

It Is Finished!

John 19:30 -- **"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."**

Unfinished Business ... We all know what it's like, don't we? All of us have unfinished things cluttering up the highway of life.

- the half-mowed lawn
- the half-read book
- the letter started but never sent
- the abandoned diet
- the degree we never finished
- the phone calls never returned

But it can be much more serious than that.

- the abandoned child
- the job we quit in a fit of anger
- the wrecked marriage
- the bills never paid
- the promises never kept

All of us go through life leaving behind a trail of unfinished projects and unfulfilled dreams. How few there are who can come to the end of life and say, "I finished exactly what I set out to do."

Only one person in history never left behind any unfinished business. His name is Jesus Christ. He is the only person who could come to the end of his life and say—with absolute and total truthfulness—"I have finished everything I set out to do."

It is Friday in Jerusalem and a huge crowd has gathered at the place called Skull Hill. It was on the north side of the city, just outside the Damascus Gate, and located by the side of a well-traveled road. The Romans liked to hold their crucifixions in public places. Killing people in public had a restraining effect on the masses. Three men would be hung on crosses that day.

This particular crucifixion started at 9 A.M. For three hours everything proceeded normally. Then at exactly 12 noon, the sky went black. Not overcast, but black. It wasn't just a normal eclipse of the sun. You could feel the weight of this shadow as if all the good in the world had been stripped away. For three hours darkness fell across the city of Jerusalem.

One glance at the middle cross made it clear that this man Jesus would not last much longer. He looked dead already. His body quivered uncontrollably, his chest heaving with every tortured breath. The soldiers knew from long experience that he wouldn't make it to sundown.

Then it happened. He shouted something—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Someone in the crowd shouted back at him. Moments passed, death drew near, then a hoarse whisper, "I thirst." Someone put some sour vinegar on a sponge and lifted it to his lips with a stalk of hyssop. He moistened his lips and took a deep breath. If you listened you could hear the death rattle in his throat.

Then he spoke again. It was a quick shout. Just one word. If you weren't paying attention, you missed it in all the confusion. Then he breathed out another sentence. Then he was dead.

What was that shout? In the language of the New Testament it is only one word ... Tetelestai ... "It is finished."

Tetelestai comes from the verb teleo, which means "to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish." It's a crucial word because it signifies the successful end to a particular course of action. It's the word you would use when you reach the summit of Mt. Everest; it's the word you would use when you make the final payment on your house; it's the word you use when you cross the finish line in a marathon. The word means more than just "I survived." It means "I did it all-- exactly what I set out to do."

When Jesus cried out "It is finished," he meant "It was finished in the past, it is still finished in the present and it will remain finished forever."

Jesus did not say, "I am finished," for that would imply that he died defeated and exhausted. Rather, he cried out "It is finished."

Tetelestai is the Savior's final cry of victory. When he died, he left no unfinished business behind.

When you read these words of Jesus, only one question grips the mind—What was finished?

The work of redemption was now complete. Matthew Henry expands on what Christ's death accomplished in four statements, each one beginning with the letter F. The death of Christ provided a ...

- A. Full satisfaction for sin
- B. Fatal blow to Satan
- C. Fountain of grace opened that will flow forever
- D. Foundation of peace laid that will last forever

Tetelestai was used in the first and second centuries in the sense of "fulfilling" or "paying" a debt and often appeared in receipts. "It is finished" (Tetelestai) could be interpreted as "Paid in full."

"Paid in full" means that once a thing is paid for, you never have to pay for it again. So let me ask you a personal question. What sin is keeping you from God today? Is it anger? Is it lust? Is it a hard heart of unbelief? Is it alcohol abuse? Is

it an uncontrollable temper? Is it lying? Is it stealing? Is it adultery? Is it pornography? Is it pride? Is it greed?

Let me tell you the best news you've ever heard. It doesn't matter what "your" sin is. It doesn't matter how many sins you've piled up in your life. It doesn't matter how guilty you think you are. It doesn't matter what you've been doing this week. It doesn't matter how bad you've been. It doesn't matter how many skeletons rattle around in your closet.

All of your sins have been stamped by God with one word—*Tetelestai*—Paid in full. 1 John 2:2 says this about Jesus, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." Propitiation means the payment that removes the penalty.

Anger ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Rebellious pride ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Gossip ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Drunkenness ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Fornication ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Lying ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Disobedience ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Murder ... *Tetelestai* ... Paid in Full

Those are just examples. Just fill in the blank with whatever sins plague your life. Then write over those sins the word *Tetelestai* because through the blood of Jesus Christ the price for "your" sins has been Paid in Full.

Since Jesus Christ paid in full, the work of salvation is now complete. That is what "It is finished" means. The debt was paid, the work was accomplished, the sacrifice was completed, once-for-all, forever.

Since Jesus Christ paid in full, all efforts to add anything to what Christ did on the cross are doomed to failure. You can't add anything to the value of what Jesus did on the cross. If Jesus paid it all, you don't have to. If you try to pay for your salvation, it means you don't think he paid it all. There is no middle ground either Jesus finished it, or He didn't.

God is not trying to sell you salvation. He's not offering salvation at half-price. He's not offering to go "Dutch Treat" with you. He's not offering salvation on an installment plan. God is offering you salvation free of charge. That's what *Tetelestai* means. Jesus paid in full so you wouldn't have to pay anything.

There was once a rather straight-forward preacher named Alexander Wooten. One day a young man approached Wooten and in a tone dripping with sarcasm he flippantly asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

Wooten replied, - almost in a dismissive way, - "It's too late!" ... and he kept on doing what he was doing. The young man became alarmed. He was not

expecting this response! Sobered, he asked in earnest, "Do you mean, Mr. Wooten, it is too late for me to be saved?! Is there nothing I can do?" ...

"Too late," came the reply, "It's already been done! The only thing you must do now is believe."

It is finished. That is the message of this cross. It's too late for you to do anything; Jesus has already done it all. Since Jesus Christ paid in full, the only thing you can do is accept it or reject it.

Thanks be to God that Jesus left no unfinished business behind. He finished what he came to do, and in finishing his work he paid in full the price for your sins. As the old hymn says,

I hear the Savior say,
"Thy strength indeed is small,
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in Me thine all in all."

*Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy pow'r, and Thine alone,
Can change the leper's spots,
And melt the heart of stone.

For nothing good have
I Whereby Thy grace to claim—
I'll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.

And when, before the throne,
I stand in Him complete,
"Jesus died my soul to save,
My lips shall still repeat.

*Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.*