

It Is Finished
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John 19:17-30

Happy Mother's Day to all the Moms! I pray you all feel greatly celebrated. When it comes to gifts are you a better giver or receiver? Anyone struggle with being a good receiver of gifts or acts of kindness? Why might it be a struggle? Back in the 1400's someone came up with the term, doing a "good turn." Any idea what it means? Perhaps the toughest thing for a "poor receiver" is when someone does something for you that you cannot repay. All you can do is receive it with thanks.

In today's text we read about the greatest gift ever given to mankind. Often someone will refer to the Christ Child in the manger as God's Christmas gift to mankind. While that is not incorrect, the ultimate gift of God to a lost world is the salvation paid for by the atoning death of Christ on the cross (Romans 6:23ⁱ). The babe in a manger was born to die (1 Tim. 1:15ⁱⁱ) so we could live forever.

At the end of Jesus' horrible suffering on the cross and just before He voluntarily gave up His Spirit and died, He said, "It is finished"(19:30.) Those words declare that He paid the full sin debt for all mankind and His work on the cross was complete. Not only do we not HAVE to do the work of earning our salvation, there is no way we CAN do the work.

Here's the point for us: We must beware of trying to finish what Jesus already finished on the cross. A gift is not a gift if you pay for it. Jesus paid the debt He did not owe because it was a debt we could not pay. We need to be good "receivers" and accept His free gift of eternal life with gratitude, love, and faith.

John 19:16–30 (ESV) — 16...So they took Jesus, **17** and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. **18** There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

- This is a familiar scene. The danger of a familiar text is to read it without exploring it for something new, mining it, reflecting on it, applying it.
- Let's ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a fresh view of what it says, what it means, and how it should change us.
- How important is the cross in Jesus' story? John Stott wrote, "*The writers of the four Gospels devote a disproportionate amount of space to Christ's last week and death when compared to the rest of his life and ministry: 40% of the first Gospel, 60% of the second, 33% of the third, and almost 50% of the fourth are given to an account of the events between his final entry into Jerusalem and his return to heaven. It is particularly striking in the case of John, whose Gospel has sometimes been divided into two equal halves which have been entitled 'The Book of the Signs' and 'The Book of the Passion'.*"ⁱⁱⁱ The cross is central to the gospels!

- Crucifixion was one of the most horrid forms of execution in history.
- One of the most well-researched descriptions of what Jesus suffered on the cross is recounted by T.W. Hunt in his book, "The Mind of Christ.": *"Nails were not necessary to cause death. The Egyptians, in fact, used ropes to fasten the victim to the cross, but Rome was more cruel and preferred nails. The arms were nailed at ninety degrees, but in the course of hanging on the cross, the body would sag to sixty-five degrees. The weight of the body fixed certain breathing muscles in an inhalation state and hindered passive exhalation. In other words, the pectoral muscles became paralyzed and the victim discovered that he could breathe in, but not out. The usual cause of death in crucifixion was asphyxiation and shock from loss of blood...As the victim hung there, unable to breathe, tetany, a condition marked by cramps and contractions of the muscles, would set in...The victim would discover that, if he used the nail going through his feet as a cruel step to force his body upward so that the arms once more reached a ninety-degree angle, he could breathe again. Each time Christ spoke, He had to do this. He alternately hung by the nails in His hands until the need for oxygen forced Him to stand on the spike in His feet. This inevitably reopened the wounds in His feet, causing further loss of blood and also greatly exacerbated the wounds in His back as He slid up and down on the rough wood..."^v*

[T.W. Hunt's great teaching on this in on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXsJsMO1z-c59-2De_mgYTkQn63hSabyk]

19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." **20** Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. **21** So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" **22** Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

- Verses 17-22 are the climax of the Pontius Pilate episode. Though he tried to (literally) "wash his hands" of this matter, Pilate caved to the chief priests and delivered Jesus "over to them to be crucified."
- In Roman crucifixion a placard was posted over the condemned describing their crime. It was meant to be a warning. Proclaiming Jesus as "King of the Jews" was Pilate's final jab at the religious leaders.
- Warren Wiersbe writes, *"In one sense, this title proved to be the first 'Gospel tract' ever written. It announced to one of the thieves crucified with Him that He was the Saviour and a King. He dared to believe this message and asked Jesus to save him!"^v*

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, **24** so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was

to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things,

- The details of Christ's crucifixion amazingly fulfill Old Testament prophecy written hundreds of years before; particularly in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.
- In verse 23 John quoted Psalm 22: "*They divided my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots.*" Incredible detail!
- Isaiah 53 is so detailed we don't have time to look at it all. A sampling:

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. **6** ...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter... **9** And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death... **10** Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt... **12** ...because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26** When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" **27** Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

- Though suffering, Jesus asked John to care for His mother Mary.
- Mary was experiencing what Simeon prophesied over Baby Jesus: "*a sword will pierce through your own soul also...*" **Luke 2:35 (ESV)**
- The synoptic gospels tell us from noon to three there was darkness.
- T.W. Hunt writes, "*God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus was now ugly. He was hideously deformed, repulsive, and repugnant. He was guilty, although it was our guilt He was bearing. He was sin. The most terrible moment in the history of the universe had arrived. God the Holy Father cannot gaze upon sin. Out of the need consistent with His perfect holiness, God had to turn away from His only begotten Son.*"^{vi}
- Mark tells us Jesus cried, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*"^{vii} A direct quote from Psalm 22:1.
- The dehydration and asphyxiation made it hard to speak, but He must.

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said... "I thirst." [This was (to fulfill the Scripture) [for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink. Ps 69:21^{viii}], **29** A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. **30** When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished,"

- "It is finished." The Greek word *tetelestai* had several meanings.
- A servant might say it to their master when their work was done.

- An artist or writer might say it after their painting or manuscript was done.
- The most significant meaning “was that used by the merchants: “The debt is paid in full!”^{ix} Archeologists have found “Papyri receipts for taxes...with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning “paid in full.”^x
- T.W. Hunt again, “*Jesus never did anything halfway. He did not heal halfway; no leper ever approached Him after being healed and complained, “I seem to have these white spots again.” His teaching was so profound that the greatest minds have spent lifetimes trying to unravel all its secrets and yet a child may understand its essentials. Jesus did not do anything halfway, and He certainly did not redeem halfway. He paid in its entirety the enormous debt for all the sin against holiness that the rest of us incurred. Jesus paid it all.*”^{xi}
- The final words of verse 30 tell us, “...and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” No one took Jesus’ life. He gave it up willingly to pay our debt.

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- If you were gazing at DaVinci’s “Mona Lisa” at the Louvre in Paris, would you dare ask for a paint set to add a few touches?
- How about Michelangelo’s statue “David?” Would you offer to improve it?
- Would you go to the National Archives and ask to add some words to the Declaration of Independence?
- Those masterpieces are finished, complete, beyond revision or improvement. So is the masterpiece of grace Jesus completed on Calvary.
- Why would we dare think we could do anything to add to or improve what Jesus did for us? Yet, in our humanity, we sometimes unconsciously try to finish what He has already finished. We try to earn what He’s paid for by our own efforts or good behavior.
- **Isaiah 64:6 (NIV) — 6** All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags...
- Why would we dress in filthy rags when Jesus has given us His robe of righteousness to wear? Why would we try to earn what we cannot pay?
- Oswald Smith wrote a little known but beautiful hymn. Listen to the words:

*For salvation full and free,
Purchased once on Calvary,
Christ alone shall be my plea—
Jesus! Jesus only!
Jesus only, let me see,
Jesus only, none save He,
Then my song shall ever be—
Jesus! Jesus only!*^{xii}
- A gift is not a gift if you pay for it. Jesus paid the debt He did not owe because it was a debt we could not pay. Let’s not try to finish what He already finished and paid in full. Let’s be good “receivers” and accept His free gift of eternal life with gratitude, love, and faith.

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- i ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus whom we say is Trustworthy and Deserving of full acceptance (2016) (Ps 20) as
- ii ¹⁵ The saying is Trustworthy and Deserving of full acceptance (2016) (Ps 20) as we came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (1 Ti 1:15). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
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- iv Hunt, T. W.. The Mind of Christ (pp. 113-114). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- v Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 102–103). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- vi Hunt, T. W.. The Mind of Christ (p. 116). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- vii [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:34). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.
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- ix Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 384). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- x Blum, E. A. (1985). [John](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 340). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.
- xi Hunt, T. W.. The Mind of Christ (p. 118). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.
- xii https://hymnary.org/text/for_salvation_full_and_free