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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

“IT IS FINISHED”

John 19:30

Time is running out. Life is bleeding out of you. You have six hours left, at most.

Your physical agony is excruciating, your mental anguish torturous. It takes great effort to speak.

‡ What do you say to God, to your dear ones, to the strangers who stop and stare? What are your last words?

Christ Jesus survives six hours on the cross. Every breath is a struggle, every movement an occasion of pain.

The mental torture is worse. Last night Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, all the male disciples except John deserted him. His enemies framed him, slandered him, spat in his face.

Now they have nailed him to a tree. To first century Jews this is incontrovertible evidence that YHWH is punishing him. As Dt 21:22 {NLT} explains, **“anyone hanging on a tree is cursed of God.”**

To add insult to injury, the Roman soldiers have stripped him bare. Jesus is stark-naked, utterly exposed, deprived of every shred of clothing. In ancient Jewish culture, forced nudity is the ultimate degradation.

In the midst of his torment Messiah speaks. According to the Scriptures he speaks briefly seven times.

These sayings are called The Seven Last Words from the Cross. They are loaded with significance.

The Sixth Word is recorded in **John 19:30**.

Please turn there with me.

☐ John 19:30: **“Jesus said, ‘It is finished’”**
“It is finished.” {Msg} **“It’s done...”**

★ This phrase can be a whimper of defeat. **“It is finished”** can signal defeat and despair, crushing failure or unwilling surrender. It can seal the death of a career, a marriage, or a cherished hope.

☑ A woman in the emergency room at MacNeal Hospital in west suburban Berwyn sobbed to me, **“It’s all over. It’s done.”** She lost her first husband years earlier to a massive heart attack. Now she had just lost her second husband the same way in the same E.R. She told me her life was finished, done, over.

→ {Jn 10:18, NLT} To some, Messiah’s sixth word sounds like *“I give up.”* Yet he is not the tragic figure of Good Friday; that role was played by sinners. He stated, with absolute assurance, **“No one can take my life from me. I lay down my life voluntarily.”**

★ This phrase can be a cry of relief. **“It is finished”** can signal the certainty of a diagnosis after the stress of not knowing, the end of a difficult project after a series of setbacks, or well-needed rest after a futile struggle.

☑ When she was four years old AmyLynn fell from our swing set and bit through her tongue. Part of it was hanging on by a flap.

We rushed her to the urgent care and held her hands as they stitched her tongue. It was such a relief when the doctor finally said the procedure was finished.

→ To some, Messiah's sixth word sounds like, "At least that's done." Surely, he was glad that his suffering was over, yet he was a man of steely resolve. We see this so clearly in Gethsemane where his soul was {Mt 26:38, NLT} "**crushed with grief**" and still he prayed three times, "**Not as I will, but as you will.**"

★ Sometimes, "**It is finished**" is a shout of great triumph. This phrase can signal outward victory and inward fulfillment, the fruit of dogged perseverance or unexpected success. It can mark the beginning of a new life, fresh opportunities, or higher aspirations.

☑ Beth and I joyfully said something along the lines of "**It is finished**" when each of our daughters was born. What a thrill it was to hold them for the first time!

☆ To many, Messiah's sixth word from the cross sounds nothing like a cry of triumph. But when he foretold his death he said, {Jn 27} "**It was for this very reason I came to this hour.**" His "**It is finished**" was, first and foremost, a declaration of victory.

It was another way of saying, "It is accomplished! I have fulfilled my purpose! I have completed my mission!"

❓ What was accomplished? What purpose did Christ fulfill? What mission did he complete?

✝ By his death, Jesus bore the guilt of human sin. John 1:29: "[Behold], **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" And First John 2:2: "**He is the**

atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

✝ By his death, Jesus ransomed us from spiritual captivity. Matthew 20:28: "**the Son of Man** [came] ... **to give his life as a ransom for many.**"

✝ By his death, Jesus reconciled us to God his Father. Romans 5:10: "**When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son.**"

✝ By his death, Jesus expanded the people of God to include Gentiles who trust in him. Ephesians 2:13: "**now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through [his] blood.**"

✝ By his death, Jesus defeated Satan and death. Hebrews 2:14-15: "**he... shared in [our] humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**"

🌟 In a nutshell, Jesus has by his death, resurrection, and ascension established God's Kingdom, and he is bringing many sons and daughters into it. Coming from his lips, "**It is finished**" means "Mission accomplished!"

What about you and me? Is it finished in us?

Has the Gospel come to life within us? Or has our hearing been more about information than transformation?

Have we entered the rest of the finished work of Christ? Or are we shedding blood, sweat and tears to earn God's approval?

Has the work of Good Friday borne its fruit in us? Or are we {Eph 2:1} **“dead in [our] sins”**?

‡ The day will come when each of us will breathe our last, when you and I will say **“It is finished.”** Will it be a whimper of defeat, a sob of resignation, a mere sigh of relief, or a shout of triumph?

The answer will be determined by our response to the Messiah and his cross.

“Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

John 19:30 is the word of the Lord.