



It Is Finished

Message Notes, November 6, 2016

John 19:16-30

The time has finally come – Jesus’ crucifixion. The fulfillment of his mission. The culmination of John’s gospel – all he has written from verse 1:1 has been pointing to this moment. The fulcrum event in all of history. Jesus declares it with his dying breath – “It is finished.” The old way of sin, guilt and death is vanquished by grace, redemption and life.

Examining the cross in the context of this study of John gives it even fuller meaning. All that has come before has pointed to and laid the foundation for this crucial event in history: Incarnation; Jesus’ baptism; his temptation in the wilderness; his teachings, miracles and encounters of compassion; the masses; the opposing religious leaders; discipleship of his immediate 12 and his upper room time with them – the assurances, instructions, commissioning, intercession, time in the garden, his arrest and trial, and now, his death.

John spent five chapters recounting the intimate hours in the upper room, but only 14 verses describe the crucifixion. Why is this?

- He is not minimizing the import of the Cross. It is central to his gospel and to human history.
- Perhaps he does not want to taint it with drama or a play on emotions. The weight and meaning of this event stands on its own merits.
- Perhaps it is difficult to describe the experience in detail. John was there through it all.

He describes seven significant elements of Jesus’ crucifixion:

1. Jesus carried his own cross.

This was customary for the day. Criminals were paraded with their cross before the people to highlight the consequence of crime. From other gospel accounts, Jesus was so exhausted from his torture at the hands of the soldiers that he needed assistance carrying his cross for the final stretch, but John is driving home the point that *this was a work Jesus had to do himself*. Jesus *went* to the cross; he was not forced to it.

2. He was crucified between two thieves/sinners.

- Throughout his life, Jesus was regularly drawn to sinners (ironically one of the accusations against him).
- From other gospel accounts, we know that one criminal believed in Jesus and the other rejected him. A striking microcosm of the human condition: Salvation available to all, but choice is required; some believe and, sadly, some reject.

3. The sign over his head: “Jesus of Nazareth – King of the Jews”

- The Pharisees resented this, saying, “write He claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate was perhaps jabbing back at them for forcing his hand. He replied, “What I have written, I have written.”
- Written in multiple languages: Hebrew and Aramaic, the local tongues; Latin, the language of the empire; and Greek, considered the universal language. This a meaningful expression of the redemption of his cross being for all people – *any* who would believe.



4. They divided his clothes among them.

This fulfilled the prophecy scripture in Psalm 22 (verse 18)

5. Giving of his mother to a new son (John, vv. 25-27).

- Even in his dying he is tender, compassionate and selfless.
- Caring for his mother, affirming his dear friend.
- This moment is deeply wounding for Mary – before Jesus was Messiah, he was the baby she nursed, the boy she trained, the young man she released. He is the son she loves.

6. I am thirsty.

- The “living water” himself, now parched with thirst (reflecting the reality of his humanity).
- Also reflecting the depth of his love and sacrifice as he pours himself out, emptying his life for us.

7. It is Finished!

The Greek word here means “completed” or “accomplished”; also used for a “debt fully paid/cleared.”

Jesus has completed his work, he has accomplished his mission, he has fully paid the debt for humanity.

But this is not simply a critical moment in John’s gospel, it is the critical moment in all of history. The culmination of the redemptive purpose of God, foreshadowed in all of scripture:

- Genesis 3:14-15
- The Passover that led to the release and exodus of the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt – the passing over of the angel of death because of the posting of lamb’s blood over their doors.
- The ongoing sacrificial system in Israel requiring the shedding of blood for forgiveness of sins.
- Psalm 22: 1-4
- Isaiah 53:1-6

All of these glimpses showing the “cruciality” of the Cross – the “turning point” that explains all that has come before and reveals the new that is being ushered in.

What is finished?

1. Jesus’ response to His Father’s will.

The Father has sent Jesus to die; this is His purpose. Jesus has seen it through (willfully) to the very end.

2. Jesus’ redemption of His Father’s world.

John 3:16, “for God so loved the world ...”

3. Jesus’ revelation of his Father’s heart.

This whole event is fueled by unconditional love. Love sent Jesus to this Cross.

We, like the two thieves are faced with a choice:

- Die to self and humbly surrender to the love and grace of God.
- Reject “so great a gift” to maintain lordship of our own lives. This is the heart of rebellion.

**Response**

1. Perhaps the best response is to meditate on His unfathomable, sacrificial gift to us and worship Him in awe and thanksgiving. But such worship must move us beyond emotion to ...
2. ... A renewed devotion to honor and love Him through holy obedience, committing our hearts to seek him first in all our days, and also to kindle ...
3. ... A renewed passion for inviting others into His gift of love and redemption.