

“It is finished”

John 18 & 19

Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, our strength and our redeemer. – Amen

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These are the last words of Jesus of Nazareth...Hanging on a cross... outside the city... in the place of the skull... Golgotha... hanging from the nails that were hammered through his hands and one big nail through both his legs... like the worst criminal - and in the middle of two criminals. Away from the gates of the city that less than a week ago He entered amidst a chorus of praise and adoration for the coming of a king. Yet up on a hill for all that approach the city to see... Dead – hanging in the worst type of death known. A death to evoke fear in all that would see. This death was to send a message of just how powerful the Roman Empire was.

Consider what the last words of Jesus would have meant:

To Judas - this was the end of a long journey that has ended in disappointment.

When once things seemed to be so promising. This was the messiah that was to bring us Jews everything that the prophets had ever promised. This was the end of Roman occupation. This was the end of 1/3 of everyone we know being a slave. This was the man that was supposed to set the captives free, that was to bring the year of jubilation. How could we have been so wrong? How could we have misread the signs? He surely was of God, he miraculously healed people. He taught - and people from miles away would come and listen, they would leave everything, sometimes coming so captivated by His teachings that they would not bring food or drink – yet He provided for all that came....

Some of His teachings were confusing, some of His ways didn't make sense, and I should have understood sooner, I should have seen He was not going to lead us to military victory. Only a few days ago a foolish woman wasted a year's salary worth of precious oil on His feet - and He said 'it was alright, she was preparing Him for burial' – well, burial is what He wanted and I helped make sure of that. The hope of a Jewish Kingdom rising out of this oppression - **“It is finished”**

Consider what it would have meant to Caiaphas, the high priest and all the other Priests, Sadducees and Jewish religious leaders. This is finally the end of that problem. No longer will the people be distracted from the temple. No longer will we hear of people hungry for this new message. It is back to business as usual. The Passover festival can continue. No longer will we be challenged and made to feel like we don't know what we are talking about. No longer will we have to worry about who is loyal to us. No longer will we have to settle the minds of the Romans occupiers about their concerns for this movement – this uprising. It is better that this one man shall die for the good and the peace of all the people - **“It is finished”**

Consider what this would have meant to Pontius Pilate:

That was a close one! There was so many gathered – so many of these Jews gathered at this time in this God-forsaken land, in which I am sentenced to this place, so far away from the real action in Rome. This land where no one respects me, where we are forced to put up with these Jewish customs, where we allow them to continue because it is easier to rule, letting them to continue as long as they understand and fear the power I wield. Yet that was a close one! This Jesus seems to me to have done nothing wrong – but He sure could get a crowd going, only last week I was told that they treated Him like a King as He entered the city. I made sure that people in every language knew what He had been crucified for – ‘King of the Jews’, is what I wrote for His cross! This was the end of a long and strange day. Where my wife, came to me, she

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doesn't normally bother me during the day – yet she came to me and told me to have nothing to do with this Jesus – that she had a dream that troubled her. Then these crazy religious Jews, they bring me this man, Jesus, a Nazarene, to execute, because they don't like the message He has. They have no charges against Him, and they leave His judgement up to me. I questioned Him - and His answers show no fear. He didn't seem to understand that I hold His life in my hands. He claims to testify to the truth. Ah... what is truth? It is certainly **not** with these Religious crazies – that much is easy to see. Try as I may to respect my wife's warning and to release this innocent man, they repeatedly call for His death. And trade Him for the bandit Barabbas. Truth – I don't know what it is – but I wash my hands of all it - **“It is Finished”**

Consider what this would have meant to Peter:

My Best friend is dead. I don't understand. He brought me out of everything that I have ever known. I left my job – I left my boats – I left my family. To follow – to learn. He gave me the power to heal as He healed. I saw thousands seek Him where-ever He went – to hear what he taught – to be healed from all kinds of illness. He even brought Lazarus back to life. My best friend – my teacher – The man I thought was the Messiah is dead. Like a criminal! And I betrayed Him - three times – just like he said I would. I thought I would be stronger – I thought I would die for Him – but I was so afraid, so afraid - and now he is dead. I am so confused - **“It is finished?”**

Consider what it would have meant to Mary, the mother of Jesus:

My Son, my Son! In whom God gave to me to care. In whom the angel told me, was God's Son. Jesus, who at twelve marvelled the priests in the temple, Jesus who did so many miraculous things. From water into wine. To healing - To teaching - To showing us a different way to understand the scriptures. My Boy! Who, I knew a long time ago in my heart, was someone beyond normal understanding. My Son – God's Son. Is dead

The miracles are over – the suffering is over – the torture is over – the pain is over. **“It is finished”**

Consider what it might mean to Jesus:

“It is finished” My work is done - What I came to accomplish – What Abba sent me here for – is complete. I have taught - I have healed - I have shown them signs and wonders – miracles - I have served - I have given them a 'new commandment'. I have shown them ... I have lived... for them ... I have died... for them... I love them... so that they might truly know my new commandment. **“It is finished”**

Consider what it might mean to God the Father:

My obedient Son – well done – “good and faithful servant” - My children of faith will know that I love them so much that I sent My one and only Son that they may know my love. That they might know 'my way' is love. That they can be released of their sins – that they can be united with their creator for evermore – that they may know Love - That they may live love - **“It is finished”**

Consider what the Cross – what the last word of Jesus means to you... **“It is finished”**

Thank you Jesus – Thanks be to God - Amen