

JESUS' DEATH ON THE CROSS

John 19:16b-42

Key verse 19:30

"When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

In the last lesson, Jesus was determined to drink the cup of suffering and walk the path of obedience to death on the cross, standing on the side of truth. Determined, he testified to his true identity before Pilate, the Roman governor: "I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (18:37) Although Jesus is the King, he was imprisoned, interrogated, mocked, scourged and condemned to death in our place. Praise Jesus, our King, who testified to the truth to give us eternal life. God bless us to listen to his voice of truth.

Today we learn that Jesus is crucified like a criminal, dies and is buried. At first glance, Jesus' death looks like a tragedy. But historically, Jesus' death on the cross signifies God's accomplished work of redemption and is the necessary condition for Jesus' glorious resurrection. The author makes it unmistakably clear that Jesus' death on the cross is the fulfillment of Scripture. Jesus' death is the victory of God over the power of sin and death. God grant us his grace to come to Jesus who suffered unbearable pain and terrible shame in our place. May God give us listening ears for Jesus' cry of victory, "It is finished!" Through Jesus' death on the cross, we may live a victorious life of faith and proclaim the message of Jesus' victory over the power of sin and death in this pandemic time when many young people are very fearful.

1. Jesus' shame and suffering (16b-27)

Let's read verses 16b-18: "Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. 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 found no guilt in Jesus and wanted to release him. But the Jews

shouted, "Away, away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate decided against the truth. He wanted to please the people and condemned Jesus to death. John the Evangelist describes the process of crucifixion very briefly, "Here they crucified him." But the death penalty of crucifixion, in which a living person was nailed to a piece of wood like an object, was so terrible and shameful that it was carried out only on felons and slaves. Jesus had already suffered interrogation and humiliation all night, and then scourging and mockery at the hands of the Romans. But the people were merciless. The Roman soldiers placed a heavy cross on Jesus' shoulders. In public, he was whipped through the streets of Jerusalem to the place of execution. Jesus was so weakened that he fell to the ground several times. Once on Golgotha, the soldiers stripped Jesus of his clothes. Then they laid him on the cross and nailed his hands and feet to it. Iron nails were placed on Jesus' wrists and driven through Jesus' hand into the wood with heavy blows. They pressed Jesus' feet together and drove a long nail through his bones into the cross. Finally, they straightened the cross by dropping it into a hole with Jesus on it, so that Jesus experienced excruciating pain when it hit the bottom of the hole. Because of the hanging position, Jesus had difficulty breathing. To catch his breath, Jesus always had to lean on the one nail in his feet. For this, Jesus suffered terrible shame by being crucified with two criminals, but Jesus in the middle. He was the Son of God who had harmed no one. But he was crucified as the worst offender.

Why did Jesus, who was without sin, have to suffer such pain and shame? The prophet Isaiah gives us the answer: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the

Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5,6) The Bible teaches that Jesus was nailed to the cross because of our sin. The Bible also says that the consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23; James 1:15) But death is not the end, but after our physical death, if we continue in our sin, we will all be judged and experience the second death (Hebrews 9:27). Revelation 21:8 says in this regard, "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." The second death is damnation, the place of eternal torment. Thanks be to our Lord Jesus, who was nailed to the cross to save us from damnation. By bearing vicariously on the cross the punishment we deserved because of our sins, Jesus fulfilled God's justice. Here on the cross we see how serious our sin is, but also how great God's love is. Our God wants to save everyone from the coming judgment and eternal damnation, and through the cross of Jesus gives everyone forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

Let us read verse 19: "Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This inscription was read by many Jews, for Jesus was crucified near the city. And it was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. These three were the most important languages, so that it was proclaimed to the whole world who Jesus was. "Jesus of Nazareth" cared for God's flock as the shepherd of his people, healing the sick, preaching the kingdom of God, and calling 12 disciples. He was a friend to a lonely tax collector and the true man to a Samaritan woman. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus became "the King of the Jews." Jesus is the Messiah promised by God for all people in this world. He rules our hearts with God's peace now and forever (Isaiah 9:6). Those who accept Jesus on the cross as their King will be saved.

Let's look at verses 23 and 24a. The soldiers who crucified Jesus took his garments and made them into four pieces, one for each soldier. But Jesus' garment was unsewn, woven in one piece from the top down. Then they said, "Let us not divide it, but let us cast lots for it, to whom it shall belong." Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified. But the soldiers were only interested in how they could make a material gain from the crucifixion. Their action shows how in-

humane a person can become through his greed and thus revile the crucified Jesus.

In contrast to the cruel soldiers, standing by the cross were the disciple John and four women (25): Jesus' mother, her sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas) and Mary of Magdala. They were faithful people of faith who followed Jesus to the end both in the good times and in the time of terrible suffering. No mother wants to see her son die in agony in such an unjust way. Jesus, seeing his grieving mother under the cross, bore greater sorrow. But he carried our sin and sorrow to the cross. In doing so, he cared for his grieving mother to the end and entrusted her to his beloved disciple John. Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." Praise Jesus, who on the cross bore all our sorrows, that we may always be confident and participate with joy in his suffering.

Through this passage, we can learn that Jesus had to die so agonizingly on the cross for the sake of our iniquities and sins. Many act like the Roman soldiers in that although they see Jesus crucified, they remain indifferent and cold. Some deliberately do not look at the cross of Jesus because they do not want to repent of their sinful lives. It is crucial how we respond to the cross of Jesus in this Easter season. Jesus took all the agony of the cross upon Himself to bear our sickness and sin. Therefore, we may look up to Jesus on the cross by putting away our sin. A young woman did not react indifferently or rejectingly to Jesus' cross, but accepted Jesus as the Savior and King and held on to it even in the face of temptation. She is currently getting to know Jesus day by day and is growing as a faithful woman of faith like Mary, who even wants to suffer with Christ, no matter what the cost. God will fulfill His promise in her that nations will come from her and kings over many nations (Genesis 17:16). God bless us in this pandemic time not to remain indifferent to the cross of Jesus, but to love the cross of Jesus, and to deepen our personal love and life relationship with Jesus on the cross, and also to participate with joy in the remaining suffering of Jesus.

2. It is finished! (28-42)

Consider verses 28 and 29: "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar 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." At that moment of dying, Jesus was suffering excruciating pain. We say quickly when we are tired or thirsty. Jesus, however, was not thinking first of his pain, but of whether he had fulfilled the mission he had been given by God. Jesus knew that everything had already been accomplished. Now he could have bowed his head and died. But in order to fulfill the Scriptures and be obedient to God's will, namely to die on the cross as the Passover Lamb, Jesus fought to the death on the cross. Thus Jesus fulfilled the word of Scripture (Psalm 22:16; 69:22), saying, "I am thirsty."

Let us read verse 30: "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." These last words of Jesus on the cross show that by his obedience to the point of death on the cross, he fulfilled his mission and thus accomplished the redemptive work of God. Jesus' death was not a fateful event, but God's plan and the culmination of the work of redemption in God's history. Through the accomplished work of redemption on the cross, Jesus redeemed all people who believe in him from their sins. All who turn from their ungodly lives and believe in Jesus as their Savior have eternal life. "It is finished!" is the victory cry of our Savior, Jesus Christ, over sin and death. It is the good news for all people suffering under sin and death power. We now have the greatest privilege that we, as sinners, may come to the Cross of Jesus and ask for His forgiveness. We may be grateful for the accomplished work of redemption by giving our lives to God as a thank you.

Many great men and women of faith testify to how they experienced the power of God and power of change in their lives through Jesus' victory cry, "It is finished!" When they personally received Jesus' victory cry, they followed Jesus' example and accomplished their mission and glorified God. John Newton once lived as a ruthless and brutal captain of an English slave ship. On a dangerous crossing, however, he was converted to God. He began to give thanks for Jesus' accomplished work of redemption. With his collaborator William Cowper, he wrote a hymnal of over 400 pages. His song "Amazing Grace" is known to all people today. Jesus' death on the cross accomplished John Newton's change from a slave trader to an influential servant of God for the abolition of slavery in England and for spiritual revival in Europe.

I grew up in a Christian community. Nevertheless, I tortured myself under youthful lust by secretly gambling and molesting various women. Although I did not want to do this, I did it over and over again. In desperation, my soul cried out to God, "I wretched man!" I lived as a failure. I lacked the strength to study God's word. I could not even study for school. Without Jesus, I could accomplish nothing. But Jesus cried out for me on the cross, "It is finished!" Jesus went the way to Calvary for me, and for me He shed His blood. Jesus' cry of victory changed me from a hopeless prodigal son to Jesus' servant, shepherd and Bible teacher for God's redemptive work of the Next Generation. When I heard Jesus' victory cry and built my life on the grace of Jesus alone, God allowed me to graduate from my master's program with an A grade. I also experienced Jesus' victory over Satan's challenge. Since Jesus accomplished the work of redemption for me, I give my limbs to God as weapons of righteousness with gratitude and obey 2 Timothy 2:15.

Let's read the key verse 30 again, "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." "It is finished!" is in perfect tense, meaning Jesus has already accomplished the work of redemption. Jesus' death on the cross has the power to give perfect redemption to all people living in this world. With his death on the cross, Jesus has fulfilled God's plan for our salvation 100 percent. Everyone who comes to the cross of Jesus in faith as a lost sinner and asks for His mercy experiences the miracle of redemption and receives the new life in the power of God and eternal life. But why are there some who live a changed life through Jesus' victory cry, while some remain under the power of sin and death? Why are some who are persecuted for the sake of Jesus' name full of joy, while some who live in the best conditions are powerless and helpless? It is because many live without Jesus. They deny in one way or another that Jesus accomplished everything on the cross. There are many who, while saying they are grateful for Jesus' death on the cross, draw back when they are told to surrender something.

Let us personally accept Jesus' word "It is finished!" and live the new life with the power of God. Since Jesus accomplished everything for us, we also receive power to accomplish the mission of God. Last week, we heard a talk

about William Tyndale through Sh. Noah. After accepting Jesus' redemptive work for his sins through Bible study, William Tyndale gave his life as a thanksgiving for Jesus' grace, victoriously accomplishing his mission of English Bible translation even until his execution. A servant of God committed himself to the disciple-making work out of his shepherd heart, so that many returned to the Bible and were raised up as spiritual leaders. At the same time, however, he experienced many challenges and accusations. However, because Jesus accomplished everything for him, he holds on to Philippians 1:21 and serves the world mission even more increasingly until the end. Through the master courses for leadership, we came to know that many philosophers and even theologians seduce people to supposed autonomous freedom by calling their own life's work an error at the end of their lives. But I know two young men. About one, the so-called experts said he could never attend secondary school. Another had a noise problem that Dr. Google said could not be solved. But they didn't listen to the lies of the godless zeitgeist, they listened to Jesus' victory cry on the cross, "It is finished!" In this baccalaureate period, they struggle with clear prayer requests to glorify God by accomplishing the baccalaureate, and God uses them as His living witnesses to their classmates and further to the world campus mission.

Out of gratitude for Jesus' victory over sin and death, and because Jesus has already accomplished all things for us, we may surrender to God with confidence of victory and accomplish the works of God according to Jesus' promise, for the campus mission and for spiritual revival by forming 10,000 one-on-one Bible study teams, for the mobilization of the Next Generation through GLEF, leadership and master classes, and for the M-mission by building three mission bases.

Let us look at verses 31-37. When Jesus died on the cross, it was the preparation day for the Passover. The bodies were not to remain on the cross, but were to be buried on the same day (Deut. 21:23). Therefore the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of those crucified and to take them off. So the soldiers broke the legs of the robbers to hasten their death. But Jesus had already died. Therefore, they did not break his legs, but a soldier thrust his spear into Jesus' side, and immediately blood and water came out. Jesus was really dead. That is why his sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins is perfect.

His shed, holy blood cleanses our conscience from dead works so that we can serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). John the evangelist makes it clear through these facts that Jesus really died (33). He was an eyewitness to all these events and testified to Jesus' death so that we too may accept this as fact and believe that Jesus died for us (35). Furthermore, John testifies through these events that all the details of Jesus' death did not happen by chance, but according to Scripture (36.37). Four times in this text he mentions the fulfillment of Scripture (24.28.36.37). God is absolutely faithful and fulfills his promises of Scripture. Thus, through Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross, God also fulfilled his promise in Psalm 130:8: "And he will redeem Israel from all their sins."

Let's look at verses 38 and 39. Since the Sabbath was near, the religious Jews urged that Jesus be buried quickly. Then two men came to do their service for Jesus: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two respected members of the Jewish high council. Until then, the two had only been secret disciples of Jesus. The cross of Jesus, however, changed their lives 180 degrees. Joseph of Arimathea boldly went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Nicodemus brought a hundred pounds of fragrant myrrh mixed with aloes to Jesus. John reports Jesus' burial to confirm Jesus' death and burial as true facts. Just as Jesus' death and burial are historical facts, so Jesus' perfect love and forgiveness are realities, in which we can fully trust. They become alive in our lives just as in the lives of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

Today we heard Jesus' cry of victory on the cross, "It is finished!" We have come to know that Jesus' death on the cross was not a tragedy, but God's victory over sin and death. Jesus fulfilled his mission to the point of death on the cross and accomplished the saving work of God. Through repentance for our sins and faith in the accomplished redemptive work of Jesus, God gives everyone forgiveness of their sins and eternal life. Let us always give thanks for God's grace and, like Jesus, fulfill our mission to the end by bringing the Good News of Jesus' victory over sin and death to young people in all universities in Europe and to the ends of the earth.