

## TEXT SERMONS – SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SUFFERING SAVIOR

## SAYING #6

## “IT IS FINISHED”

## John 19:28-30

***“After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!”***

George Bennard’s hymn, “The Old Rugged Cross,” is one of the most popular hymns of the Christian church. The first stanza is as follows:

*“On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
The emblem of suffering and shame;  
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
For a world of lost sinners was slain.”*

As much as the sentiment behind the words touches us, the cross without the Christ offers no cure. We do not exalt a wooden structure but the wounded Savior, Who was on that old rugged cross. We love “*the dearest and best*” Who “*for a world of lost sinners was slain.*”

As we approach the scene of the Savior’s suffering once again, we hear Him speak for the sixth time these words, “*It is finished!*” What did He mean by this statement. In attempting to extract the exact meaning as revealed in scripture, there are two divisions that are necessary to examine in order to have an understanding of Jesus’ statement. The first is, His announcement and the second, His accomplishment.

**THESE WORDS COMPRISE A GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT.**

“It is finished!” The Greek is but one word, “τετέλεσται.” It is best translated by a simple English word: “completed,” or “finished.” It was a term of finality.

***This Was Not The Announcement of a Victim.***

On the cross He did not say, “They have finished Me!” Neither did He say, “I am finished!” He said, “*It is finished!*”

Perhaps those uninformed ones standing at the foot of the cross thought that this was the cry of a helpless martyr or that this was a victim who sensed that His suffering was now over. This was not the last gasp of a wasted life, an admission of defeat, a sigh of relief or a wail of despair!

Years ago on the slope of Mt. McKinley, a bony skeleton of a mountain climber was found leaning against a tree. Carved into the tree were these words, “The end of the trail.” Those simple words told the tragic story of one who started out to climb Mt. McKinley, but whose strength failed and his life ended without his purpose being fulfilled.

When Jesus said, "It is finished!" He did not mean that He had come to "the end of the trail" with His life's purpose unrealized. This was not the announcement of a victim but the words of a Victor!

### ***This Was The Announcement of Victory!***

It was with joy and a sense of accomplishment that Jesus said, "*It is finished!*" This was not a tragic sigh but a triumphant shout: "*It is finished!*" What was finished?

He was signaling, not the end of His life but the end of His mission, His task, that for which He had come into the world. He died, not because His life was taken from Him, but because He chose to give it up of Himself.

The Lord of Glory is seen upon the cross and now the glory of the Lord is seen beaming from the cross to all mankind! Jesus has finished the work He came to do. He said anticipatorily in His High Priestly prayer: "*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*" (John 17:4,5) Does that sound like defeat? He suffered not defeat for His great mission was complete and on Easter we sing:

*"Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.  
He arose! He arose!  
Hallelujah! Christ arose!"*

- Robert Lowry

Queen Elizabeth I of England died in 1603. When near death she said to her Lady in Waiting, "It is over. I have come to the end of it. The end, the end, the end. To have only one life and to have done with it! To have lived and to have loved and triumphed; and now to know that it is over! One may defy everything else but this."

Such was the end of one whose life had been the envy of the world. But how different it was with our Savior when He came to die. He did not cling remorsefully to life; He did not reluctantly die. He died with a shout of victory upon His lips, "*It is finished!*"

### **THESE WORDS CONCLUDE A GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT.**

What was Jesus doing upon the cross? Was He a common criminal like those two on either side of Him? Had He just been in the wrong place at the wrong time and had been arrested with the other two? Was He revolting against the Roman Government that was ruling the area at that time? Or was His birth, life and death the result of a Divine plan? If so, what was He accomplishing there upon that cross?

When He said, "*It is finished!*" What was *finished*? Jesus was speaking of the work of redemption. In His work on the cross He accomplished more than we can comprehend, but there are at the least three aspects of our redemption that we should be aware of: He died for our sins, He paid for our sins and He bore our sins away. Let us look at each briefly.

***In Dying For Our Sins, He Accomplished The Work of a Substitute.***

It is an inexorable, divine principle that *"The wages of sin is death"* ( Rom.6:23) and *"The soul that sins it shall die."* (Ezekiel 18:20) Since *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23) what can be done to absolve us of our sin? There is nothing we can do!

If we are to be rid of our sin God must take the initiative for all sin is against Him. He must, in mercy, provide a remedy for our sin and that He has done in providing a Substitute in the Person of His Son Who died in our place and for our sin: *"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...."* (I Cor. 15:3) A substitute is someone taking the place of another. That Jesus did for us.

Isaiah states: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."* (Isa.53:5,6)

When Jesus said, *"It is finished!"*, He was saying that the substitutionary work on the cross for us had been accomplished. Peter said, *"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit."* (I Peter 3:18) Thank You, Lord Jesus, for taking my place and dying for my sins!

***In Paying For Our Sins, He Accomplished The Work of A Sacrifice.***

There had been many sacrifices offered for sin down through the history of the Old Testament. But Jesus' sacrifice of Himself was the last! *"Now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* (Heb.9:26)

The writer of the book of Hebrews continues: *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.'..... 'We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.'" (Heb.10:4-7, 10)*

The wages of sin had been paid. The Greeks would write the word "τετέλεσται" upon a bill when it had been paid, meaning: "The debt is finished, completed, paid off." Paul wrote to the Colossian Christians that Christ had *"wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross."* (Col.2:14)

As we are seeing, there is more to the death of Christ on the cross taught in scripture, than is generally comprehended, even by some Christians. Crosses are worn as jewelry today and many of the wearers do not know that the cross upon which Jesus died was an altar and He was the sacrifice!

***He Bore Our Sins Away, Accomplishing The Work of a Scapegoat.***

The term *"scapegoat"* is a biblical term. In Leviticus 16 we read about the scapegoat: *"Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the*

*iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.” (vs.21,22)*

John the Baptizer exclaimed, when seeing Jesus, **“Behold! The Lamb of God who *takes away* the sin of the world!”** (John 1:29) To die for our sins; to pay the price for sin and then not remove our sins would not be completed salvation. He died for our sins, thereby meeting the demands of God’s Holy Law; He paid the redemptive price for our sins; *He then took our sins away!* Among the works that Jesus was accomplishing on the cross, and after which He said, **“It is finished!”** are these three acts that make it possible for us to be saved from our sins.

In much of Christian literature we come across the term “The finished work of Christ” to describe what Christ was accomplishing upon the cross. In what sense was His work “finished”? He finished the work of a Substitute, dying in our place; He finished the work of sacrificing Himself to pay for our sins; He did the work of the Old Testament ceremonial “scapegoat” by taking our sins away from us.

The message in the statement **“It is finished!”** is that the Door of salvation had been opened; the Way to heaven had been paved; the Bread of Life had been prepared; the fountain of the Water of Life is flowing; the Light for the dark world shines! The sinner has nothing now to do but believe the message. Nothing can be added to a finished work. To attempt to add to it is to spoil it. We are saved by God’s mercy, not our merit; by His atonement, not by our attainment!

*“Nothing to pay? No, not a penny;  
Some good work to do? No, not any!  
All that was needed to do or pay,  
Jesus did on Calvary that day.”*

JdonJ

Hudson Taylor, the famous Missionary Pioneer to China, told of his conversion to Jesus Christ. He said that as a teenager, he found some time on his hands with nothing to do. He hunted for something to read and found a Bible pamphlet and decided to read it thinking that there might be a good story in it.

As he read the material he came across the statement, “The finished work of Christ” for the first time. He thought it a strange statement and the more he pondered it the more it gripped his mind. As he studied the subject, he came to see that Jesus had finished all that needed to be done to provide salvation for him. He said that, upon his knees, he accepted the Lord Jesus as his Savior and determined to live for Him and praise Him forever! Have you received Him?

*“For ’twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,  
To pardon and sanctify me.”*

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