

Powerful Words – Powerful Passion: “It is Finished!”

Text: John 19:17-30

17 And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. 19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin. 21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' " 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." 23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things. 25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*. 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. 30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, once wrote in the book of Ecclesiastes, “**The end of a thing is better than its beginning**” (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Don’t we find this to be true so many times in life? For example, what is better: the feeling of waking up at the crack of dawn at the beginning of a very busy day, or laying your head down on your pillow after that day is done with the satisfaction of a job well done? Those of you who have ever participated in a long distance race or a marathon probably understand this as well as anyone. There is excitement and energy at the start of the race, but there is absolutely nothing that can compare to the feeling you get when you finally cross that finish line. “**The end of a thing is better than its beginning**” (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

If this is true in life, how much more true is it in death? The day of our birth and our baptism into God’s family was truly a joyous occasion, but think of all the hardships of life that we endure throughout our time here on earth. Think of the sinful, fallen world we are subjected to on the day of our birth. Think of how much more glorious our end will be than our beginning! The day when we hear our Heavenly Father say to us, “**Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your Lord!**” (Matthew 25:23). The day of our death will actually be the greatest day of our lives!

“**The end of a thing is better than its beginning**” (Ecclesiastes 7:8). This statement holds true for Jesus life as well. Remember back just a few months ago to the day we celebrated Jesus birth. Do you remember the joy and excitement? How about tonight, Good Friday evening, as we “celebrate” the death of our Savior? Obviously there is great sadness involved with Jesus’ death when we think of all that He endured because our sins put Him on that cursed cross; when we think of God Himself dying; when we think of Jesus going through hell itself during the darkness of those three hours when He was forsaken by God the Father. But there is also great joy on Good Friday! Greater joy for our souls than even at Jesus’ birth! At His birth Jesus had so much left to accomplish; so many temptations to withstand, so many prophecies to fulfill, so many of God’s Laws to keep, so much pressure to accomplish it all perfectly. The fate of the entire human race for all times rested on the shoulders of this little baby born in a barn in a small town in the tiny region of Judea. But now, when Jesus spoke these **Powerful Words** of His **Powerful Passion**, “**It is finished!**” (John 19:30), it was all over. John tells us Jesus knew “**that all things were now accomplished**” (v. 28).

What a relief! However, these weren't just words of relief from Jesus after a "job well done." They weren't just the exhausted sighs of a man who was about to willingly give up His life either. No, it was a victorious shout, "**It is finished!**" These were some of the most powerful words ever spoken!

Why were they so powerful? First of all, just think of all that was "**finished**" by Jesus' death on the cross. God's plan of salvation didn't start with the **Powerful Words** of the angels at Jesus birth, "**For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" (Luke 2:11). It didn't start hundreds of years earlier with the **Powerful Words** of the prophets predicting Jesus' work of salvation, "**And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all**" (Isaiah 53:6). It didn't even begin with God's **Powerful Words** at the beginning of time, "**Let there be...**" (Genesis 1:1). No, God's plan of salvation for mankind began in eternity! From eternity God knew mankind would fall into sin and would need a Savior, His Son Jesus. From eternity—from before time even began—God knew that you and I would be born sinful, lost and in need of a Savior as well. God also knew from eternity that He wanted us for His very own to share eternity with Him and His Son Jesus, so He chose us and made us His sons and daughters by faith in Christ.

How do we know this? God told us Himself! **2 Timothy 1:9** "[God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." That plan—this eternal plan—was "**finished**" at the moment of Jesus' death:

- † Thousands of years of promises and prophecies of the redemptive work of the coming Savior: "**It is finished!**"
- † The perfect fulfillment of all of God's Laws on behalf of all people, who could never keep them: "**It is finished!**"
- † The insults, the wounds and stripes inflicted on Jesus that gave us our healing: "**It is finished!**"
- † The very precious blood of God Himself shed for us and for the sins of the whole world: "**It is finished!**"
- † The full and total punishment for sins—hell itself and abandonment by God the Father: "**It is finished!**"
- † Forgiveness and everlasting salvation purchased and won for all people for all time: "**It is finished!**"

These **Powerful Words** of Jesus spoken on that horrible cross are also wonderful words of comfort to all of us, especially when Satan comes and puts His doubts and accusations into our hearts. "*You must have to do something to make up for all those terrible sins you've committed! Surely, God can't be pleased with you, not after all the things I know you've done!*"

Jesus' victorious shout silences Satan's accusations, and all our doubts and fears about the certainty of our salvation. "**It is finished!**" He cries from the cross. Cling to that cross, listen to that voice of truth, that shout of victory. There is nothing left to do to secure our salvation. It has all been done. It was done by Jesus, the only one who could do it; the only One who could truly say "**It is finished!**"

Yes, Good Friday is a time for us to stand at the foot of Christ's cross in sorrow over our sins that put Him there, but it is also a time to gaze at our crucified Savior in wonder over His great love and rejoice in our salvation which He "**finished**" there.

Even though Jesus "**finished**" His work of redemption for the sins of all people on the cross that Good Friday Jesus Himself was not "**finished**." His story does not end there; it does not end in His death. Because of a few more very **Powerful Words** which we will hear this Easter Sunday morning, "**He is Risen!**" our stories won't end at our death either. Our death will instead be the day we receive true life—everlasting life. Then, because of Jesus' completely "**finished**" work we too will know fully for ourselves that "**The end of a thing is better than its beginning**" (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Amen.