

Sermon: Good Friday

Text: John 19:30: "It is finished!"

Theme: Jesus did everything for us.

Goal: Jesus died as a victor and had completed what He had come to do.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: When I was preparing the four Services for this Holy Week: the readings, the prayers, the Order of Service, the PPP, the sermon..., I said to myself after each of them was ready: One more is finished! I felt myself relieved and happy that the task had been done. - I think this is a general feeling when we accomplish a project.

"It is finished!" The greatest project ever planned came to its end. The eternal plan of God to bring humankind back to Him through the sacrifice of His own Son Jesus Christ was accomplished. Jesus was able to say on the cross: "It is finished!" in a loud cry. It is the shout of a victor, not the last words of a weak dying man. Jesus had said to the disciples (John 10:17-18): "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

The way Jesus committed His spirit in the hands of the Father and died is a guarantee that He had accomplished everything that was required by the Father. His sacrifice was accepted by the Father and Jesus was able to depart in peace, in the firm assurance of His resurrection on the third day according to His own words.

I – Jesus accomplished the prophecies

The Holy Evangelists reported that everything that happened to Jesus

on the cross was according to the Prophecies of the Old Testament. Even some single details that seem to be of no importance for us were accomplished. This is to show that Jesus was put to death not only by the envy of the High Priest and the Jewish leaders, but this was God's plan to sacrifice “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”.

When the soldiers divided Jesus' clothes among themselves, Psalm 22:17 was accomplished, that says: “They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” - Psalm 22 is the song of the suffering Messiah and we read it this morning as Introit.

When Jesus cried out: “Eloi Eloi, lama sabachthani”, He was uttering the first words of that same Psalm: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

“Later, knowing that all was now accomplished, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.” - Again the same Psalm 22:15 describes the situation of the dying Messiah with the words: “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.” And Psalm 65:21 says: “They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.”

Even after Jesus' death, when the soldiers pierced Jesus' side and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus so that they would die faster, Jesus didn't have any of His bones broken. This was according to God's law about the Paschal Lamb (Ex 12:46): “Do not break any of the bones.” - And Psalm 22:16 says: “They have pierced my hands and my feet”; and Zachariah 12:10 says: “They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.”

II – The salvation plan was accomplished

But not only these external signs were fulfilled , but the most important in God's plan was accomplished: The salvation for all of us!

The “seed of the woman” promised to Eve in the lost paradise, that would come to restore communion between men and God, is the son of Mary, Jesus of Nazareth. Even dying on the cross, He showed concerns about His mother and committed her to the apostle John, His good friend and disciple.

The sacrificial lamb and the scapegoat of the Old Testament covenant were accomplished in Jesus, 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. Prophet Isaiah had spoken about His sacrifice on our behalf 700 years before it happened. The text we read from Isaiah 53 says: “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering... he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed... the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter...For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.”

III – Once for all

Jesus died as a victor and had completed what He had come to do. Everything was done. “It is finished!” Jesus cried from the cross as a shout of victory! “For Christ also suffered *once* for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.”(1 Peter 3:18). Nothing more is necessary to reconcile God with humankind, and nothing more can be done, as some people insist to work on their own salvation, attempting to please God. It is an offense to Jesus’ sacrifice if someone tries to add some personal sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ to get his own salvation. If someone does this , it means that he doesn't trust in Jesus completely. Faith is faith, and not deeds! Either we believe in Jesus

100%, or we do not believe in Him and despise His sacrifice.

When the jailer in Philippi asked the apostles, “what must I do to be saved?”, they simply answered him: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” (Acts 16:30-31). He couldn't do anything but believe. Forgiveness and salvation is a matter of faith in Jesus, who proclaimed in a loud and strong voice: “It is finished!”

In this faith, and only in this faith, we are saved to live a new life with the resurrected Jesus according to God's will. “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Romans 6:4).

Salvation is a gift from God, totally free and finished. It's not like when we receive a puzzle as a gift, that we need to put the pieces together. “It is finished!” It's a ready gift! God gives it to us by grace and we accept it by faith!

Conclusion: “It is finished” is the full stop to a long quarrel between men and God. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:18-19):“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ ... God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.”

Why is this day called “Good Friday” and not “Bad Friday”, when we remember all the sufferings of Jesus? Maybe because it was bad for Jesus; but for us it is a Good Day, the day of our salvation! “It is finished!” God invites us: “Come, for everything is now ready.” Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle
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