

Good Friday. The scripture text is taken from John 19:16-30

We know how satisfying it feels to do a job well done. At times, the harder the work, the greater satisfaction. The more intense the toil, the greater the joy of completion. For instance, a doctor saves a patient's life and restores him or her to health.

A skilled craftsman finishes a difficult and complicated project.

A woman gives birth after hours of exhausting labor.

Not only do we experience an enormous sense of relief, but pride and joy in seeing a job well done.

So on this Good Friday, in our mind's eye, we now go to Golgotha's stony slope, at the foot of the cross. There we see Jesus. You see Him struggling to breathe. It looks as if the weight of the entire world is on His shoulders, for it is. He has been there for several hours on the cross, and now we hear Him say, "It is finished."

Yet, they are not sad and mournful words. It's not as if He said, "I am finished," or "I am done for," as someone might say in fear when the dark shroud of death descends on him or her.

Those words, despite Jesus' weariness and anguish, were words of triumph and words of great satisfaction. For He had finished all that His Father had sent Him to do.

Yes, Jesus completed His entire ministry on earth, His preaching, teaching, and healing, He had finished His whole work of obeying and fulfilling God's Law.

But even more important, He had completed what He needed to do, to redeem the world. He could, indeed, look with satisfaction on this work and say, "It is finished."

The Prophet Isaiah wrote in chapter 53, verse 10: "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper."

Jesus has earned, won, and redeemed the whole world, a work that only God in the flesh could do, a work too great for any mere human-being to even begin to do.

If anyone ever had the right to say, "It is finished," it was Jesus. Yet, He does not say these words to express His own pride and satisfaction.

He speaks them, or better said, He speaks it, for the original language, it was just one word, as a short sermon for us.

Why? So we sinful human-beings might have comfort, true assurance, and salvation. And so we meditate on Jesus' brief sermon: "It is finished."

*First, what is finished? What Jesus finished was nothing less than the redeeming of sinners, that is paying for their sins. That's what Jesus finished.

The wages of sin are high, the wages of sin is death, and nothing less. And when the scripture says that, it means not only the death of the body, but also the eternal death of soul and body in hell.

The wages of sin, is the endless wrath of God, against sinners and His eternal separation from them.

It was, those wages that Jesus received in full. He didn't just die, He hung nailed to a cross, the focus of an entire life-time of humanity, rejection, and persecution. On the cross, Jesus suffered the pangs of hell in full.

Jesus did this as the substitute for sinners. He satisfied the holy and righteous anger of God toward the world by stepping in the place of sinners, sinners like you, sinners like me. Jesus did this even though, He was fully innocent.

Jesus was without sin. But that's only part of the story. The Apostle Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5, verse 21: "For our sake he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God."

That's why your sins and my sins have been paid for in full, so He (Jesus) make us righteous and we could spend eternity in God's presence.

That's why when death overshadows us, we can approach it without fear, even with a sense of victory and satisfaction.

We can only do so because Jesus has made our life acceptable to God the Father, through Christ's sacrifice.

*Well, what else? What did Jesus finish? Our justification and no less; for our God has forgiven our sins. Because of Jesus, we are guilty no more. Christ Jesus has absolved us of our sins, and they have been erased from God's court-room record.

God sees us as perfect and sinless, without spot or wrinkle. Because of Jesus, our consciences have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and cleansed from dead works, to serve the living God.

How thoroughly is that work? Fully and perfectly; that's how well Jesus finished the work, He was sent to do. Yet, the work isn't simply finished, the work has been finished.

That means the effects of Jesus' work goes on and on, even for us to this day.

Jesus' life-giving work of the cross wasn't some past event that has no relevance for you today. And so your redemption isn't a work, that has to be finished again, it isn't a work that has to be added to or supplemented, it has been finished.

It has all been done. The writer of the Book of Hebrews, tells us, in chapter 10, verse 14: "For by a single offering, he has perfected for all time, those who are sanctified."

God commanded in His Old Covenant that His priests, everyday, make sacrifices for the sins of the people. But those Old Testament sacrifices, in and of themselves, did not atone for sins.

For the blood of bulls, rams, goats, lambs, pigeons, or turtle-doves, could not, on their own, take away sin.

Then why did God commend the priests to do this, what was the point of it? Because their blood (the blood of the animals) did forgive sins in this way: They connected to the future sacrifice of the promised Messiah, who would with His one offering take away sin forever.

And so today, we need no further sacrifices for sin, because Jesus has reconciled us with God for all time.

And Jesus atoned for all sins, not just some sins, but all sins, Jesus paid the price for all the sins of all sinners.

Jesus left no sin behind. The Son of God paid the penalty for every single person who has ever lived, past, present, and future.

Jesus work on the cross is finished. No one could anything to it, or do anything to help earn, his or her way into heaven.

The Apostle Paul tells us in the book of Romans, chapter 4, verse 5. The apostle Paul writes: "But to one who without works, trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness."

Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, He gives it all to you as a gift, Yes, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2). Yes, it is finished indeed. Amen.