

Final Words

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[0 : 00] If you could turn your Bibles now at least to John chapter 19. John chapter 19. And we'll read in from verse, the second half of verse 16.

The section that's marked in my Bible by the head of Jesus is led away to be crucified. So John chapter 19 and from verse 16, this is God's word.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. Here they crucified him and with him two others, one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city.

And the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, do not write the King of the Jews, but that this man claimed to be the King of the Jews.

[1 : 13] Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written. When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them with the undergarment remaining.

This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. Let's not tear it, they said to one another. Let's decide by lot who will get it.

This happened so that the scripture might be fulfilled, which said, they divided my garments among them and cast lots from my clothing. So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Dear woman, here is your son. And to the disciple, here is your mother.

From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that all was now completed and so the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I am thirsty.

[2 : 22] A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge on it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, it is finished.

With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of preparation. And the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus aside with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it was given testimony and his testimony is true.

He knows that he tells the truth and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled.

[3 : 34] Not one of his bones will be broken. And as another scripture says, they will look on the one they have pierced. Amen. May God bless that reading of his word to us.

Let's pray for a moment. Heavenly Father, we pray that as we turn back to your word and as we listen to the words of Jesus, as he hung on the cross for us, help us, we pray.

As we listen and as we look to him, to come to the end of this message saying that we place our confidence in him continuing.

We pray that we would be able to know the assurance of salvation through all that he has done for us. So help us, Lord, we pray to see Jesus, to hear Jesus and to trust Jesus.

Lord, we pray for ourselves, we pray for the young ones. Through the different rooms, we pray for the congregations around us, whoever Christ crucified is preached.

[4 : 44] Lord, draw your people and build your church. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. John chapter 19 is where we've got to in our studies.

And what we come to in John chapter 19 is the final words of Christ on the cross before he lays down his life and dies.

And the final words, the last words that people speak in time, they often carry great significance and they're noted, they're remembered. I was looking at the last words of various people just online.

And there's article after article about the notable last words of various people. Jimmy Hendrix, the guitarist, apparently his last words, he wrote.

He was halfway through writing a song and by his deathbed there was the note, the story of life is quicker than the blink of an eye. The last lyrics that he wrote.

[5 : 54] Bob Marley, apparently his last words, where money can't buy life. The terrifying last words of Joan Crawford, the actress.

She took a heart attack and as she was dying, her housekeeper began to pray for her. And her final words, apparently were, don't you dare ask God to help me.

Sobering last words. But last words are words that we remember and that we often think about.

And they can come as great comfort sometimes. Today we're conscious of John Norman's absence. We miss him as a congregation.

And yet there's comfort even in knowing that his last words to his family were God bless. Last two words in time.

[6 : 58] God bless. There's great comfort in knowing that was his last expression of what he wanted for those whom he loved the best.

And today what I'd like us to think about is the last words of Jesus on the cross. And there's two phrases here as John presents them to us.

Two phrases and we'll simply take these two phrases as the two points to the structure of our thoughts. The first word, the first phrase that Jesus speaks from the cross as John records it here is, I am thirsty.

I thirst. And the second phrase that Jesus utters before he lays down his life is, It is finished.

So first of all, we consider these words, I am thirsty. I am thirsty. And these are words that speak to us of the sufferings of Christ.

[8 : 05] And the second phrase we'll come to, it is finished. These are words that speak of the salvation of Christ. So first of all, we have to think about the sufferings of Jesus.

Verse 28. Jesus later says, Knowing that all was now completed. You know, there's a whole other level of suffering there that I have no time to go into, but you can think about it later.

From the second that Jesus became aware and conscious and was able to string together thoughts as he grew physically and as he grew psychologically, He knew where he was going.

All these passages. Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Psalm 69. All these passages that were in the Old Testament pointing forward to the cross.

Jesus knew them. The Holy Spirit, God, had inspired them. And it's alarming to think of how that would have impacted Christ in his humanity as he grew.

[9 : 17] He grew in the shadow of the cross. He knew anything that was to come. Verse 28. Later, knowing that all was now completed.

And so that the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, I am thirsty. I've said this before, but I will need to keep on saying it.

Sometimes I think we overwork the reality of Jesus' humanity. We're very much focused on the fact that he is God.

He is God the Son. But he is the God-man. The Son of Man. And sometimes we give less emphasis to the fact that he's fully human.

And if we miss that, we miss something of the sufferings that he was going through on the cross. He was suffering at this moment in his physical being.

[10 : 17] We have to remember that. Every blow to his head that has been recorded here. It hurt him. Every lashing of his back.

Every tear of his skin. Every nail that was driven through his hands and his feet. It hurt him.

And now as Jesus is on the cross, as he is hanging there, every breath that he labored to take, was excruciating.

The word excruciating in the English comes from the word crucifixion. This was excruciating in the physical reality of this.

Jesus was suffering. As he cried out, I thirst. And yes, he cried it out so that the scriptures would be fulfilled.

[11 : 23] But he cried it out because he was thirsty. Because he was suffering. A.W. Pink says this, all his sufferings had been born in majestic silence.

He thought about that last week, like a sheep done before a shearer. So he opened not his mouth. But now at the end, his whole body wracked with pain, his mouth parched, he cries, I thirst.

It was not an appeal for pity. It was not an appeal for pity. Not an expression or request for the alleviation of his sufferings.

but it gave expression to the intensity of the agonies that he was undergoing for you.

We are not disconnected from this. We are very much connected with us. We are the cause of this. J.C.

[12 : 27] Ryle says he felt what all severely wounded persons, and especially all crucified persons, felt a burning and consuming thirst.

And so he cried out. So that they would know, and we would know, that he was suffering.

That he was hurting. You know, there's an application here, even, to help us in our prayer life. When we are hurting, Jesus knows what that feels like.

We don't have a God who is so remote from us, and other than us, that he cannot enter into what we are going through. But when we are going through these horrors, he has been there.

More so. When those that we love, who we're separated by distance from, are going through these horrors, we can bring them to Jesus in prayer, and he understands, and he can minister to them, because he is not disconnected from all that they go through.

[13 : 37] He has been there. He's suffered. But there's more than just physical suffering here.

There's much more than physical suffering. There is a spiritual suffering that we cannot really hope to grasp in any great measure, but we can enter into it in some measure.

Why was Jesus on the cross? Well, we sang it. It was in our place. It was my sin that held him there.

And as Jesus hung there, and suffered, as he took the punishment for our sin, as he took the punishment for the sin of human mankind, he cried out, I thirst.

Now, what was going on here? Well, 2 Corinthians 5.21, I think, gives us an insight into what was going on.

[14 : 41] In that passage, it says, God made him who had no sin to be sin for us. And this is the point in John's Gospel where Jesus was being made sin.

This was the point at which our sin was being transferred onto his shoulders. And so, at this point, when Jesus spoke, he was speaking on behalf of sinners.

He was speaking about the reality and the state of our sin. He was experiencing it. Sometimes a child may be in a room, in their bedroom maybe, and in walks their mother or father and says, would you look at the state of this room?

I have this room tidy in the morning. You've only been in here for an hour. Look at the state of it. You know, when Jesus spoke these words, I thirst, he was speaking about the broken, sad, discontented state of the sin.

He was speaking about the bad news of our fallen condition. We are born, we are born in a fallen state with a thirst that nothing in this world can quench.

[16 : 09] And John, even has illustrated that already in this gospel. Think about John chapter 4. Think about the woman at that well. And she's at the well at noon and she's there because she has a thirst.

It's a physical thirst for water, yes. But she is a thirst for love and approval and affirmation. And she's been through five husbands already trying to quench that thirst and she's still thirsty.

And now she has number six at home and she's still going to be thirsty. And Jesus speaks to her and shows her and shares with us the fact that he goes looking for her because she is thirsty.

And only he can give her that living water that she needs. Or think about think about John chapter 3 where we were speaking with the children.

Nicodemus. This woman was on the low end of the social spectrum. She was a woman with a bad reputation probably but think about Nicodemus.

[17 : 16] He's up there as the pillar of the community. He's the man with all the standing, the religious and social standing. He has power. He has credibility. He has letters after his name.

He has all the clerical gear on. He has all the honours of religion. And yet he's thirsty. And so he scolds out at night looking for Jesus.

Or flick from John to Mark chapter 10. There we meet the rich ruler. And he has lots of money. And he has the looks we can imagine.

He has the good name. He has the world at his feet. But he's thirsty. So he too comes looking for Jesus.

Or think about the prodigal that Jesus tells us the parable about in Luke 15. He gets the lump of cash in his youth. He goes crazy with it. Sex, drugs, rock and roll. And in spite of all the hedonism of that phase in his life.

[18 : 22] In spite of all the parties and the crazy nights and all that he accumulated. Very soon he's lost it all. He's a sore head.

He has no friends. He's in the pigsty. And he's thirsty. And go from there in the Bible to here in our day.

Pick up a newspaper. You read about the super rich. They can buy anything and they do. I was reading this week about Lewis Hamilton. He's just spent 16 million on a private jet.

That's not enough. He has to customise it. He has to paint it red to match his profile. That's his latest investment.

But it won't satisfy him. He'll still be thirsty. And you read about the super famous. You read these tragic stories about these little girls who dreamed about becoming a star.

[19 : 26] So they chase her. And the dream becomes a reality. But the reality proves to be not a dream but a nightmare. And their lives are broken.

And they're left thirsty. Think about a culture here that's looking for love. The more love they get the more love they want. I was seeing an advert for a programme on BBC just this last week.

Love Unlimited. Polyamory in Scotland. Adultery. Thing of the past. You want five partners? Have five partners. You want five marriages? Have five marriages.

The rule books out the window. The foundation has crumbled in the nation. And we look at our country and it's increasingly confused and dysfunctional and it's thirsty.

And you know and I know that we could give a dozen more illustrations of this. We go to Mick Jagger. I can't get no satisfaction. We go to Bono.

[20 : 29] I still haven't found what I'm looking for. We could go to any of the lyrics of these songs of today that I don't know anymore. And they speak the same story. It's the same testimony.

It's the reality of what sin does to us. It leaves us thirsty. It promises us satisfaction but leaves us thirsty. We're going to sing at the end.

this is the testimony of a daughter of the man's Francis Bevan from the 1800s. I tried the broken cisterns water but I the waters failed.

Even as I stooped to drink they fled and mocked me as I wailed. Very graphic image. Picking up a beaker to satisfy your thirst but it's broken and it's got holes.

The more you pour into it the more it just comes out the bottom and every time it comes to your lips it's empty. It's laughing at you. That's what sin does.

[21 : 33] It leaves us thirsty. And yet here as Jesus hangs on the cross identified with fallen sinners experiencing what we experience thirst.

He cries out with that sin parched thirst because our sin is on him. He cries out I am thirsty.

Here as Jesus is experiencing the bitter reality of forsakenness. Remember it's God's presence. It's that intimate relationship with God that quenches our thirst here as Jesus is on the cross the one who is in being a perfect communion with the father and the spirit is now isolated.

That's how he feels. My God my God why have you forsaken me? The father has turned his face away because of my sin and yours.

and Jesus in that spiritual torment cries out for the first time and the last time I am thirsty.

[22 : 52] Here as Jesus descends into hell as the Apostles Creed puts it to pay the price for the punishment of our sin he cried out I am thirsty.

Matthew Henry says this the torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man who begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue to that everlasting thirst we have been condemned if Christ had not suffered on the cross and said I thirst and yet as we see him here we see him suffer physically and spiritually and psychologically for us and we hear him cry out I am thirsty A.W.

Pink says reject not the saviour for if you die in your sins your eternal cry will be I thirst this is the moan of the damned and here we see Jesus being damned so that we can be saved we see we see Jesus thirsty so that we can be satisfied the sufferings of Christ as he cries out I am thirsty the second point the final point is the salvation of Jesus as he cries out it is finished verse 30 when he had received the drink

Jesus said it is finished I am not going to go into the details of the drink I am really focusing on these two phrases today when Jesus had received the drink the second drink on the cross Jesus said it is finished and with that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit some of the commentators say why did he bow his head he bowed his head because of the crushing weight of our sin that was on his head Matthew Henry says this he bowed his head and gave up the ghost he was voluntary in dying don't ever think that Jesus here is having his life taken away from him he's laying it down remember in John 6 he says no one can take my life away from me I am the one who lays it down and have authority to take it back up again and we see here

Jesus laying down his life Henry goes on to say he gave up the ghost his life was not forcibly exhorting from him but freely resigned he had said father into thy hands I commit my spirit thereby expressing the intention of this act I give I give up myself as a ransom for his spirit paid down the price of pardon and life at his father's hands so here we see Jesus choosing the moment of his death we see him laying down his life but just before he does he cries out these words it is finished tetelestai and that's a word that was used in the marketplace to word that they recognised as business was done as services and goods were exchanged a debt built up and then when that debt was paid across the bill to show that it was finished it was paid it was once and for all settled they would write tetelestai finished and that was Jesus final word on the cross we need to hear that final word finished sometimes you can be having a conversation with someone you're negotiating for something for a period and there's a bit of give and take and there's a bit of dialogue and eventually the one in authority says right that's my final word finished and this is Jesus final word his last word his conclusive ultimate finished word get the lesson it's finished finished and for those here who are trusting in Christ this morning that's the sweetest thing that we can ever hear

[28 : 21] Jesus say finished sins penalty the debt that is against me it's written off it's finished Satan the enemy of our soul in that ultimate sense he's finished death finished sting removed hell finished for those who are trusting in Christ the work of salvation which enables us to receive peace with God and life in fullness and joy and life in eternity that work to secure that salvation is finished some of us read these words earlier in the week

John 6 this is Jesus and the crowds are around him and then they ask him what must we do to do the work God requires so many people are asking that question what must we do I want heaven I want eternal life I want to know that I'm safe so what must we do what must I do tell me the works tell me where do I have to go where do I have to sign what do I have to pay where do I have to pilgrimage what's the works that we have to do and Jesus answered the work of God is this to believe in the one he has sent and there are people who are endlessly complaining against that saying surely I have to do something else surely there's more that I have to do surely there's religious stuff that I have to accumulate and so you see people and you meet people all the time in churches and out of them they're working hard and trying to be good and writing checks for charities and volunteering and this that and the next thing and being religious and doing all the expected tasks of religion in the hope that one day they'll be worthy enough to say I'm a Christian one day they'll be worthy enough to be able to come forward at communion weekend and say

I am the Lord's there will be people here this morning who have been working for years to try and make themselves worthy enough to come to the Lord's table and the gospel says you will never be worthy enough to come on your own you can do all the works of religion that you have strength to do you can write all the checks that you have money in your bank to cash you can help how many thousand ladies across the road in your lifetime and yet you'll never do enough to save yourself that's the bad news we were out and down in the church a week yesterday it was and grafting away lifting stones and doing all that stuff at the front where people could see on the road side and somebody came in the car park and they were walking across and they shouted up to me as I was trying to haunt this big this rock and the guy shouted up and he says that's all very well doing that work but that will not take you up and he says who was that guy anyway but he's speaking absolute truth we can do all the works of religion we can we can be sweating and grafting at whatever it is we're applying ourselves to but nothing will take us up that's the bad news there is no ladder to heaven that we can climb in our own strength it's the bad news but the good news is what we could not do

Jesus has done he's done all of it and his final word to us is finished it's done it's finished Daniel in chapter 9 sees this vision of one the son of man who would come to this is verse 24 finished transgression put an end to sin atone for wickedness bring in everlasting righteousness and with Jesus' words from the cross it is finished he was declaring as the son of man that that work was complete it's finished a couple of quotes for you here to move to a conclusion this is pink it is finished this was not the despairing cry of a helpless martyr it was not an expression of satisfaction that the termination of his sufferings had now been reached it was not the last gasp of a worn out life no this was the declaration on the part of the divine redeemer that all for which he came from heaven to earth to do was now done that all that was needed to reveal the full character of god had now been accomplished that all that was required by the law before sinners could be saved had now been performed that the full price of our redemption was now paid finished here's ryan after 33 years since the day when he jesus was born in beth with him he had done all paid all performed all suffered all that was needful to save sinners and satisfy the justice of god he had fought the battle and won it and in two days he would give proof by rising again it is finished and so all that is left for you and i to do is to believe in him to put our faith in the one who sent to put our weight our trust on his finished work john's purpose in writing these verses verse 35 here is so that you also may believe so the question to finish with is do you believe not what are you doing not what have you done not what do you hope to do with your last few years but do you believe do you believe in jesus do you believe that he is the christ that he is the promised one do you believe that he is the one who was sent to do the work of salvation and as you hear him cry out i am thirsty do you see that he was suffering that thirst for you and as you hear him cry out it is finished do you understand and accept that the salvation he was securing is for you my faith looks up to thee says the hymn writer thou lamb of calvary saviour divine last quote and this is a quote for anybody who's thinking about coming to the lord's table in two weeks time if we're able to do so here's a quote from

Ryle again he says when we look at our own works we may well be ashamed of their imperfections but when we look at the finished work of christ we may feel peace when we look at our own works as we examine ourselves as we must we feel shame because we see our sin and because we see how unworthy we are in ourselves but when we look to Jesus and we hear him say finished we may feel peace we must feel peace we feel the joy of his salvation and we are encouraged to come to him and to believe in him and to own him to profess him as our saviour and our lord and we'll stop there let's pray heavenly father we pray that you would give each one of us eyes to be able to see

[38 : 12] Jesus suffering on the cross in our place we pray that you would be able that you would give us ears where we are able to hear as he cries out I thirst that he is suffering for us lord that we would have ears to hear him saying it is finished in order lord that we would believe that we would accept and lord that we would benefit from his finished work we know that he has done everything that is required to satisfy the law of god he has paid the price in full for sins but we also know that it's possible if we do not believe in him that that debt will remain on our heads so we ask god that there would be no one who would walk out from this hall this morning with the weight of sin still upon them but we pray that by faith that weight of our sin would transfer from us to christ and that we would know as we go from here that he has finished the work he has secured our salvation and that we are saved in and through him help us to believe and lord for any who believe and are not yet professing we pray that they would see the wrongness of doubting the sufficiency of what christ has done forgive us for the days and the weeks perhaps the years that we have looked to jesus and listened to him cry and said to him it's not enough you have not done enough for me help us lord to believe that it is finished and to repent of any unbelief that we try and top up his work with our filthy rags of religion hear our prayers and help us we ask it in jesus name amen and now may the grace of our lord jesus christ and the love of god the father and the fellowship of god the holy spirit be with us all both now and forevermore amen