

INI - SDG

5th Mid-Week Lenten Service
March 17, 2010
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Hecla, SD

Text: John 19:28-30a - *After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!"*

Theme: The Pulpit of the Cross
- A Sermon on Completion
a) of the Scriptures
b) of our Salvation

*Calvary's mournful mountain climb;
There, adoring at His feet,
Mark that miracle of time.
God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear Him cry;
Learn of Jesus Christ to die. (TLH 159:3)*

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus,

Have you ever started a project thinking you could handle it, but the further you got into it the more you realized you were in over your head? A year or so ago I was working on replacing the faucet in the bathroom at the parsonage. It didn't look like it would be that difficult of a job. Shut off the water, loosen some copper nuts, remove the old faucet, install the new one, use some plumbing tape, and tighten things down. Seemed simple enough. What I didn't realize until I was half way through the project was that the water had corroded some of the old plumbing. The result was a phone call to Marvin and the replacement of some old pipes and valves. The faucet did get replaced, but it proved to be a much more difficult project than I first anticipated.

Maybe you've had projects or jobs similar to that one. Projects that seemed easy enough and you were confident that you could accomplish it, only to find out half way through that you did not have the ability to complete it. Or maybe you have the other problem of starting projects, but never finishing it. Maybe it was a puzzle, a quilt, or a house. Regardless of what the project was, I think all of us can identify the disappointment of not completing it. What is especially difficult to deal with is when other people are depending on you to get that project done and you are unable to follow through.

Imagine if that had been the case with Jesus. Imagine if Jesus had been born of the Virgin Mary, kept the whole will and law of God perfectly, but got to the Garden of Gethsemane and decided that He was not going to go through with it. That the cost of our salvation was just too much for Him to pay. That we were not worth Him shedding His blood and dying for us. Or imagine if the pain and the taunting on the cross was just too much and He did come down from

the cross. Imagine if Jesus did not complete the project He was working on - fulfilling the Father's will and saving our soul! We would be doomed! We would be hopelessly lost forever!

Thanks be to Jesus that none of this happened. As Jesus said to His disciples when they were at Jacob's well, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**" (John 4:36) For Jesus, failure was never an option. He knew His Father's will and He was going to finish the work the Father gave Him to do. We hear of this tonight's sermon from the pulpit of the cross. We will be hearing both the fifth and sixth saying from the cross as we consider Jesus' sermon on completion. John 19:28-30 -

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!"

So far the Word of God.

SCRIPTURE

Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations because of ignorance. As children we didn't realize that jumping off the roof of the house would result in a broken ankle. As adults we didn't realize that the highway was not just wet, but icy until we found ourselves stuck in the ditch. These are problems we got ourselves into because of ignorance. But Jesus did not end up on the cross in ignorance. Jesus was not ignorant of what was going to happen to Him on Good Friday because He knew the Scriptures. He knew that the Scriptures prophesied that one of His own friends would betray Him. He knew from Isaiah 53 that He would be led as a sheep to the slaughter, bruised, chastised, and punished. Jesus knew that David wrote in Psalm 22, "**They pierced My hands and My feet.**" (Ps 22:16) Jesus knew all this and was determined to fulfill all that was written of Him.

That brings us to Jesus sermon on completion tonight. After nearly 6 hours on the cross Jesus had endured the physical and spiritual suffering which He needed to. He prayed for His enemies, He assured the repentant thief of eternal life, He cared for His mother, and He endured separation from God as He was punished for the sins of the world. Jesus then knew that all things were now finished, or "accomplished" as our text has it. This word, "accomplished," appears exactly the same in the Greek as the word "It is finished" which we will consider next.

Yet it seems that Jesus knew there was still Scripture to be fulfilled from the cross. In Psalm 69:21 we read, "**They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.**" In the early moments of the crucifixion the soldiers offered Him sour wine but He would not take it. Though small in alcoholic content it would have relieved at least a little of the physical pain of the crucifixion. Jesus refused it at that time because He needed to drink the cup of God's wrath to the very dregs. He must suffer to the bitter end. Thus He refused the intoxicating drink, lest He not suffer fully for the sins of the world.

But now at the end, the suffering for the sins of the world was finished. It was time to fulfill this one last passage. Though seemingly insignificant to us, no portion of God's Word was insignificant to Jesus - nor should it be to us. Therefore we hear Jesus speak, "**I thirst.**" Oh, the thirst He must have felt! The thirst after a night of physical abuse. The thirst after physical torment of the cross in the heat of the day. David prophesied in Psalm 22, "**My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.**" (Ps 22:15)

But the spiritual thirst Jesus experienced must have been even greater. All this physical torment and spiritual anguish was so foreign to Him as the eternal and almighty Son of God. Earlier on Maundy Thursday Jesus had prayed that the Father would glorify Him with Himself with the glory which He had from eternity. How Jesus must have thirsted for that glory and communion with the Father once again.

But first Jesus had to fulfill this last prophecy of Scripture that was written of His suffering. And we find once again that the enemies of Jesus are the ones who actually fulfilled that prophecy. Jesus simply said, *“I thirst.”* Those crucifying Him make use of the sour wine present at the crucifixion site. They immerse a sponge, put it on a two or three foot hyssop reed, and raised it to Jesus lips. Even in this seeming act of mercy, the Romans were cruel. That which was given to ease the thirst was a vinegar wine. Something that must have been very unagreeable to a dry mouth.

Here we find Jesus committed to completing the Father’s will and fulfilling even the smallest and seemingly most insignificant verses of Scripture.

SALVATION

Having received the sour wine, Jesus speaks His sixth sermon from the cross. A sermon that is eternally powerful and filled with the Gospel truth. He said, *“It is finished!”* The way this word of Jesus is presented in the Greek it expresses an action completed with an ongoing result. Another way of expressing it might be, “It is finished now and it goes on remaining finished forever.” He finished suffering the pains of hell. He finished fulfilling Scripture. It is now as though Jesus looked over the entire sinful history of man, from the first sin of Adam to the last sin committed before Judgment Day and Jesus saw it was finished. Every last sin had been paid for. His work of redemption was completed. The only thing left for Him to do was to die.

These words of Jesus, “It is finished!” are the very heart and soul of the Gospel itself. There is nothing left for us to do to be saved. Jesus finished everything. He was faithful in keeping the Law perfectly in our place. FINISHED! Now we are credited with His righteousness. The punishment for all of our sin? FINISHED! Paid in full! There is no work we can do to make it more finished and there is no sin we can commit to un-finish it. Jesus has finished it all for us.

The ongoing result is that we have been ransomed from hell and the salvation of our souls. Those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Those who live and believe in Jesus will not die but will live eternally. Because Jesus completed the will of the Father, the thief on the cross entered Paradise to be with Jesus that very day. Because Jesus finished everything necessary for our salvation, our sins have been removed forever. Heaven is now open!

“It is finished!” What a glorious sermon from the lips of our Redeemer as He completes the work which the Father gave Him to do. He fulfilled all of Scripture and redeemed our souls from hell! Praise be to Jesus for not leaving any of His work undone, but perfectly completing it! Amen.