

It is Finished

By Tim James

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Lantana Grace Church
5108 Lantana Rd.
Crossville, TN 38572

Website: lantanagraca.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/dleeb

John chapter 19, what our brother just read.

Brother, I am a big fan of absolutes. I like absolutes. There is a preacher that is—I believe he is dead now. The last I heard he was in a rest home, but I believe he died—his name was Dusty Rose. Do you remember old Dusty Rose? He was a real strong Calvinist preacher, a bit to legal for my tastes now. Back then when I was a lost, Legalist, Calvinist preacher I liked him a whole lot. I liked him less in the latter days.

But I heard him in a radio interview one time and there was kind of a debate going on between him and the radio announcer. It was on a religious station. I think it was WPGD.in... do you remember that? They said their word... their letters meant “We preach God’s deliverance.” And I always thought it meant, “We preach God’s deficiency.

But nonetheless, this fellow asked Dusty Rose did he believe in absolutes. And Dusty said, “Yes, I do. I believe in absolutes.”

This fellow said, “Well, I don’t believe in absolutes.”

He says, “You don’t believe in absolutes?”

He said, “No, I don’t.”

He said, “Are you sure about that?”

He said, “Absolutely.”

I love absolutes. I am predestinarian, practical predestinarian, a natural predestinarian and a spiritual predestinarian. I don’t do anything hardly without planning it and neither do you. So that makes you a predestinarian. I like it when God says something is the way it is.

In this passage of Scripture we have three wonderful words here spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

He said, “It is finished.”¹

That is an absolute. That is an absolute. Whatever he was talking about, it was finished right then and there. And there are no more words in Scripture that are more familiar and more precious to the believer than these three words.

“It is finished.”²

It is actually one word in the original language. It is the same word used in verse 28 twice and translated “accomplished” and “fulfilled.” It comes from that same root word translated as three words, “It is finished,”³ but the word is perfect. That is what the word means. “Accomplished” is a form of the word $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omega$ (tel-eh'-o). So is “fulfilled.” So is, “It is finished.”⁴ All of them is the same word.

Considering the circumstance of this language and these words, our Lord, having stood the worst that men could do, having stood the worst that God could do, came out on the other side of it in agonies and blood. As far as human eyes could see his visage was marred more than any man, torn up, ravaged, shredded like a slaughtered beast. He wasn't hanging on a cross with a little crown of rose thorns on his head and a tea towel wrapped around his belly. He was buck naked, shamefully mistreated, humiliated. And he raises his head and says in a loud voice, “Perfect.”

That is what he said.

“It is finished.”⁵

This is poetry. This is prose. It is rhyme. It is reason. It is sublime syntax.

“It is finished.”⁶

These are words that describe a crowning achievement, the achievement that began before time when God picked out, elected, selected, severed out from a fallen race that did not yet even exist a people for himself, his very own people, what he would call his portion. Can you imagine that? Think of yourself. You are God's portion. I know he is our portion, but I can't imagine myself being called of him his portion, an innumerable company of sinners, a gargantuan number of felonious miscreants, on whom he would just freely bestow his sovereign grace. He gave that crowd of convicts to his Son who proceeded to sign his name on the debt of the sin they owed so that when they came into this world as vile and as guilty as they were, they were never for one nanosecond

¹ John 19:30.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

responsible for the payment of their sins.

His Son, the Son of God, the King of kings came into this world and assumed human flesh. Great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh.

And on the cross he stood in the room and stead of that naturally condemned company and suffered, indeed, gladly suffered the punishment that they were due and for three hours of darkness bore up under God's wrath and drank that punishing cup of just condemnation. He drank it dry and we arrive at our text.

“It is finished.”⁷

These words are a powerful declaration of the successful completion of the redemption of that great chosen company of the successful completion of redemption. In time, the Holy Spirit will make this vast scrap of humanity aware of what has been accomplished for them through the preaching of the gospel by taking the things of Christ and showing them to the elect this picture, the Holy Spirit paints and the report he tells. The doctrine he teaches is so glorious and wondrous and matter of fact that the elect become totally enamored and helplessly fall in love with the chiefest among 10,000.

One of the things that would be planted and ingrained and etched with a pen of a ready writer and seared in the minds and hearts of the elect will be these three words.

“It is finished.”⁸

These words are spoken by Jesus Christ the Lord. They are words stronger than iron and will ring true and absolute when time is no more. Though religion endeavors to change the meaning of the words or explain them away all together, the believer knows what they mean and willingly hangs his never dying soul upon his master's utterance here. This is that nail in a sure place.

One man said, “Not only does the Bible say what it says, it means what it means.”

I have heard many try to make these words say something other than what they say. I was at a funeral one time and a preacher said of these words that Christ meant that he had finished his part and the rest was up to you.

He should be glad that I didn't have a gun that day.

I heard another fellow down in Atlanta, a very popular preacher, spend an hour trying to explain how the work of Christ was finished, but not complete unless a person believed it.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

How sad that is for the King of kings, the only true potentate to dangle in limbo for 2000 years until I, a maniacal maggot, came along and gave his words some effectual value.

Men certainly think a lot of themselves, don't they?

How desperate Christ must have felt knowing that the efficaciousness of his work had to wait on the wriggling, writhing worms of the earth to lift their heads from the dunghill and make his great work viable and this great proclamation to have some semblance of clout.

“It is finished.”⁹

It is. It really, really is.

These words have meaning. They have meaning. That is backed up, that meaning, with the very authority of heaven itself, God almighty, words that resound to the glory of God and the honor of God. Words that fulfill all the prophecies of the Scripture, types and shadows all that God has spoken thus far in the Word of God is spoken right here in these three words, “It is finished.”¹⁰

Do you want to know what Genesis one means?

“It is finished.”¹¹

Do you know what Revelation 22 means?

“It is finished.”¹²

Do you know what Malachi means?

“It is finished.”¹³

That is what it means.

“It is finished.”¹⁴

Let's look at a few passages of Scripture, holding your place in John there.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Turn back to the prophet Isaiah, the gospel according to Isaiah in Isaiah chapter 43. Listen to these words.

Verse 25.

“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”¹⁵

“It is finished.”¹⁶

Look at chapter 44 and verse 22.

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.”¹⁷

Look at Isaiah chapter 53 verses five and six.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we [underline it] are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on [Jesus Christ] the iniquity of us all.¹⁸

Look at verse 10.

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see...”¹⁹

Oh, there is that little word again. Oh, I love that little word.

He shall see all the product of, what is derived of.

“He shall see [all] of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge [his wit, his skill] shall my righteous servant justify many; [how come?] for he shall bear their iniquities.”²⁰

“It is finished.”²¹

Jeremiah 31. Look at verse 31.

¹⁵ Isaiah 43:25.

¹⁶ John 19:30.

¹⁷ Isaiah 44:22.

¹⁸ Isaiah 53:5-6

¹⁹ Isaiah 53:10-11.

²⁰ Isaiah 53:11.

²¹ John 19:30.

“Behold, the days come...”²²

This is quoted twice in the Hebrews in chapter eight and chapter 10.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts...²³

That is not talking about the 10 Commandments. That law can't be written in your heart because it is written outside you on a stone. And it can't be bent. It can only be broken. And that is what we did when we drew our first breath.

What is that? His book, his words. Do you know this book is in your heart?

Well, I don't know it all. I can't quote it all, but I will tell you what. When some preachers stands up and says this do you know what you say? There you go. Don't you? That is it. That is it. I know that is true.

Well, how do you know it is true? Because this whole book is in here.

“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD.”²⁴

We don't have to say that to each other. Why? Because we know the Word.

“For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”²⁵

Why?

“It is finished.”²⁶

In Jeremiah chapter 50 and verse 20 he says, “They are going to look for your [?]. But I am going to pardon my reserve.”

²² Jeremiah 31:31.

²³ Jeremiah 31:31-33.

²⁴ Jeremiah 31:33-34.

²⁵ Jeremiah 31:34.

²⁶ John 19:30.

“It is finished.”²⁷

These words mean something. These words mean something to everyone. And I want us to consider this fact and look at these words for three points of view tonight.

First of all, what do these words mean to God? Secondly, what do these words mean to the believer. And, thirdly, what do these words mean to the self righteous.

What do these words mean?

First of all, what do these words mean to God?

Well, it is safe to say that since it is God incarnate who spoke these words in triumphant glory and power that these words are true. They are true or the one who said them is a fraud. That is the only two choices you have in there.

God cannot lie. He is not a man.

To God, these words are the completion of whatever he intended in the suffering and death of his Son, whatever he intended. The promises of the Old Testament are manifold concerning what God meant when he spoke these very words. Every lamb and every bullock whose blood was drained from his victimized body form a great coagulate finger that point across history to the one who cried these three words.

Every Day of Atonement, every prophet, every priest, every king lived and died in this world, he existed in this world to point to and picture this man who spoke these words. To find what God intended is easy.

I know people talk about, “I just don’t know the will of God.”

That is because you don’t know God. If you knew God you would know his will. Wouldn’t you? I know his will. So you know what he is going to do. No. I know what he is doing now. But I know. I know what he has intended. I can tell you what he has intended. It is real easy to do. I will give you a very simple formula to find out what God is intending. All you have to do is look at what has been done. That is easy, ain’t it?

One fellow said, “I pick up the newspaper and I want to see what God has done.”

Because that is what it is. You see, he does all things after the counsel of his own will.

He hath done what he pleased in heaven and earth and all the deep places.

Do you want to know what God is intended to do? What has he done. That is what he intended to do, because that is [?] ended up.

²⁷ Ibid.

He is in the heavens.

Paul told Timothy what these words mean. He said, “[God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world [was even thought of],”²⁸ prior to the conception of the world.

How does that work? Like electricity, real good.

Perhaps the plainest explanation of what is meant to God is found when he sent his angel to tell Joseph what to name this one and why name him that. He would, after some 33 years cry with a loud voice, after all, “It is finished.”²⁹

What is finished?

“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”³⁰

God knew what was going to happen, didn't he? That was his intent.

And on that cross he saved his people from their sin.

“It is finished.”³¹

And since this addresses death, the penalty for sin to God, it means that the law's demands are fulfilled completely by Christ's death. They are finished. The law's demands are finished.

We are not under the law.

Well, what do you mean? Don't we have it as ruler of life?

You better not.

You know what the law says, don't you?

You who are under the law, don't you hear what the law says? The law only says one thing. That word “fulfilled,” that don't mean kept. That means finished. And what does the law say to you? One thing. Dying.

You are sitting in the gas chamber and some fellow brings in a book and he opens up the book and he tells you, “This is why you are going to die.”

²⁸ 2 Timothy 1:9.

²⁹ John 19:30.

³⁰ Matthew 1:21.

³¹ John 19:30.

What has he got in his hand? The law. Defines what you have done, condemns you for it, sets the sentence and executes it. That is what the law does.

I don't want anything to do with it.

That is my former husband [?]. Now I do [?] put flowers there. But I never dig up the bones and ask for help. You better not either.

What does it mean? To God it meant that the requirement of the law, that holy law, that perfect law, that law that demands your and my death, it demands it, when Christ said, "It is finished,"³² that demand is done for every one for whom Christ died. It is gone, cleaned up, cleaned up.

Justice can demand no more than death. And Christ died in the room and stead of his people. That is why when we take the Lord's Table we are not celebrating his life though his life was perfect and wonderful. That is not what we are celebrating.

What are we showing forth?

We do show forth is death until he comes again.

When we go into baptismal waters what are we doing? We are showing forth his death and that we died with him in the beloved.

When you put your body in that preacher's hands, you must be crazy to do something like that. And he is going to put you into a situation you cannot be of, into an element where death is your only... that is it for you.

You talk about submission. He is going to bring you out.

What is that about? It is about death. It is a bloody religion. It is a death religion. That is what we... when you go into the holy of holies, if you could get in there, you opened up that curtain. It ain't no nice little one room apartment. It is stained from top to bottom and that ark, it ain't all gold and shiny like Indiana Jones time. It was covered in brown rusty looking stains from blood that had been sprinkled on it year after year after year.

But for you because Christ's finished death, you are not going to die.

"It is finished."³³

The law is satisfied. It has its pound of flesh and it is finished.

Secondly, what does these word mean to the believer? The short answer is everything. It just means everything.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

“It is finished.”³⁴

I will elaborate a little bit, though.

One thing it means is that when my salvation was finished it was already done before I ever heard about it. I have got so much trouble saying things, like I love that. That is just so true.

When somebody told me... when that night when W R Cruise was preaching and Moose and I were sitting in that little old chapel over there in [?], North Carolina, here is all we heard. We didn't hear that we could be something [?]. We didn't hear if we did something we would be something. We didn't even hear if we believed. We didn't hear that.

What did we hear?

“It is finished.”³⁵

What?

“It is finished.”³⁶

What is finished? Salvation. It is done. The great transaction is done. I am the Lord's and he is mine. It is finished.

This means the world to me because I know what I am and if something had been left up to me I simply had nothing to offer. It is finished.

Something else. I am here now and these words mean the world to me now. I live and breathe and walk in this world and seek to serve the Lord and love my family and love my spiritual family. I seek in my crippled impotent, inadequate way to please my Savior, but wait.

“It is finished.”³⁷

It is a constant, pleasant sweet reminder that my life has nothing to do with my salvation. My salvation has something to do with my life, but my life don't have a thing to do with me.

Look over at numbers chapter 23 just for a moment. Verse 21.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob.”³⁸

In Jacob? That is what my name is. James is the English word for Jacob. That means supplanter, snake. I wouldn't like Jacob if I met him. I really wouldn't. He was a momma's boy. He was a sneak. He was, wasn't he? He was, wasn't he? He was a momma's boy. His momma would talk him into anything. He would do anything. He was sneaky. Betrayed his father, betrayed his brother. He was just all the time getting into trouble.

God said, “I don't see nothing wrong with him. Ain't nothing wrong with that boy.”

Jacob, are we talking about the same [?].

“...neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.”³⁹

And what is the shout?

“It is finished.”⁴⁰

All glory for it belongs to God and he made it plain when he said 2000 years on Calvary's tree, “It is finished.”⁴¹

And these words also reveal to me that no event or circumstance can change the fact.

You know, what preacher's do—and I know we talk about, you know, when we are trying to press folks, we talk about the sacredness of the desk, you know, and how burdened we are. I love what I do. Don't you?

And we got it made. We sit up here and talk out of a book three or four times a week and tell people things, just tell them the same thing over and over again. And they build us houses and put food on our table.

Oh, the poor preacher.

We have got it made in the shade, bud. Like old Scott says, “I hope they don't never figure out who I am.”

That would be a bad thing, wouldn't it?

What we do up here is report. We tell a report over and over again. We tell the same report over and over again, that God is gracious and glorified himself in the salvation of

³⁸ Numbers 23:21.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ John 19:30.

⁴¹ Ibid.

the elect by the blood and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, satisfied his law through his death and has saved every one of his people.

We say that 1000 different ways, but that is what we say. It is a report.

Now what do you do with a report? What is a report?

I will tell you something about a report. Whatever is in it is done. A report ain't got a thing to do with the future, does it? Well, we are just reporters. I am here to report that no event or circumstances can change the fact of the report. And I find myself in nights of glory like I have these last few days nothing has changed.

“It is finished.”⁴²

When I find myself in depths of despair nothing about this changes. If I live for die, nothing about this changes. If I live long enough to get old and infirmed and I get dementia and forget God, nothing changes about this.

“It is finished.”⁴³

That is why we can say:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.⁴⁴

Sounds like finished to me.

Well, if that is the case, what in the world can we say? Well, if God is for us who can be against us?

“It is finished.”⁴⁵

Thirdly, what do these words mean to the self righteous? Now, when I speak of self righteousness I am not speaking strictly of those individuals who exhibit such goody two shoes behavior that no one can hardly stand to be around them. The self righteous are those who believe, earnestly believe that they merit a righteousness before God based on what they do or what they do not do.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Romans 8:28-30.

⁴⁵ John 19:30.

They believe that somehow in some way their life is worthy of recommending them to God. They do not partake in social evils. They are kind and philanthropic and spend their lives in the service of others. Perhaps some feel righteous because they have embraced a system of theology and joined themselves to those who worship God in spirit and truth.

Just this week a man told me, a dear man, he sat under the gospel for years and years and then one night God gave him ears to hear.

All those things, philanthropy and being in the service of others are good things. They are commendable things and things that all men especially the leadership aspire to. But, you see, "It is finished."⁴⁶

You and I can neither add to nor take away from what is done. It is perfect, complete and finished. And "It is finished"⁴⁷ sounds like a [?] to every hope of salvation other than the work of the one who proclaimed these three astounding words.

"It is finished."⁴⁸

It is my prayer that if anyone in the sound of my voice tonight is considering that they have by any means attributed sufficient righteousness to gain God's approval, please listen closely to these words. Please listen. Listen.

"It is finished."⁴⁹

Well might the words of Revelation 22 be spoken from the cross.

"Let him... that is righteous be righteous still."⁵⁰

Let him that us ungodly be ungodly still.

Why? Because 2000 years ago that is what happened.

"It is finished."⁵¹

God bless you.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Revelation 22:11.

⁵¹ Ibid.