

"It is Finished!"

Thomas Robinson, July 11, 2010

John 19:16-30

¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them **to be crucified**. So the **soldiers took charge of Jesus**.

¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the **place of the Skull** (which in Aramaic is called **Golgotha**). ¹⁸ Here they **crucified him**, and with him **two others** – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate had **a notice** prepared and fastened to the cross. It read:
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "*Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that **this man claimed to be king of the Jews.***"

²² Pilate answered, "*What I have written, I have written.*"

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, **they took his clothes**, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment (tunic) remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴ "*Let's not tear it,*" they said to one another. "*Let's **decide by lot** who will get it.*" This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,
*"They divided my clothes among them
and **cast lots for my garment.**"* [Ps 22:18]

So this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood **his mother**, his mother's **sister**, **Mary** the wife of Clopas, and **Mary** Magdalene.

²⁶ When Jesus saw **his mother** there, and **the disciple whom he loved** standing nearby, he said to her, "**Woman, here is your son,**" ²⁷ and to the disciple, "*Here is your mother.*" From that time (hour) on, this disciple took her into his home.

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "**I am thirsty.**" [Ps 22:15; 69:21]

²⁹ A jar of sour wine was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said,
"It is finished."

With that, he bowed his head and **gave up his spirit**.

Psalms 22: 1, 7-8, 15-18, 27-28

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;

¹⁶ A company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet—

¹⁷ I can count all my bones –
they stare and gloat over me;

¹⁸ they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

²⁷ All the families of the nations
shall worship before you.

²⁸ For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

The Strange Narrative of Jesus' Death

We've been waiting for this scene – the “hour” – but now we read it; it's unexpected, anticlimactic. Like “*had him flogged*” (v1) – we want details. It says “*they crucified him,*” but then turns away to other things: the notice over his head, the soldiers with his clothes, his mother, his thirst. We want to see it, feel it. Nails through the hands, thud of the hammer, Mary's face, the thrill of horror. We want to be moved!

This narrative is not here to make you cry. That's not hard. It's hard to take hold of a life at a deep level and change it, bring it out of one world into another. John thinks/hopes he has trained us through the Gospel to look deeper, see more, believe.

The Battle Over the Sign

What is happening in these events? What we see/hear? What the High Priest/Pilate does? The sign bears a charge neither believes – “King.” They use it in fear, venom, sarcasm. The blindness of the obvious actors points us to the true actor – we see!

Remember Nathanael (Jn1): From Nazareth? *Son of God, King of Israel, Son of man.*
Remember the donkey colt (Jn12): *Hosanna, King of Israel.* One man must die.

The meaning of this story is not in Pilate but in David, in God's whole story with Israel. The truth of Jesus as Messiah is posted by a Roman in the languages of empire.

Throwing Dice for Clothes

The soldiers got the spoils – ordinary. John highlights Ps 22:18. It is this psalm of king David that marks Jesus' Kingship – Suffering Servant. A glimpse into deep story: The forsaken one trusts God; mocked, executed; he as king brings nations to God.

Jesus bears the shame of crucifixion, naked, vulnerable, powerless. The shame we cover. Jesus' glory/power – like a servant he undressed and washed feet (Jn 13). Lifted up on a cross he is most powerless/powerful. He draws all to himself (12:32).

Mother and New Son

Jesus as eldest son cares for his mother. (Three Marys and Mary's sister!) But a new relationship/family is created at the cross. Mary and the Beloved Disciple are both stepping into that world of God's reality and love shown in Jesus. Jesus' brothers, not yet. Deep community. Love one another as I have loved you. Real disciples.

Thirst to Drink

Strangest of all. Everything completed. Now to finish scripture, Jesus says “I'm thirsty.” He did not complain with flogging, nailing hands and feet, but now he's thirsty.

It brings out sour wine and hyssop. Painting the blood of a Passover lamb.(Ex 12:22)

Jesus made good wine (Jn 2), offered living water, never thirst (Jn 4, 7). Now he is parched. Cut off from the Father's life, on the brink of our hell, into our desert of sin.

In the Garden: “*Shall I not drink the cup...?*” Now here it is! The creator of life on the brink of our death. The cup of his judgment at his lips. Jesus cries, “*I am thirsty!*”

“It is Finished!” - *Tetelestai*

Nothing is left. The way from God into the deepest brokenness and sin in our lives is open. Jesus is that way. We do not strive & finish. It is finished. We receive Grace!

I can't reach God. Jesus has reached me. I'm transformed trusting in his finished work.