

This saying is not the last words of a defeated martyr, a cry of despair as His life ebbed from Him, but it is a triumphant battle cry, the words of triumph - as all has been completed. There is a contrast - as to all around Jesus seems to have lost, been defeated and is the loser, but He declares all is won, accomplished and He is the Victor.

His word of suffering “*I thirst*” drew our attention to His person and all He endured. This saying draws our attention to His work and what He accomplished. These words must never be forgotten - the person of the Lord Jesus and His work on the cross are central and eternally important.

Here Jesus says just one word in the original *Tetelestai τετέλεσται*. Yet we need to know what was finished! Jesus would still die, be pierced, be buried, be raised from the dead and ascend back into heaven? Yet such is the certainty of such things that the Lord Jesus speaks in anticipation of His having finished, accomplished something eternally momentous on the cross.

Before all things were created, in eternity when the great plans of salvation and of Creation were entered into, Jesus was given the

work of salvation to accomplish and it is this work that is finished here. When Jesus says this word, it literally means “*It is finished and remains so forever!*” Or “*It stands finished forever.*” The Greeks strove for ‘auditory eloquence’ - aiming to capture a sea of meaning in a word and here the Lord Jesus exceeds them all, as here His vast work is covered in a single word. I want us to see 3 things concerning this work that is described here as “*finished*”:

1. The contents of the work finished.

A number of things were finished. His work was such a vast work that we do not have time to consider it all, but briefly here are 6 areas which were finished by the Lord Jesus on the cross (*which is our longest point*).

A. OT sacrifices, ceremonies and rituals: In OT we have many sacrifices, ceremonies and rituals by which a worshipper of God could approach and be right with Him, so all things they had done wrong (sins) could be dealt with. The sacrifices were of no intrinsic worth in and of themselves to deal with sin – they were animals offered and killed, there was nothing special or mystical about them, but they represented something of real worth e.g. it is made out of plastic type paper, yet a £50 note represents worth and value. All the types, ceremonies and symbols were reminders of and pointers to the need for a sacrifice to be made once and for all to finally deal with sin’s guilt and pollution, so the OT sacrifices etc. were pointing to and drawing down from the once and for all sin offering that had to be made and secure the promise to pay for those made in OT and those OT sacrifices were counted as valid.

There on the cross, in the person and work of the Lord Jesus, we see all the types, sacrifices and ceremonies fulfilled in humanity. All Jesus did there on the cross, finished these types etc. and they became obsolete, worthless - this was shown by the veil in the temple being torn in two from the top to the bottom - the way was

now freely open to an intimate, personal relationship with Almighty God. The writer of the Hebrews enlarges on this in 9:11-14, 25-28. “*once for all... once*” - not again and again as in OT, but Jesus finished the types, sacrifices and ceremonies of OT - we do not have an altar, do not sacrifice Jesus afresh in the communion, for “*It is finished*”. In OT many sacrifices were consumed by fire and in Jesus’ person and work, the fire was taken and then consumed by the sacrifice! OT types etc. are finished here.

B. Sin is dealt and finished with: Sin demands punishment and separation from God - the infinite anger of the holy God is the penalty on sin. Jesus took the accumulated sin, its penalty and guilt of all who will ever trust in Him onto Himself. Jesus was made sin and He was punished - the infinite Son of God, took the infinite punishment for their sin upon Himself. He took our hell in His own body on the cross - all His people’s punishment was taken, not one drop left, not one stroke held back, for all was laid on Him and it is finished with. When we trust Jesus as our Saviour - my, your, personal sin was there, our punishment was paid. There is no judicial punishment from God waiting for any believer, but we are reconciled and accepted in the Beloved Son of God; we have access to God in prayer and have His fatherly love and affection toward us as His children. In His word of triumph, we can join in full of wonder, as we consider **our** sin and say of it and its deserved judgement “*It is finished!*” and remains so forever.

C. Our sin’s condemnation is finished: Our sin is forever finished with when we trust in Christ. Sadly, we are all too aware of this or that sin, the wrong thoughts, desires in our hearts and minds, that we still do wrong. Yet we have been legally divorced from our sin and its guilt. Yes, sin still persists in us, pestering us and trying to get us to embrace it. Remember the work of removing all our sin’s condemnation was finished at Calvary, but

we are still to work it out practically show such in our lives. Yes, there may be sin in us, but as we battle and struggle with it, to overcome it, we can rejoice **its condemnation is not on us**, for it fell on Jesus there on the cross and that is the grave of our sin's condemnation, guilt, power. One day it will be totally silenced there. Our sin was finished there on the cross of Jesus - my sin, your sin, the sin of all who will trust the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour. Is that true of us or are we still unforgiven?

D. The Law is finished: Not only was sin, OT sacrifices and rituals finished with, but so too was the Law. You may question if that means that the 10 Commandments are no longer valid, that we are free to live as we please! The answer is Yes... and No! The 10 Commandments are valid as a rule of life, they teach us what God expects for us, to show us, even as believers, the way we should live. Yet they are of no validity or weight and are finished with in regards earning or adding to our salvation. If we do not believe on Jesus, then we may live as best as we are able; obey God's law and still be lost because we have original sin and any failures by breaking of God's word are not covered and we are guilty of breaking all the Law - even if we break just one. The law of God is good, but acts as a spotlight to show us how short of God's standards we come and how high God's standard of holiness is and so the law curses us.

Yet the Lord Jesus came - not to destroy the Law or put it aside, but to fulfil it perfectly and so fulfil the righteousness it demanded and to give it to His people - Romans 10:4 "*Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness **for everyone who believes.***" Christ's death would have accomplished nothing unless He had perfectly kept God's law. This He did and it has been revealed - Romans 3:21 "*But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.*" (Also read Romans 3:21-31). Our salvation by

keeping the Law has been finished with. In a sense, before Christ died it was “*Do this and live*”, but now with the Holy Spirit in our lives as believers it is “*Live and do this*”.

E. The Devil is finished: as a credible enemy, for his kingdom and power are in a tottering mess. These words are the death toll for Satan, it is a word that put him on death row waiting his end. Yet he is still a vicious enemy and powerful, but his time and power are limited - which is guaranteed by our Lord Jesus defeating him there on the cross – he is finished.

F. Death is finished: this saying here puts an end to death’s tyranny, for in finishing the Law and sin, the Lord Jesus removes death’s sting which the Law provided and He removes the terror of the grave and makes death just the entrance, the doorway to the glorious life in heaven for His people. Yes, the Lord Jesus bowed His head and went into death’s bitterly cold waters, He gave Himself up to its fearful grip, but He destroyed death – we are to note the death of death in the death of Christ - death is a defeated enemy and will one day be totally destroyed when He returns.

Someone may think this is fine words, it’s so easy to say such grand sweeping statements, but what proof can be given that He accomplished this? We see:

2. The credentials showing the work is finished.

If Jesus really finished such great things, how do we know it is so, and how do we know God is satisfied? Again, this is a big area, but I will be very brief! Let’s quickly consider 5 areas and underline Jesus’ work was finished and accepted as such by God.

A. The temple veil was rent in two: When Jesus was dead it was torn from **top to bottom**. No man, did this, but God did, to show **the** sacrifice for sin was accepted and the way was open for all who would, to go to Him.

B. The raising of Jesus from the dead: this showed that Jesus is the Son of God - Romans 1:4 *“who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”* The work done by His Beloved Son was enough and accepted.

C. Christ is exalted: Jesus was exalted back to God’s right hand in heaven - His ascension clearly shows He and His work are accepted, complete and it is of great value to God.

D. God sent His Holy Spirit: He came in His fullness to apply all the worth, virtue and benefits of Christ’s accepted and completed work.

E. The Christian Church: The Church is still in existence after some almost 2000 years and is still preaching Jesus Christ - His person, His completed work - and men, women, boys and girls are still being transformed as they trust Him as their Saviour. Let’s move on quickly and look at:

3. The consequences of His finished work to us.

Ebenezer Wooten was an “eccentric” English evangelist and once held a meeting in a tent at Lidford Brook. The mission was complete and he was helping to take down the tent, when a young man approached him and casually asked *“Mr Wooten, what must I do to be saved?”* *“Too late!”* he said in a matter-of-fact way. *“Too late, my friend, too late!”* It startled the young man who asked *“Surely it’s not too late because the meetings are over?”* *“Yes, my friend”* said Wooten *“it’s too late! You want to know what you must **DO** to be saved; I tell you that you are several hundreds of years too late. The work of salvation is done, finished, completed. It was finished on the cross. Jesus said so with one of the last breaths He drew! What more do you want?”* There was nothing for the young man to **DO** - he realised it and trusted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. Have we realised that too and trusted Jesus as our own Saviour?

After I finished university, I had an interview in London and had to go back to the interviewer's office a bit later that afternoon to be told the outcome of the interview. So, I went to the National Art Gallery nearby. There were many famous painters - some I'd heard of and many of their marvellous paintings and portraits. It would have been a stupid, senseless, insulting thing to get out a painting by numbers art set and alter the paintings, do a little alteration here or there! I just marvelled at these masterpieces and the skill shown by the artists. Yet people insult God by trying to add their own good works, religious feelings, emotions, persecution complexes, ideas etc. to the work of salvation. Yet there is nothing we can do to add to the salvation offered in Christ, **all has been accomplished and finished for ever**. We insult and mock God if we feel we need to "add" anything to what Jesus has accomplished.

Heaven is satisfied, God's outraged holiness and justice has been paid and God would be unjust to demand anything further as a payment for our sins. This word "*It is finished*" should cause and stir up in us as believers a great assurance that "*No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine! Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine, bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.*"

Our sin, all its guilt, condemnation, pollution and power are finished; our hell is finished, our eternal death is finished, our pathetic struggling to be accepted by God through His Law is finished and we are saved by faith which makes all the Lord Jesus finished on the cross ours. It doesn't matter how up or down, weak or strong, emotional or religious we feel, good or bad we have been, we are saved by all Jesus accomplished and finished completely there on the cross of Calvary.

If anyone here or listening online has not trusted the Lord Jesus, they realise you cannot do anything to get salvation from God apart from trusting the Lord Jesus. The gospel calls you to trust in Jesus alone, to see your need of Him and to cast yourself on His mercy, to ask Him to save you from your sin, from hell itself. Amazingly you will not be turned away or cast out, but received and your old sinful, self-centred life will be done with, be finished with forever and God will make you a new creation and His child. Then your eternal destiny and end will be to have an eternal home in heaven, knowing the amazing wonder, love joy, peace and satisfaction that heaven has prepared for ones such as us, which will never end or be finished, but go on for billions and billions of millennia. Yet you will also know wonderful foretastes of such wonders on earth too! The finished work of Jesus on the cross has secured all this for people like you and me – we, who only deserve His fullest punishment forever in Hell. We have every reason to praise Jesus who finished this great work of salvation for the likes of us so that we can share in His glory and joy.