

IT IS FINISHED!

JOHN 19:30

Introduction: This sermon is based on the last words that Jesus spoke on the cross before bowing his head and giving up his Spirit. Thank you, Diane, for reading this passage for us.

Prayer: Lord, as we meditate in your words, the last words you spoke on the cross on this side of resurrection, we pray the Holy Spirit opens our minds and hearts to understand the moment and how that moment, in your life, forms and informs our daily living. We pray these things in the name of Jesus, Amen!

It is finished!

These words spoken by Jesus from the cross echo through the centuries! The words are meaningful because they are spoken for us to hear and for God to know that Jesus has finished the work that he, the Father, did in the person of Jesus. His work is finished. As the songs goes,

“he lived to die, rejected and alone. He took the fall and thought of us, above all”

He died so that we may be saved.

This is the moment when the Scriptures are fulfilled. The grand plan of salvation which we hear for the first time in Genesis 3:15, then throughout the prophets is finished. Yes, Jesus finished his

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work on the cross. It was not easy. It took the incarnate God in Jesus to do it. Matthew speaks of Jesus as our Emmanuel, God with us.

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”
which means, “God is with us.”¹(Matthew 1:22:23 NRSV)*

John also talks about Jesus as the Word (Logos) who became flesh. This is what John writes:

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ ”) ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.² (John 1:14-16 NRSV)

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Mt 1:22–23.

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Jn 1:14–16.

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The Word becoming flesh was part God's plan of salvation. We can only understand and know God as revealed by the Scriptures in the life of Jesus. God had spoken through the prophets.

The prophets knew God in deeper ways than the average person in their days. God spoke to them. God gave them words to speak to the people. But people always heard from the prophets say, "Thus says the Lord..."

The Jewish people in first century were looking and expecting a Messiah who would liberate them from the Romans. But Isaiah spoke about a suffering servant of the Lord and of the people:

*³He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.*

*⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.*

*⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,*

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*and by his bruises we are healed.
6All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.*

*7He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

*8By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.*

*9They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

*10Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.*

11Out of his anguish he shall see light;

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*he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.³ (Isaiah 53:1-12
NRSV)*

Jesus came to give us freedom. True freedom. On the cross he finished the way to know God in him. Now we can walk in his ways. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth and life”* He also said, *“you will know the true and the true will make you free”* Jesus made the way for us to follow him. Jesus is the way of our liberation of sin and death. Jesus is the way. In John 14:6-7 Jesus tells Thomas,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my

³ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Is 53:3–12.

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*Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”⁴
(John 14:6-7 NRSV).*

It is only in Jesus that we can go to the Father and the only way to know the Father!

How do we know the will of the Father? It is in Jesus that we know the Father. God has done all that God alone can do to get us to know him. The Jewish nation was so far from doing the will of God back in first century that they didn't know him anymore.

While God cared that they were a land occupied by the Romans and in need of salvation from that oppression, God also wanted their hearts back. God wanted to give them the freedom that only God can give. That is, freedom from the power, and the curse of sin.

How does the work that Jesus accomplished on the cross inform and forms our daily living? How does it inform our relations with our family, with our neighbors, with our community, with the international community? How do we, individually and in community, treat others?

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Jn 14:6–7.

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John wrote *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*

17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
(Jn 3:16–17 NRSV)

If we think that the world had reached a degree of perfection back then, we would be mistaken. The world was no better than it is today. Yet, God loved love the world! He loved the world, and in his love, he provided a way for their salvation, a way for our salvation. God sent his only Son that we may believe and be saved and not perish but have life now and eternally.

And Jesus accomplished his work and finished it on the cross with great dedication, with much work and with grace. Grace under great suffering. He never cursed those he came to save. He forgave his tormentors and his enemies. They were his enemies, not because Jesus had done wrong to them, but because they simply rejected his life, his teachings, his way to the Father with such a violent hatred that they were willing to crucify him.

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I am afraid we would do the same things to Jesus now if he was walking among us.

How do we act in the face of hostility?

Some Christians face more hostility than others in the world. I don't believe that Christians in the west suffer much for the cause of Jesus. Jesus does not send us "to change" the world through legislation. Trying to change a nation with legislation is dangerous. Europe did that a couple of centuries ago. It didn't work.

Eventually Christians started persecuting Christians because they opposed legislation or because their beliefs were contrary to the laws back then. But even if we do, a country's legislation is not the way to do it. All Jesus calls us to do is to go and preach the gospel.

And we have many ways and many reasons to continue to preach the gospel. But it is critically important that before we do it, we live it. "“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” Let us never forget this.

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We can always start with love. *“For God so loved the world”* The first and greatest commandment is still loving God and neighbor as you love yourself. Jesus answering to a lawyer, said:

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37b-40 NRSV)

Of course, this doesn’t mean that we lose our discernment and wisdom or that we become sin-blind, (if there is such an expression), but it means we still love no matter what.

Do we know what we live for?

Even in his humanity, Jesus knew what his purpose in this life was. He never deviated from it. Do we know what our purpose in life is? What is Jesus calling us as a church to do? How does that help when the pressure in life is high?

The work of Jesus is finished! He accomplished it in his death. In his death we have found life and purpose for our lives. We know we can have peace with God, with our neighbor, within ourselves, and with creation in him. We can experience salvation like we

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never experienced before. Salvation from sin and from its power. We don't have to live in sin. Jesus can and does forgive us from our sins. In Christ, we are transformed in deep, personal ways. Our entire belief is changed in a birth from above. This is so deep with outward implications and realizations. We no longer view people as our enemies, but as the objects of the love of God, and the object of our love.

Thanks be to God and to our Lord and Savior Jesus! He finished his work!

The way (road) to know the Father is set by Jesus. We can know God in Jesus.

A road, a way is built for people to walk or to drive on it. So, we too, in Jesus we need to walk in his ways. We walk in his ways in love and joy, and with patience and dignity in the face of hostility. And hostility will come in one way or another. Jesus said,

11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Mat 5:11-12 NRSV)

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The rewards are salvation, and the privilege of knowing and seeing the face of God some day in heaven. Jesus has prepared a place for us so that we can forever be with him in eternity. We are no longer slaves to sin and corruption. We no longer return evil for evil, but we have overcome evil with good. We know God in our hearts and in our lives.

Yes, Jesus finished his work that day on the cross. Now that we know him, how are going to finish the work that he has given to us on behalf of his church and of the world? I pray we finish well!