

WORDS FROM THE CROSS - PART 5

Finished

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Luke 23:46; John 19:30
Subject:	What Jesus cried out in a loud voice before He committed His Spirit into His Father's hands
Complement:	It is finished!
Exegetical idea:	Before Jesus committed His Spirit into His Father's hands, He cried out in a loud voice, "It is finished!"
Preaching idea:	Jesus fulfilled His mission-to provide salvation for everyone.
Purpose	To encourage my hearers to rejoice that Jesus accomplished His mission and to urge them to accept His salvation personally.

According to Dr. Luke, the last words of Jesus from the cross were these: Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit." Having said this, Dr. Luke tells us in Luke 23:46, Jesus breathed His last. But according to the apostle John, there is one other saying from the cross that Jesus uttered right before these final words. Just one word in Greek. Tetelestai. Three words in most English translations. Those words are recorded in John 19:30. "It is finished!"

This word, tetelestai, was commonly used by the people of Jesus' day. When a servant had completed an assignment that His master had given to him, he would say, "Tetelestai." When a merchant received full payment for a debt that was owed, he would give a receipt saying, "Tetelestai."

What did Jesus mean when He said, "Tetelestai," "It is finished!"? Was He referring to the fact that His life was over? He had been beaten, flogged, nailed to the cross and now He was about to breathe His last breath. Is that what Jesus meant when He said, "It is finished!"?

A clue is found in John 19:28, for the same Greek word, tetelestai, is found there. John 19:28 "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled,

Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’” The KJV translates this verse “that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”

This word that Jesus spoke from the cross, tetelestai, is referring to the fulfillment of all that was written in the Scriptures concerning Himself. Every prophesy regarding Messiah had been fulfilled. The prophecies in the books of Moses, the prophecies in the prophets, the prophecies in the psalms. All had been fulfilled. Tetelestai. It is finished.

But there is more to the meaning of this word tetelestai that Jesus spoke from the cross. I’m convinced that the primary meaning of this word from the cross is revealed through a careful study of the Gospel of John. Let’s begin our study in John 4. Jesus has been meeting with a Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well, just outside of Sychar. He has revealed to this woman not only the secrets of her own life, but He has revealed to her that He is the Messiah! We can pick up the story in John 4:27. “ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, ‘What do you want?’ or ‘Why are you talking with her?’ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, ‘Rabbi, eat something.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you know nothing about.’ Then his disciples said to each other, ‘Could someone have brought him food?’ ‘My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’” Did you notice that last sentence? ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish **his work**.’

Some time later, Jesus had healed a man by the pool of Bethsaida. When the Jewish leaders criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus had this to say, recorded in John 5:36 –“I

have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.”

At the very end of His earthly ministry, Jesus gave this testimony in prayer to His Father: John 17:4 “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” How does the KJV translate that verse? “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

And then, less than 24 hours later, Jesus utters this cry from the cross, recorded in John 19:30 “‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” Now you can clearly answer the question that I asked at the beginning of this message. What was finished? The work that His Father had given Him to do. His mission to provide salvation was accomplished! It is finished! Then He bowed His head and died.

But before He died, Jesus looked down by faith through the corridors of time and He saw all of those who would accept the salvation that had been accomplished. He saw you. He saw me, and Jesus willingly pressed on to the very end that our salvation might be sure. And then, in a shout not of despair, but of triumph, Jesus said, “Tetelestai,” “It is finished!” Mission accomplished!

Can you imagine how much joy comes to the heart of Jesus when individuals receive Him as their personal Savior and accept the gift of salvation that He offers? Scripture tells us that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Saul of Tarsus had been an enemy of Jesus Christ. He had persecuted the followers of Christ and when they were put to death he cast his vote against them. But when Saul met the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Jesus worked a miracle in Saul’s heart. Saul realized that Jesus was the Messiah, and he received

Jesus as His personal Savior and Lord! Can you imagine how much joy that brought to the heart of Jesus? Mission accomplished!

The apostle Paul gave this testimony, recorded in Acts 20:24 “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.” Just as Jesus had finished the work of salvation that His Father had given to Him, so the apostle Paul desires to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given to him—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace, the task of telling the world about Jesus and the mission that He accomplished.

Several weeks ago, when we were studying part 2 of this series on Words from the Cross, God worked a miracle in Arnaldo’s heart. Arnaldo was not an enemy of Jesus, like Saul of Tarsus, but Arnaldo realized that it was time to surrender His life wholly to Jesus as His personal Savior and Lord. As Arnaldo was listening to the message about The Paradise Promise, he realized that if Jesus could save a dying thief, then Jesus could save him too. And deep in his heart, Arnaldo wanted to cry out, “Jesus, remember me when you come into Your kingdom!”

At the end of that service, I gave a simple invitation. And I can still remember seeing Arnaldo walking to the front of the church with tears rolling down His cheeks. His wife Laura has been praying for him for many years. Can you imagine the joy that filled her heart when her husband stood up in church and responded to the call of God?

Jesus looked down from heaven and rejoiced. Mission accomplished. Another precious child of God has made a personal confession of his faith in Jesus as His personal Savior and Lord. Hallelujah!

Jesus longs for that story to be repeated over and over again. When He was hanging

there upon the cross, He rejoiced that His mission had been accomplished. He had finished the work that His Father had given Him to do. It is finished! Now He longs for people to respond to His invitation to accept Him as Savior and Lord. That's why He came, to seek and to save the lost!

I'm thankful today that the mission of Jesus was fulfilled for me! Aren't you thankful that the mission of Jesus was accomplished for you! Tetelestai! Mission accomplished!

Some weeks ago, I read an anonymous testimony of a follower of Jesus. That anonymous testimony made such an impact on my life that I wanted to make it my own. I give this confession with joy in my heart that Jesus died to save me, His mission was accomplished and I have accepted Him as my personal Savior and Lord!

Fellowship of the Unashamed

Author unknown, adapted by Derek J. Morris

I am part of the fellowship of the Unashamed.

I have Holy Spirit power.

The dye has been cast.

I have stepped over the line.

The decision has been made.

I am a disciple of His.

I won't look back,

let up,

slow down,

back away,

or be still.

My past has been redeemed,

my present makes sense,

and my future is secure.

I am finished and done with low living,

sight walking,

small planning,
smooth knees,
colorless dreams,
tame visions,
mundane talking,
chintzy giving,
and dwarfed goals!

I no longer need preeminence,
prosperity,
position,
promotions,
plaudits,
or popularity.

I don't have to be right,
first,
tops,
recognized,
praised,
regarded,
or rewarded.

I now live by presence,
lean by faith,
love by patience,
live by prayer,
and labor by power.

My face is set,
my gait is fast,
my goal in heaven,
my road is narrow,
my way is rough,
my companions few,
my Guide reliable,
my mission clear.
I cannot be bought,
compromised,
detoured,
lured away,
turned back,
diluted,
or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice,
hesitate in the presence of adversity,
negotiate at the table of the enemy,
ponder at the pool of popularity,
or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up,
shut up,
let up,
or slow down
until I've preached up,
prayed up,
paid up,
stored up,
and stayed up
for the cause of Christ.

I am a disciple of Jesus.
I must go til He comes,
give as He gave,
preach all I know,
and serve til He stops.

And when He comes to get His own,
He'll have no problems recognizing me--
my allegiance will be clear.

I'm thankful that the mission of Jesus was accomplished. Aren't you? Jesus didn't moan, "I'm finished!" He gave a shout of victory! Tetelestai! It is finished. Mission accomplished!

At the end of my days, I want to confess with the transformed apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7

Do you want to be part of the vast multitude that have longed for Christ's return and welcome Him with joy as their Savior and Lord? Is there someone here today who needs to cry out, "Jesus, please save me! I want your mission to be accomplished in my life! Please be my Savior and Lord." I'm going to give a simple invitation right now, as we bow our heads in prayer. With every head bowed and with every eye closed, if you want to cry out today, "Jesus, please save me!" I invite you to raise your hand toward heaven. Praise God. Many hands are raised. Now I want to challenge you to follow up on that decision. Some of you need to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of you have already been baptized, but you need to just publically confess that you have asked Jesus to save you today. I urge you to tell someone—one of the pastors, a family member, a friend. Give testimony of the commitment you have made.

We thank you, our Father in heaven, that every decision made here today was noticed by you, and that there is joy in heaven right now! In Jesus' name, Amen.