

IT TRULY IS FINISHED
Sermon for Good Friday 2026
John 19:30

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 19:30: **When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Once again, we find ourselves standing beneath the cross of our Saviour. On the night of Jesus’ birth, the sky above Bethlehem was lit up by the heavenly host who appeared to the shepherds. But on the day of His death, for three hours, the sky darkened, filling everyone’s hearts with terror and fear. This darkness cannot be explained by an eclipse of the sun, since such an event is not possible when the moon is full, as is the case at the time of the Passover. Neither can it be explained away by a dust-laden wind, a dark cloud, or something else. Luke simply tells us in his Gospel that the *“sun’s light failed”* (Luke 23:45) and leaves the matter there. All creation groans in darkness when the Light of the world is extinguished.

In that tragic scene on Calvary’s hill, we find the innocent Victim, our Saviour, nailed to the cursed tree, weak from blood loss, dry from thirst, with His nerves in His hands and feet supporting the entire weight of His exhausted body. People are standing below Him, while two criminals are suffering in great agony at His sides. As the end draws near, we hear our Saviour speak for the sixth time. And what does He say? It is but a brief exclamation, yet one of the most significant in the history of man. **“It is finished.”**

“**When**” reads our text, **“Jesus had received the sour wine,”** when He had taken the drink from the sponge that had been held up to His lips, and a thrill of rejuvenating strength passed through His parched body, He opened His lips and said, **“It is finished.”** What is finished?

The natural thing to assume would be that His physical suffering is finished. After all, beginning at the Garden of Gethsemane, He had been in agony. Luke tells us that while there, *“He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.” And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground”* (Luke 22:42-44). Again, think of the violence that had been done to Him in Pontius Pilate’s judgment hall. This time Matthew tells us how *“The soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they spit on Him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to crucify Him”* (Matt. 27:27-31). And finally, again from Luke we read, *“When they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified Him”* (Luke 23:33).

When Jesus said, **“It is finished,”** those things were now over, ended. But we can’t leave it there. The end of physical suffering is not enough to justify this outcry. *There was more in the cross than just physical agony.*

Throughout the years since Christ’s death, the crucifixion has been depicted in artworks. Among these

is a picture showing the scene on Calvary on the evening after the Saviour's body was taken down and laid in the grave.

You can picture it in your mind. The cross is empty, and an angel kneeling at the foot of the cross holds the crown of thorns, feeling with the tip of his finger one of the sharp points. His face shows mystery and wonder as he tries to understand what caused such grief to his Lord. And we, too, imagine ourselves taking up the crown of thorns, feeling its prickliness, touching the nails and their sharp points, raising the spear that pierced Jesus' side and His heart, and asking, "*Was it these alone that caused such agony to our Lord?*" And we must answer, "**No.**" Yes, the thorns are prickly, the spear is sharp, and the nails are pointed, but there was more than these that brought such suffering and pain to Jesus. Already in the Garden, where no sinful hand had touched Him, no ruthless nails or spear had pierced His body, He had exclaimed: "*My soul is very sorrowful, even to death*" (Matt. 26:38). Far greater and deeper than the physical sufferings that our Lord experienced were the spiritual pains—the sorrows that prompted His tremendous cry: "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*" (Matt. 27:46). But now, as He uttered this cry, all the sharp pain, the ongoing sorrow, the anguish of heart, and the inward struggle were over. "**It is finished.**"

But these words still hold a *deeper significance*.

To understand them properly, we must take the sacred pages of the Old Testament into our hands. There we are told, in its very first pages, that as soon as sin entered the world, a promise of a Redeemer was given to man—One who would crush the serpent's head.¹ This promise was continually repeated over four thousand years and became clearer as the ages passed. Just as, after the waters of the Great Flood receded, a rainbow was placed in the sky to assure mankind that the earth would no longer perish by flood², so, when the greater flood of sin entered the world, God gave these glorious promises—like a rainbow in the sky, foretelling to His people the salvation to come in due time. We don't have time this morning to go through all these promises, but let us remember a few familiar ones. There's Zechariah's prophecy: "*So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver*" (Zech. 11:12). There's David's prophecy: "*They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots*" (Psalm 22:18). There's Isaiah's prediction: "*He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His wounds we are healed*" (Isaiah 53:5). Again, another prophetic word: "*He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken*" (Psalm 32:20), and "*They shall look on Him whom they have pierced*" (Zech. 12:10).

And when we turn to the New Testament, to the accounts of the holy evangelists, we marvel at *how precisely* and wonderfully these and other Messianic predictions were fulfilled, down to the smallest detail, as Christ hung upon the cross. Because He knew all this and had in His person accomplished these predictions, He exclaimed, "**It is finished.**"

But not only were the promises and prophecies fulfilled, but also *the types and foreshadowing*.

With the entrance of sin into the world, men were taught to approach God through sacrifice. As we read immediately after the Fall, Abel, the second son of Adam, offered the firstborn of his flock upon an altar. What did that signify? It symbolised, foreshadowed, and pointed forward to the sacrifice of the promised Redeemer on the cross. This pattern extended through Noah, Abraham, and all the patriarchs.

When the Jews became a nation and built their Tabernacle and Temple, God established a detailed system of sacrifices and offerings. They were to bring these sacrifices daily, but the sacrifice on the *Great Day of Atonement* was especially significant, *corresponding* to our Good Friday. On that day, two goats were chosen—one was slaughtered, and its blood taken by the high priest into the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the Tabernacle and Temple, where it was sprinkled on the mercy-seat,

¹ Genesis 3:15

² Genesis 8:13-15

the top of the Ark of the Covenant; the other goat, after the high priest confessed the people's sins over it, was led into the wilderness to symbolise the removal of sins. What powerful scenes! What do they reveal? Even a child can understand. ***The tragedy on Calvary.***

Not only were prophecies and sacrifices fulfilled, but numerous incidents as well! Consider Moses lifting up the bronze serpent on a pole shaped like a cross in the wilderness. Think of Abraham, the patriarch, climbing Mount Moriah, binding his only beloved son, Isaac, on an altar with the intent to sacrifice him. What is that story in the Bible meant to teach us? Or recall the night when the angel of death swept through Egypt to kill all the firstborn in every household; the Israelites killed a blemish-free lamb, sprinkled its blood on their doorframes, and the angel passed over their houses marked with blood. When and where were all these Old Testament events fulfilled? Here and now—in the death of Christ on Good Friday.

Now pay attention to one particular detail: Our Lord was crucified at the third hour of the day, around nine o'clock, as the Jews marked their day from six in the morning to six in the evening. *At that same hour*, according to God's command, a lamb was to be placed on the altar in the Temple, announced by the sound of a silver trumpet, prompting the people to pray. We have seen that our Lord was crucified *at that precise hour*, and it's reasonable to imagine that as the cross was lifted, the temple's trumpet sounded to announce the morning sacrifice. ***Here, at that hour, was the ultimate sacrifice.*** Again, at the ninth hour—around three o'clock in the afternoon—the evening sacrifice was to be offered. That was the exact moment when Jesus died, and the temple trumpet's blast, carried by the wind over Calvary, coincided with His cry from the cross, ***"It is finished."*** *That was the greatest sacrifice—the one all those temple sacrifices pointed to and drew their meaning from.* Oh, the wonder of it, the profound significance—the key that unlocks the true understanding of the Old Testament scriptures!

And so, we say that the great work for which that Man, the God-man, came into the world, *was finished.* What work? ***None other than the salvation of man.*** The Apostle Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said it well, *"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). That is the deepest, fullest meaning of that sixth word from the cross. Atonement and reconciliation between God and man. Finished, completed redemption.

And now, what does that mean to us, and how ought it to affect us?

From the Book of Genesis, we read that when God finished creating this world and everything within it, at the end of the sixth day, He surveyed His work and pronounced His divine verdict: *"God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good"* (Gen. 1:31). The Hebrew word for "good" refers to something which is beautiful or pleasant, which delights the eye of the beholder. In other words, creation was perfect in every way. Again, in His discussion with Job, where God asks Job questions about the creation of the world, He asks where Job was when *"the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy"* (Job 38:7). Angels sang joyfully at creation. Creation must truly have been a glorious event and one that showed absolute perfection.

But with what greater exultation, do you think, must God the Father have regarded the *even grander work* of His Son's redemption when there echoed across the bleak hill of Golgotha His triumphant cry, ***"It is finished."***

We can imagine Him speaking, as it were, *"It is good, My Son, very good,"* and the hosts of heaven singing out as they did at His birth: *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"* (Luke 2:14).

And what of us, us, for whom this entire event has been arranged? Should we remain unaffected when God the Father Himself and the angels in heaven thus rejoice? What does it mean to us?

There is no denying the fact that we are great sinners, subject to God's wrath and eternal condemnation. Yet listen to that voice from Calvary. ***"It is finished."*** *"There is therefore now no*

condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Yes, the wages of sin is death³, but that voice still rings out from Calvary, “**It is finished.**” “*O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*” (1 Cor. 15:55). But you are not perfectly holy, are you? Satan still has some claim on you. **No, he doesn’t.** That voice still rings out from Calvary, “**It is finished.**” We belong to God. “*Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands,*” He says (Is. 49:16). The old evil Foe may mean deadly woe, but he can harm us none; he’s judged, the deed is done. One little word, “**It is finished,**” can fell him.

Since that great victory on Calvary, sin, death, and Satan are powerless, harmless foes. If only we would always remember that! Let nothing, no fears, no doubts, no false teachings, rob us of that comforting assurance.

Dear friends, Christ has given His life for us. What a great, tremendous sacrifice has been made on our behalf. The plan to save us has been completed. What can we give the Lord in return? With Luther, we answer, “*We can return nothing to God except the vows of praise and confession, for we have all things from Him and He needs nothing of our goods*” (Luther’s Works, 11:404).

At some point today, take the time to read Psalm 116. In the comforting words of this psalm, you will be reminded that God cares deeply about your mortality and has released you from its permanent bonds through the suffering, death, and resurrection of His Son. “**It is finished.**” Yes, Lord, it truly is. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

³ Romans 6:23