

April 2011

From the Pastor 

It Is Finished

Consider the scene. Here we have Jesus dying on the cross; it is a painful sight. The Son of God defeated, or is He? What words did Jesus just utter?

"It is finished." What does that mean?

You can interpret the words "It Is Finished" a couple of ways. You could say, "This is the end. It's all over now. All Jesus has to do is die." Or you could say, "The job is complete; it is finished; there is nothing more I have to do." I want you to think of what Jesus meant while He was hanging from a cross, hanging from nails that were piercing His hands and His feet, hanging on a cross with a crown of thorns pushed into His head. What did Jesus mean?

To understand what Jesus meant, let me reread a verse just before we hear Jesus say, "It is finished." "Later, knowing that **all was now completed**, and so the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.'" (John 19:28)

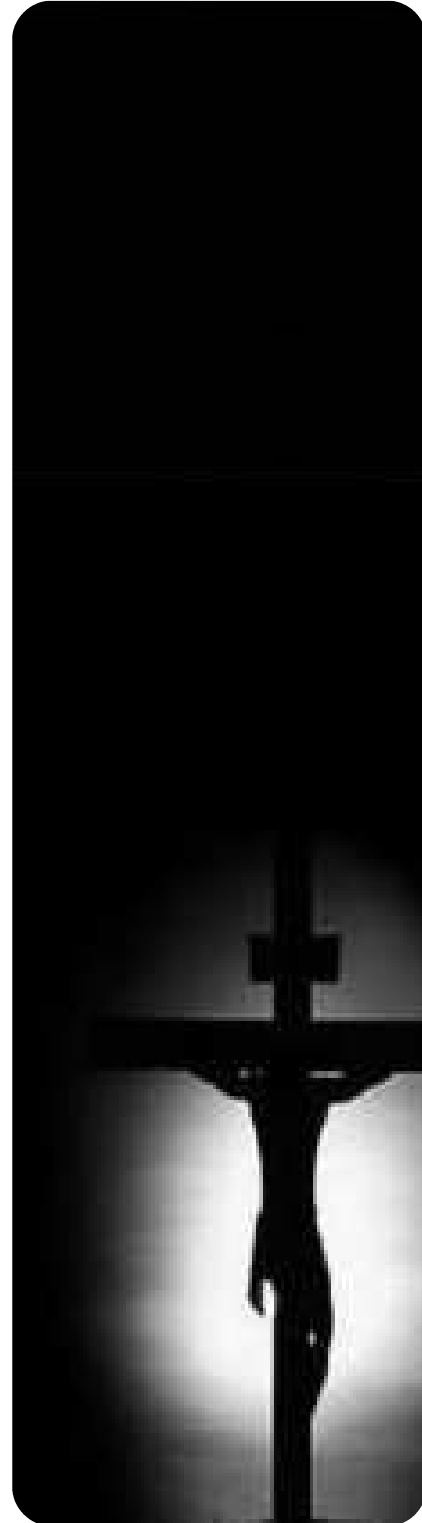
"All was now completed."

The job was complete. It was finished; Jesus had nothing more to do. God's plan for man was complete. What was that plan? Let's walk through that plan.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and God, in His justice, sent them out of the garden, He said this to the serpent, "*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*" (Genesis 3:15) God had set a plan in motion to bring man back to the garden, back to fellowship with Him.

Now let us fast forward in time to continue to see God's plan at work with Abraham. God said to Abraham, "...*a son coming from your own body will be your heir.*" He took him outside and said, '*Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them.*' Then he said to him, '*So shall your offspring be.*' Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness," (Genesis 15:4b-6) From this scripture we see God's plan was for Abraham to become a nation.

(over)



Now let us fast forward to Moses. That nation became the nation of Israel. The leader of that nation, Moses, was given a promise. God told Moses that Israel was His chosen people. This nation was called a holy people chosen by the Lord. However, these people did not remain holy. Their sin separated them from God. God's justice had to be appeased. Therefore, God provided a sacrificial system where high priest would offer the blood of animals that would be spilt out on the altar for the sins of the nation of Israel. However, these sacrifices did not last. These sacrifices were a symbol of what was to come in God's great plan. God loved this nation. Eventually, God gave the people of Israel a land.

While in the land, the nation asked for a king, and God gave them a king. One of those kings was David. In God's great plan He gave that king a promise. He said to King David, *"When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* (2 Samuel 7:12-13) From this king would come the King who would establish His kingdom forever.

God revealed more of His plan through the prophets who came after David told us what that king would be like. He would not only be a king but also a priest. The prophet Micah told us He would be born in Bethlehem. The prophet Zechariah told us He would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey and that He would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. The prophet Isaiah told us He would be spit upon and beaten and that He would die with thieves.

When Jesus came to the cross, He completed the plan.

Listen to what God says about His plan in the book of Hebrews.

"Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." (Hebrews 7:27)

When Jesus went to the cross, He went as a king to be lifted up on His throne to finish the plan that was started before man was created. Jesus' death was part of His plan to establish His kingdom on earth. His death paid the penalty for sin. His blood appeased the wrath of God against sin. By His death, Jesus reached all the way back to Adam and Eve and all the way forward to the end of the earth to save all mankind.

Listen again to how Jesus said those words. He shouted with a loud voice, **"IT IS FINISHED!"**

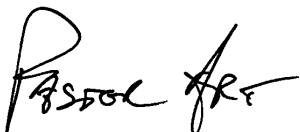
Now what does this mean for you and me? Our sins were on that cross with Jesus.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus on that cross reached into our lives and took all our sin with Him and nailed it to the cross. Those gross sins that we cannot tell anyone about were nailed to the cross. Those sins that we feel like we have no control over were nailed to the cross with Jesus. In victory, Jesus took those sins and was sacrificed for all of them. The victorious king Jesus defeated Satan and the power of sin when He shouted, **"IT IS FINISHED!"** God's plan was complete.

You and I, once we accept what Jesus did for us on the cross, are now part of His kingdom. However, there are times when we struggle with this. There are times when we feel sin has a stronghold on us. This month, in which we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, I want to help you understand that when Jesus died on the cross, He broke the stronghold of sin; sin's power is finished in your life.

In Him and for His glory,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pastor Arf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "A".