

“All is Accomplished”

John 19:30

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We've reached the last two words of Jesus from the Cross in our Lenten series, the sixth of which we will discuss this evening, and then the final word of Jesus will be the subject of the sermon on Good Friday. The sixth word of Jesus comes to us from John 19:30, where the Apostle records, “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished,’ and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.” But what is it exactly that has been finished? With these 3 words, our Lord and Savior has proclaimed that all is accomplished. It is done. The redemption of the world is complete and He may now rest as the good and faithful Servant that only He can be. With His dying breath He gives this report to His Father in heaven that what He was sent to do is completed. There is nothing else needed to satisfy the righteous requirements of God.

This report of accomplishment stated to the Father is said for all men to hear, that they might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, just as the centurion who stood there proclaims in Mark 15:39. We discussed last week that Jesus asked for a drink, so that He would have the ability to make this very proclamation. He could have said it quietly or even mindfully to His Father in heaven. After all, prayer doesn't have to be out loud to be heard by God. But He says it in such a way, that there can be no doubt that everything leading up to this moment was entirely necessary. Everything the prophets said about the Messiah and the work He came to do to redeem God's people is fully done. The true Day of Atonement has come and the world no longer needs to wait for the coming of the Anointed One, who is Christ the Lord.

As we have gone through these words of Jesus on the cross, each time I have brought out for you a binding theme in all of them. Jesus' heart and mind even in the midst of agonizing suffering and pain, even in the moment of His death, is fixed solely upon you. He is there to redeem you, not just the whole world, but you the individual believer who is His baptized child. All receive this great gift from our loving God, but you must never forget that it is for your sins that He died, for your eternity that He gave up His own life. He knows each and every one of you, and has finished the race of salvation so that you might be brought across the finish line by faith in Him. Without His accomplishment of this redemptive work, we would be doomed to run this race incessantly without end.

The sin with which we were born would weigh us down and drag us to the darkness of hell if it was our responsibility to finish this mighty work. Only Jesus, the very Son of God, has the power to redeem the world, and only He has the power to redeem you. You don't have the power to save yourself. No one does. And if left to save yourself, you would simply drown in the ocean of your own sin. There is no boat which you can build for yourself to escape that flood. The only boat which will save you from that is the baptismal boat of our Lord. As one who has been washed in the blood of the Lamb, there you are kept safe from the swirling waters of disaster.

And as our Old Adam continually tries to cling to the side of that boat, we kick him off and drown him daily in repentance and forgiveness. There we see the blessed truth of what Jesus has finished. He has given us free access to His forgiveness. In the words of absolution, He proclaims through the mouth of His undershepherd, "I forgive you all of your sins." In the water of Baptism, His word proclaims that you are now His, and no longer a slave to your sin. And in His Holy Supper, He gives you His very body and blood that Your sins would be no more. Sin is finished. Its power is dead, and its perpetrator no longer holds sway over the people of God. Satan is defeated. Death is defeated.

This victory which Christ has won is our victory as well. We reap the benefits of a hard-fought victory, and yet, we did nothing to deserve or earn it. Christ suffered all the pain, and He alone suffered the death that came upon Him as He bore the weight of every sin this world has ever made. And as I said before, this pain and suffering would not deter Him from keeping His every thought fixed on you. He is there on that cross for you, not for Himself. He is there that He might be able to go before the Father, point at each one of you and say, "This one is mine, and they are righteous." The righteous Judge, our Father in heaven, keeps our sins as far from Him as the east is from the west, which David says in Psalm 103. But what does that truly mean?

That is what has been accomplished by Jesus at the cross. He has made it so that when the Father sees us, all He sees is His Son. Because Jesus has imputed His righteousness to us by His blood, covered us in it in the waters of our baptism that we would stand before God dressed in the pure white robes that have been won for us by Christ. 1 John 3:5 says, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin." Jesus came to wipe away the debt that we owe for the sins we bear, and He had the ability to do so because He had no debt. He had no sin to satisfy with payment. And when we link this passage from John with the understanding of Paul from Romans 12:5, where he says, "So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and

individually members one of another,” we can clearly see that we no longer bear the burden of guilt.

Jesus has taken all of it, and because we are one body together in Him, His righteousness belongs to us by way of this great gift. He freely gives to us that which He has accomplished, and not because we deserve it, but simply because He loves us. That is why He went to the cross. He went there to accomplish our redemption, to show God’s great love for those whom He created, that we might be reconciled to Him and no longer be alienated. Our desire is to be with God, but not because we want that in our sinful flesh, for it is opposed to all that is good, right, and Godly. We desire to be with God because of the faith that we have in Christ Jesus, who by way of a bloody cross has done all that is necessary to bring us that desire. By His blood we are able to mortify our sinful flesh, and turn always to Him for our strength and hope.

Jesus proclaimed that “It is finished,” and because of that truth we have been declared righteous before the Father in heaven. From that very moment, all those who believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation are redeemed. Not because of their ability to believe, but because they have been given the gift of faith in Him by the Holy Spirit. And what a gracious gift that is for us! The Lord has chosen us as His own, to be His people and to have eternal life as one body in Christ. All the work of Jesus, which is now completed at the cross of Calvary, has given us salvation, and marked us as His own. All is accomplished. And as baptized children of God, we now go forth, knowing that for His sake and by way of His atonement, we will live with Him in everlasting glory when we meet our Savior face to face. Amen.