It is Finished part 2

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[0:00] John 19, 28-30. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished,! He knew it was finished, he said, It is finished!

And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Hallelujah! The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord remains forever.
May this word be preached to you. Amen. Please be seated. I think you see in your bulletin, I think, but you would have gotten the, if you get the need to know email every Friday or Saturday, you recognize that today is prayer for the persecuted church Sunday.
And I will close my message in that prayer. And hopefully at prayer meeting tonight, if you can join us, we will spend some time as well. I don't know about you, but when I was a kid, I believed the 21st century was going to be utopia.
I mean, we drew pictures of flying cars, like the Jetsons. Okay, no wonder who that is, I know. But we drew pictures of flying cars and robots and spaceships. Man, we believed the world would be more enlightened.
[1:50] War, disease, and violence would be conquered. We had this utopian view of the 21st century. The death of the British actor, Sir Patrick Stewart, who was 86, his death this past week brought this idea home to me.

And you know Patrick Stewart. Many of you do, I'm sure. I hope you do. Come out from under your rock, please, if you help.
He was an esteemed Shakespearean actor who gave rise to two iconic cinematic characters. He played Professor Charles Xavier on The X-Men.
Okay, who's seen The X-Men? Come on, be honest. All right, all right. Okay, thank you. Professor X. Billy did a great job with that. But he was most memorable.
And more importantly, as the honorable philosopher warrior, captain of the starship Enterprise, Captain Jean-Luc Picard.
[3:03] Picard. The Klingons, Picard. I mean, I'm just great. I love this show. Listen, y'all, I'm attracted. I am. Yes, I went to the conference again this past summer. I'm attracted.

And don't forget, God be fair, the dear man who played Vincent Chekhov in the first series, Walter Koenig, also passed this past week as well.
So the Trekkies are mourning right now. We're in mourning. We're in mourning. But back to the future. Star Trek portrays the future, remember?
It's a few hundred years, a few centuries past where we are now. And it portrays the earth, basically, as an enlightened paradise.
The universe is a place of wonder, with worlds and beings of wonder. Some planets are even devoted to nothing but happiness in this fictional world.
[4:04] Yet, even then, evil is always present. Yeah, yeah. They can't get away. Fictional writers, even when they write about utopia, can't get away from the fact that all beings are flawed and fallen.

Tyrants and beings who bent on conquest and destruction populate the Star Trek universe. No matter how advanced we are, we still can't get away from our baser instincts.
We can't get away from us. Now, here's the important thing. Here's why I'm bringing this up. Stuart, like his character, Picard, and his wife, who is still living, were avowed atheists and humanists.
This is his language. I mean, this is what he is. This is what he was. Now, humanism is a philosophy and life stance that emphasizes the value, the agency, and the potential of human beings.
We are the apex predator of the universe, right? It places humanity at the center of moral and philosophical thought.

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[5:16] All right? We rely on reason, science, and empathy rather than religious dogma or the supernatural.

So the humanistic worldview that is all around us at all times says there is no God. And we don't need a God because we have everything we need within human humanity to figure life out, to figure out the problems that we face, and to do better.
And that's what the humanness is about, doing better. Patrick Stewart was an amazing humanitarian devoted to fighting against domestic violence, which he was a product of.
His mother, I think it was abused by his dad. Fighting against things like, you know, anything, women's rights, and anything that, he said, anything he could do to help people, it seemed that this man was very much involved in being a true humanist.
And listen, there's much to be valued in humanism. He's not, they're not wrong in many ways.
[6:37] We should do good. The Bible is clear that we are called to do good. The New Testament champions doing good in the name of Jesus. We should want to leave the world in a better place than it was when we were born.

We should want to make a mark. We should want to care about our neighbors. Not want, do. We should use reason.
These things are not wrong. And we, and to the humanists, I say, hey, that's, hey, you got some good stuff there. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Humanist. Thank you, Patrick Stewart.
He said some things that were very interesting. He said something, in one interview, he said, hope, he said, hope, it resonates. Positive feelings about the future.
We have to be positive about the difficult situations we find ourselves in. He said, no, the potential good in us is still to be explored so that we can become better human beings to ourselves as well as to others.
[7:47] He said, I sometimes feel we're only at the threshold of these discoveries. last one. How you live is as important as what you do.

That's good stuff in general. I mean, there's good stuff there. Hmm. How you live and what kind of person you are is very important.
And so I do applaud people like Pastor Stewart who tried to leave the world in a better place. Amen.
Yet contrast that kind of thinking with Christians. Today is All Saints Day, by the way. All Saints Sunday. This is the day that we remember the saints who have gone to glory.
Around this church we can think of some names, can't we? We remember those who went, who preceded us into the presence of the magnificent Jesus and the glory of God.
[8:59] But we also are praying for those who are alive today. Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith.

See, listen, they recognize the evil in this world and work to make it better. But what is their hope and motivation for doing so? See, we're going to move away from humanism a little bit here.
We're going to move away. We have to. They recognize something deeper, a better ground, a better hope to lay their lives down for.
more. They recognize that they are not cosmic accidents, but they are being created in the image of God, which is why they see much evil, much, that's why we see so much human potential, is because we're created in the image of God.
They recognize that, these saints who are being persecuted for their faith in different parts of the world. they recognize the fall into sin.
[10:10] It is not just the fact that we do evil, it is that we are sinners who have rebelled against God, which is why even though we have done great things throughout history, yet we're still flawed.

War still happens. People are still being hurt. we are attacking and killing and hurting and stealing from one another and it just, no matter how advanced we get technologically, the persecuted saints recognize that there's something deeply wrong in every human being.
So they find hope, listen, they find their hope not in our capacity to do better, but in the God of creation who came to rescue us from ourselves.
They find hope not in our reason, but in revelation that God is speaking and has spoken to show us the way, the truth, and the life.
and Jesus has come with his power to transform us so that we can live his life and when we die to enter into everlasting joy in his presence forever.

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[11:40] So because of this, our brothers and sisters in other countries who don't have religious freedom like we do here, are willing to lay down their lives to gather and to proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

They're facing the hatred of people merely because they're truly Christian.
And when they come to take them away in prison and even to death, they say, make it so.
make it so. For Jesus sake. Family, our Lord, it is finished is our gateway to life, death, and hope.
It is finished is how we look at the world and live in this world, knowing that whatever happens, he is victorious for us.
[12:52] Amen. So it is finished is our Lord's declaration of victory. And so I ask you the simple question, what is your hope in life and in death?

What is your hope? Jesus has drank the wine, he is thirsted to complete his mission, his thirst has been assuaged finished, as it were.
And now he utters those words. What did he mean by it is finished? It means, first of all, the king left nothing undone in accomplishing his mission.
Nothing undone. the word, the phrase it is finished, as you know, is only one word in the Greek New Testament. It's simply an interesting tongue twister, tetelestai.
It's a beautiful word. We have a plaque in my home, we found it I think in Gatlinburg, tetelestai. We had it by the door, and I'm aware of where Sandy put it, we can't find it at the moment, she's always cleaning stuff from tetelestai.
[14:04] We wanted to remind ourselves of the fact that Jesus said it is finished. Now, it appears that Jesus didn't just say this, it appears he shouted it.

You see, the other three gospels say he cried out, he spoke in a loud voice, now, you've got to feel this with me.
Come on, I want you to feel it. Crucifixion is death by asphyxiation, meaning you can't breathe. The only way to breathe is to pull up.
When you sag, you can't breathe. So the victims will always pull them, the thing stuck in this, pull up like that, there was a little board under their feet, so they could do it.
They would last for days on the cross, last for days, pulling up and breathing. Jesus has been on this cross for at least three hours and now he can barely breathe.
[15:13] He's weak, he's dehydrated, he has no energy left, there's nothing left, but for some reason he pulls up to shout this one word.

Do you see it? he pulls up with the last bit of his breath, he pulls up and shouts tetelestai, it is finished.
Why do you think he did that? It has to be important. Your last words are always important and the last words of the son of God are the most important ever spoken.
God now I was helped greatly by our theologian in residence Dr. Carl Ellis in an unpublished conversation. He told me that tetelestai was used in three ways in that era.
In the military context it means the war is won. In a business context it means the debt is paid. in a legal context it means the sentence is served.
[16:27] Now some theologians are debating which one did Jesus mean here. Guess what? He meant all three. All three. You see in a military context the cross is Jesus conquering all the forces of darkness against us.

Hallelujah. The devil thought he had him. He thought it was done. He thought it was finished. But he was wrong. Jesus has the last word.
We haven't even gone to the resurrection yet and already the cross is victory. He's defeated Sid. He's pulling him down and shattering his power.
God thank you. He's defeating him for us because the Bible says that he has the power of death and we human beings through the fear of death are being enslaved by him all of our lives.
And Jesus goes to the cross to defeat the devil that you and I no longer have to fear death. The resurrection is going to prove it. In the business context the debt is paid.
[17:40] We're going to come back to that one. Give me a minute. In the legal context the sentence is served. He served our sentence of death. The wages of sin is death.

On the cross Jesus is paying for that sentence for us who believe in him. Oh my goodness.
Reformed theologian John Murray wrote a classic book called Redemption Accomplished and Applied. I had to read it for seminary many years ago. Redemption or atonement is what Jesus has

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finished.
Redemption means, now you know this word, you've heard it many times, it's a Bible word so we always got to read it and think about it. What does it mean? We've been redeemed. What does he mean by this? It means we've been purchased as a slave out of the slave market by way of a ransom.
That's how you bought slaves back in those days. You would emancipate them by paying a ransom for them. paying some form of currency to get them out.
[18:49] So behold it, Pastor Kevin, this is America. We don't technically have slaves here anymore. But here's the thing, we're all born slaves in sin. We're all born slaves in sin and blinded in the devil's kingdom of darkness.

And in this kingdom and in this position we are unable to free ourselves. Here's the thing, most of us don't even want to free ourselves because we don't know we're enslaved.
Do you understand who you are as the people of God? You're light bearers. We're telling the world that they're stuck behind invisible bars.
Listen, I heard this somewhere, the best prison is the one when you can't see the bars. Kind of like that dog collar thing, right?
You know, the electric shock thing, you can put up an electric fence around, an invisible electric fence around your yard and the dog can't see it. Yeah, but he has a collar on.
[20:01] So he's running around the yard, Kobe, my dog, running around the yard having a good time, but as soon as he tries to cross the line, shit! I can see cold, my dog would keep doing it.

Finally, he get it. That's not a serious bad shock, people, so we're not trying to kill animals. But it's an invisible cage, it's an invisible bar, and all humanity is trapped behind this invisible cage that's called sin and death and the kingdom of darkness, and most of the time, we don't even know we're in it.
We don't know we're enslaved. Listen, the best trap is the one you can't see until it grabs you. So we live our lives enslaved, entrapped, never even knowing that we need emancipation.
That's why it's so important that you and I share the gospel. Because what we're telling people is that funny feeling you have, that feeling of dis-ease, that feeling of things aren't right, I'm not right. This feeling of loneliness sometimes and depression sometimes, this sense that I keep trying to do better, but I keep falling down.
[21:30] This sense we're here to tell people what you're dealing with is slavery to sin. I know people don't like to hear me say that word too often, but I'm sorry.

I really don't know how to preach without saying it. We're sinners. We're trapped. Jesus, with his blood on the cross, the it is finished, is him ransoming people out of slavery to sin, out of darkness, out of the trap, and bringing them to God.
Ephesians 1, 7, and 8. in him, Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.
I love that. Lavished grace. Not a little grace. He took a bucket for Niagara Falls of grace all over us so that we would be drawn to God, not because of our good works, because there aren't any good enough, but because of his great love.
We were in debt to God. Because of our captivity in the slave market of sin, our spiritual credit score was so low, it didn't even register.
[22:59] Some of you got a 600 credit score? It was worse than that. In heaven. Christ purchased us by paying our debts with the immeasurable value of his blood shed on the cross.

Today in finance we talk about someone buying another entity's debt. That means a third party assumes the debt from the original lender, but he gets a discount for it.
Never at full price. He always, when someone assumes, when someone buys your debt, they always buy it at a discount. Now, otherwise it wouldn't be worth it for him. Jesus didn't pay our debt on a discount.
There was no haggling, nor was there a layaway plan. Jesus paid the full price of our sins all at once.
first Peter 1 17 through 19. If you call on him as father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, judgment is coming.
[24:11] Then he says, if you call him father though, conduct yourselves with fear. Holy, that's holy fear. That's reverence and all. Fear throughout the time of your exile on this earth.

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Knowing this, why should you do this? Knowing this, you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers. How will we ransom, Peter?
Not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
Oh, family, Jesus says it is finished. He's saying I bought you for me. God is very possessive. You heard me say this before.
God's that which belongs to him, he guards and he keeps. He's better than a running back with the football.
[25:11] You ever watch a running back with football? A good running back is tucked under here. His arm got the stiff arm out. He's pushed. You know what I'm talking about, Charles.

Boom. You can't get near the ball. No. And when he goes into the hole, he's like this, two hands on it. He goes in hard. I play football a little bit. Just a little bit.
And I didn't fumble either. Jesus is even better than that. He holds us tight. And the devil can't.
The devil is always trying to grab you. He's always coming. Hey, Oliver. Let's talk. Let's hang out. You know me.
I'm your boy. He's always coming. He don't come to you in some stupid red suit. That's crazy stuff. That's not true, by the way. He don't come to you, hi, I'm the devil.
[26:12] I'm here to take you away. He don't show up like that. He comes up. Hey, girl. Looking kind of fine. Don't worry about that old stick in the wood over there.

I got something for you. You know, he comes up smooth and silky. And so he's always pawing at you. He's always pawing. But guess what? Jesus died so that he can't fumble you.
The devil can paw at you all he wants. He can grab at you all he wants. But it is finished says you his forever. And I don't care what the devil does or what life does.
I don't care how crazy life gets. It is finished says you're safe. Are you with me, doctor? Just checking. You're safe.
You've been ransomed. And the price of the price. The price. See, we don't understand how horrible sin is.
[27:18] The price shows us how horrible sin is. It also shows us how holy God is. You see, if it wasn't that bad, you know, maybe a few Hail Marys, you know, do some good deeds, and it'd be all good.

Listen, you just paint a beautiful portrait and donate it to some needy charity, it'd be all good. But see, sin is so bad, and God is so holy, that the only way, do you hear me?
The only way we could be set free, the only way we could be cleansed, the only way we could become the children of God was that Jesus had to say, it is finished.
Hallelujah. See, it's not about how valuable we are. It's about how wonderful he is.
he said, Pastor Kevin, aren't we the apex of God's creation? Aren't we invaluable?
[28:33] Yes, we are. Yes, we are. Yes, but there was a flood, and God got rid of everybody, except one family.

Jesus said, no, sorry, John the Baptist said God could raise up stones, raise up children of Abraham from the very stones. So, yes, we are valuable, but don't get crazy.
he is more glorious. It's his love that makes us, that gives us our dignity. It's his love that gives us our worth.
It's his love on the cross that says, yes, I want you and will keep you forever. I'll never let you go.
Oh, no, I don't know how long I've been preaching.
How long I've been preaching? No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. I'm going to find you, whoever it was. Was that you, Carl?
[29:37] That wasn't you, Carl. That wasn't you, Carl. I don't believe it. I do keep a timer up here. I forgot to put it up. Let's just ask the question, and I don't wrap this up.

The high king of heaven took off his royal robes, put on filthy rags to pay what we owed. It is finished means we are debt free in Christ.
We're free not to go our own way, but free to know and love God who paid our debt. I don't know about you, but if someone paid my mortgage, I want to be their friend.
If you don't have a mortgage, how about your student loans? you know, somebody paid off your loans, maybe somebody, your credit cards, you want to be their friend.

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How much more? God who paid off our great debt in his son, how much more do we want to know him and walk with him even as he walks with us?
[30:52] So the question is, are we looking for him though? God wants to reveal himself to you every day because you're his. He didn't save you so you could just, you know, go do your thing.

He saved you for him. Remember, he's possessive. He saved you for himself. So every day he wants to reveal himself to you. Here's one way we can look for him. Here's one way. Is there someone you need to forgive?
You see, I want to suggest to you that God allows people in our lives so that we can forgive them. forgiveness is like Jesus.
We glorify Jesus when we forgive. Now, just so you know, I'm not making this up. Matthew 6, 14 and 15, the Lord's prayer.
He says, for if we forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. We pray, forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And then he adds that last part I just read.
[31:54] we pray, forgive us our debts, Lord. Forgive us the debts we owe you. As we have forgiven our debtors, people who owe us.

He's not talking about money. The debt we owe God, I showed you, was sin. But when people hurt us and offend us, now they're in our debt. they owe us.
They owe us for what they've done to us. They owe us for how they've insulted us, assaulted us. They owe us. And yet, Jesus calls us to forgive them.
this is why we have to go back to it is finished.
We've got to live there. It is finished, says he's forgiving you of your sins. Now, therefore, therefore, therefore, you are now empowered and motivated to forgive others.
[33:01] I said both. It is finished, motivates me, because to receive a love like that from God, I did not earn it or deserve it.

When I bask in his forgiveness, it motivates me to want to pass on that grace to others. But more, I need more than motivation.
I need empowerment, because forgiving people who've hurt you, is really difficult. I mean, whoo, cut off my arm.
I got a what? Oh, okay, whoo. So we need empowerment. It is finished. It's also God empowering his people.
He sends us the Holy Spirit so that Christ lives in us, Christ in us, our hope of glory lives in us, so that we might be empowered with his life to forgive.
[34:11] It's so important that Jesus said, if you don't forgive, neither will your heavenly father forgive your trespasses.

God is this worse righteousness? What is this? What is this? What is saying that bitterness and an unwillingness to forgive calls into question whether we have experienced Christ paying our sin debt or not?
It calls into question. It just makes you wonder. Sometimes it's true, you haven't. Sometimes you have, but you're struggling. We understand this, but it does call into question.
When you will hold a grudge against somebody, it calls into question, do you understand? Have you been grasped by it is finished? Have you heard the word tetelestai spoken over you?
So I got to keep going back. You see, you will forgive if you recognize the depth of your sin and more the height of the glories of his grace and kindness to you when he said it is finished.
[35:24] Do you see grace and glory on the cross? Do you see him bowing his head? Oh my goodness. That language John uses here. It is finished.

He bows his head and releases his spirit. Dignity to the last. It was not a cry, it's almost done.
It was a cry that it is done. It is finished, it says that all we need to, all that was needed to satisfy divine justice and purchase of people through the forgiveness of their sins has been done.
It is set in motion, something that's more, something that's been set in motion. It's the redemption of all things. It's been set in motion at the cross. Jesus isn't done just with us.
He's going to redeem the entire cosmos. Everything is tainted. Everything is fallen. But Jesus, starting with his people, is going to redeem everything. He's going to set everything free. Renew all of creation.

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[36:33] creation. But it begins. The wave began at the cross. It's going to wash over all creation. All that is unlike him will be washed out.

Humanism says leave a legacy of good work. Here's an honest answer. What we leave behind is always unfinished.
finished. Every one of you will leave projects half done when you go. Every one of you will leave relationships half mended. You will leave apologies not spoken.
You will leave good intentions that never got past the intention. Even the most admired life ends in the middle of a sentence. What we do finish is never clean.
You hear me? What we do finish is never clean. It is always mixed with pride, with fear, with the thousand small selfishnesses we hardly even notice.
[37:40] And memory fades too. Famous people may be remembered longer than most but most of us will be forgotten in a generation or two. No one will remember your name in a generation or two.

leaving a legacy of good works that's a hard that's a thin thing to die on when it will be forgotten. That's very thin. I feel for my humanist friends because living and dying on it is finished by Jesus is much much much much firmer ground.
It's hope in this life and in the life to come. Don't be a humanist. Be someone who lives every day knowing it is finished.
It is finished for you. Debt has been paid. Battle has been won. Freedom has been given.
[39:02] Father drive home to us please the reality that Jesus finished all that needed to be done to bring us to you.

Help us to live each day in the light of that it is finished. Help us to call upon you every day because since this has been finished we can call you Father.
Father we pray for our brothers and sisters around the world and different parts of this world that are suffering because they name the name of Jesus.
Because they are committed to the name of Jesus. Because they will not recant. They will not turn their back. No matter what is being done to them they refuse to give up Jesus.
Lord hear their cry. And hear I cry for them. that you might grant them the grace to stand. To stand against the forces of darkness.
[40:07] The wiles of the devil. To stand as your people. To stand Lord and not to give up their testimony. But to rely on Jesus. The one who said it is finished for them.

And Father Lord we thank you for this country that has so much influence around the world. And we pray Lord that our politicians at the highest levels would seek to encourage nations to grant religious freedom especially to your people.
That we will put pressure on various countries to grant freedom to people who may not believe the party religion of that country.
But they believe in Jesus. And they hope in Jesus. We talk so much about politics in this country. Help us to use our influence for something better than us. Bigger than us. So Lord bless our brothers and sisters, our mothers and fathers who refuse to bow the need to bow.
[41:23] They refuse to give in to Babylon. Help us to help us to to live in it is finished and to stand even where we are.

Deliver us from worldliness. May we seek first the kingdom of God and your righteousness and find that in you we have all the power we need to live lives of forgiveness and grace and mercy and kindness.
Not to leave a legacy of good works Father but to glorify your son who has left us a legacy of good works that we may be delivered from evil.
Be exalted we pray in Jesus name Father. Amen.

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