Title: Tetelestai: The Debt Has Been Paid in Full

Sermon Summary: Drawing from Romans 5:12-21 and John 19:28-30, this sermon centers on the Greek word "tetelestai," the final word Jesus spoke from the cross, meaning "it is finished" or "paid in full." The pastor traces the origin of humanity's sin debt back to Adam's transgression in the Garden of Eden, explaining that because all humanity descended from Adam, all inherited both his sin and the death that came with it. Because God is holy and righteous, His word cannot be revoked — the wages of sin must be paid. Through the system of animal sacrifices, God provided a temporary covering, pointing forward to the ultimate payment that would come through Jesus Christ. Since one man's disobedience brought condemnation upon all, God's plan required one sinless man whose obedience could bring justification to all. Jesus, the seed of the woman prophesied in Genesis 3:15, fulfilled this plan at Calvary, destroying Satan's greatest weapon — death — and canceling the sin debt of all who would receive Him by faith. The word "tetelestai" was not spoken in defeat but in victory, declaring that the debt owed by every human being had been fully and finally satisfied.

Key Points:
- The Greek word "tetelestai," spoken by Jesus as His final word on the cross, means "it is finished" or "paid in full," and was spoken victoriously, not in defeat
- God is holy and righteous, and His word cannot be revoked — when He declared that the wages of sin is death, that decree had to be fulfilled
- Adam's sin brought death upon all of humanity because all people were, in a sense, contained within Adam when he sinned
- The system of animal sacrifices instituted by God provided only a temporary covering for sin, not a permanent remedy, serving as a pointer toward the ultimate sacrifice
- Satan's strategy throughout biblical history has been to identify and destroy the promised seed of the woman before that seed could destroy him
- Jesus, being sinless, was the only one qualified to pay the debt that all of humanity owed but could never pay on their own
- In the Roman legal system, when a debt or sentence was fully paid, the word "tetelestai" was written across the charges, signifying that nothing more was owed — Jesus applied this to humanity's sin debt
- Salvation is received through a simple confession of faith and belief that Jesus died for sin and was raised from the dead — it cannot be earned
- The blood of Jesus functions as a covering — just as the blood on the doorposts caused the death angel to pass over the Israelites, the blood of Jesus covers all who are in Him
- Believers should walk in victory and praise, not in discouragement, because the enemy has already been defeated and the debt has already been paid

Scripture Reference:
- Romans 5:12-21, which describes how sin and death entered the world through one man, Adam, and how justification and life come through one man, Jesus Christ
- John 19:28-30, which records Jesus speaking His final words on the cross, including "it is finished"

- Genesis 3:15, which contains God's pronouncement that the seed of a woman would bruise the head of the serpent
- Hebrews 2:14, which reveals that Jesus destroyed the one who held the power of death
- Colossians 2, which describes Jesus openly spoiling principalities and powers at the cross

Stories:
- The account of Adam and Eve in the Garden, where Adam attempted to cover himself and Eve with fig leaves, only for God to reject that covering and instead provide animal skins, establishing the principle that sin requires a blood sacrifice for covering
- The story of Isaiah's vision of God, in which he cried out that he was a man of unclean lips, and an angel touched his lips with a coal from the altar, providing a covering that allowed him to stand in God's presence
- The Passover account from Exodus, in which God instructed the Israelites to apply the blood of a lamb to their doorposts so that the death angel would pass over their households — God did not inspect the conduct of those inside but looked only for the blood
- A personal story from the pastor's time after military service, in which a dishonest supervisor pointed him toward a tower and gave him no further assistance, used to illustrate that when God is for you, no opposition from others can prevail against you
- An illustration about a store owner extending credit to a customer, used to explain that even when a person begins paying for things going forward, the previous debt still remains and must be addressed separately — paralleling how coming to faith in Christ requires that the existing sin debt also be dealt with