

The Rev. Michael J. Bridge  
Sermon- John 19:1-37  
Friday, April 14, 2017

### It is finished

1. "It is finished." What a powerful phrase; perhaps the most powerful in all of scripture. These are the last words Jesus cried out before giving up his spirit and dying. These aren't just the random, passing words of a dying man. They are words of great theological significance that are worthy of our meditation and full acceptance.
2. To understand the depth of this statement, we must understand the depth of God's plans. Jesus has always existed alongside his heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. At the point of creating Adam, the triune godhead already knew that Adam would reject him. The Son chose to be the agent of the Father's creative works knowing fully at that time that he would eventually, of his own will, take on Adam's form and pay the price for Adam's, and all of his offspring's sins.
3. When we consider the words, "It is finished," they should be understood in the context of a plan for God's people that began before he ever created them. Jesus wasn't just crying out that his few hours of anguish on the cross were finished; but that the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan for his people from creation to the cross had reached its completion.

### The work of atonement is finished

1. "It is finished" speaks of the work of atonement. As the author of Hebrews speaks about at length, the OT system was to have sacrifices repeated over and over. Those sacrifices were insufficient because the blood of animals could never really cover the sins of man.
2. Hebrews 10:1-4, "For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."
3. Christ completed the work of atonement of which the sacrificial system under the law was merely a shadow. Hebrews 10:10-14, "And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet."

### The work of salvation is finished

1. "It is finished" speaks of the full work of salvation. Consider what the writer of Hebrews says in verse 14, "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." Jesus' sacrifice on the cross did the full work of salvation. It isn't up to us to do the work for ourselves.
2. The dominant view in the Church seems to be that God has done most of the work, but we have to do that last tiny part. "It is finished," becomes, "We're almost there." Jesus then becomes the great cheerleader urging us on. "Come on, you can do it. I have called you. I have done the hard part. Just respond. Just do that last little bit."

- a. “It is finished” has a finality to it that we shouldn’t miss, reject, or try to undo. The work is complete. Salvation has been secured for exactly those people whom God intended to save; those whom he set aside in Christ.
3. Consider Jesus’ words earlier in John’s gospel. John 6:43-46, “Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me-- not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.””
4. Do you see the finality of these words? No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him. We might say, “Yes, but he draws us all, but not all come. Some resist.” Is that possible from Jesus’ teaching here? “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.” Whom will Jesus raise up on the last day? The one the Father draws. Thus, why Jesus says, “Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.” All who are drawn are raised up on the last day. Therefore, all who are drawn hear the Father and learn from him and come to the Son.
5. In this we can see the depth and power of the cry, “It is finished.” The plan of redemption has come to completion. The atonement has been made in full. The work of salvation- God’s saving work for his elect- is complete. It is these truths that make the horrible scene on that Friday into a day we can truly celebrate as Good Friday.