

## It is Finished

### John 19:28-30

<sup>28</sup> Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” <sup>29</sup> A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. <sup>30</sup> When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Several years ago, on my first trip to Israel, the group I was traveling with had decided to approach the trip in a chronological method. We stayed in and toured Bethlehem first. Then on to Nazareth. Then the Galilee. At one point along the way – as we were sitting at the hotel and eating supper – I noticed that no one was speaking around the tables. Usually, the dining room was filled with the sound of voices, but that night no one seemed to be speaking. We all knew that the next day we would be heading to Jerusalem.

We would be walking down the Mount of Olives along the path of Palm Sunday. We would go to the upper room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the house of Caiaphas, the place of Pilot and then to follow the Via Dolorosa – going to Golgotha.

I know – we shouldn't have been surprised. We all knew it was coming. However, it was still overwhelming.

Through the Sundays of Lent – we have been moving across the final week in the life and ministry of Jesus. We knew this part of the story was coming. But I don't know if we are ever ready to hear it – or to think about it. But here it is.

On Good Friday we will focus on more on the cross, but our passage today takes us to the last moments of this horrible ordeal. Jesus was nailed to the cross at 9 in the morning. Darkness came over the land at noon. Now, it is around 3 in the afternoon.

Jesus speaks his final word from the cross. When you read about this moment in the other Gospel accounts – they tell us that Jesus cries out in a loud voice. So – he takes a deep breath and announces that “It is Finished.”

It was as though he was saying, "It is done. The past is the past. I have done what I needed to do. Let the future begin.”

In Hebrew, it was simply one word: **kalah: "It is finished."**  
When he says this – I really don't think it was a cry of despair – like

there is no hope. Jesus says this like someone who is in control of the situation.

What did Jesus mean, "It is finished!"? What was finished? Jesus is affirming that he has accomplished the Father's will in his life. He has finished the work for which God had sent him into the world. The plan that God had for the salvation of the world, Jesus had completed it. Whatever had to be satisfied was now satisfied, and whatever had to be made right was now made right.

Now, because Jesus announced that "it is finished," we are able to come back to God. Humanity was separated and estranged from God, but, then, came Jesus to seek and to save us. That our past can be our past and we can find and define our future in Him. Jesus gives us the example that in our life – we can draw the line and declare that old is over – the new now begins. **The past is behind, and future is ahead. Who we were isn't who we have to be.**

Someone once said, "When people tell me that human nature cannot be changed, I am moved to reply that in light of my experience, human nature may well be the only thing that CAN BE CHANGED!"

We cannot change the course of the moon or the sun. We cannot change the laws of the physical world. We cannot change the movement and flow of the ocean. However, the Bible pulsates with pages and pages of testimonies of the lives, purposes, events, and habits which have been changed and can be changed. In my opinion, that is what "new birth" and "new life in Christ" is all about. It means that: evil can be changed into good actions, bad habits can be replaced with good habits, painful defeats can be turned into joyous victories.”

But we know that change, bringing something new into being – into our life – isn’t easy. Just like making this declaration wasn’t easy for Jesus.

I don’t know how much you know about crucifixions – but I won’t go too deep. Most people who died on a cross died from asphyxiation – they often suffocated. With their arms outstretched – they would not be able to stop themselves from slumping down. Which meant – each time that Jesus spoke from the cross – he would have to raise himself up enough to get a breath that would be deep enough to speak. Imagine the

effort involved to straighten himself – to pull in enough air – to fill his lungs – to allow him to proclaim in a LOUD voice – IT IS FINISHED.

Change is possible – a new beginning is possible – it takes effort – but it can happen. Do you ever feel that there is a gap between your words and your actions? That can change. Do you ever daydream about a better life? It can change. Do you ever feel trapped by the past either because of the guilt you carry or because you only look back with rose colored glasses? That can change. Does your relationship with loved ones or friends lack the depth you want or need? Does your relationship with God lack the depth you want or need? That can change. Are you afraid to try, to work for something new or to make things better? It can change.

It is possible to say “it is finished” to the past and to pursue, to work for, to welcome in the new. It may not be easy – it may require effort – but it can be done.

When we started this Lenten Journey on Ash Wednesday – we invited you to use your thumb to make the shape of the cross on your

forehead each day to remember and to be committed to whatever you have been giving up or taking on through these days.

Now I want to invite you to think through what needs to change in your life – what needs to stay in the past as you move into the future? What line do you need to draw as you commit to be different, to live different, to act different, to expect different? What do you need to change?

I invite you to take a minute for prayer – to ask Jesus to help you do what may not be easy – then use your finger and mark your forehead with the shape of the cross and repeat the words of Jesus, **“It. Is.**

**Finished!”**