

IT IS FINISHED

Good Friday is a remembrance and honouring of a very traumatic event. It is quite literally a memorial to a brutal murder that occurred in history 2000 years ago in Jerusalem. It is a sober acknowledgement of what it took for God the Father to fix the problem of sin. It was a day promised from Genesis 3. The seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head. It was a sacrifice forecast from the blood on the doorpost in Exodus. It is the heroic sacrificial culmination of the greatest story ever told.

Good Friday is the redeeming of it. Good Friday is the fulfilment of it. Good Friday is the finishing of it.

In John 19 verse 30, Jesus hung on that cross and he said, It is finished. With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished. Most of us have an it. It happened when I was so many years old, and what happened affected my identity and how I felt about myself and others and God. It was an event that changed my life. It was more than a disruption. It was, with hindsight, a life quake that shook me and maybe still does. For some, it began as a click on a computer, a new friendship, a one-off mistake, a sip. And it became an addiction. It can take you by surprise. It can feel like it has always been like this.

Many of us want to say about our it. It's not my fault. It's not fair. I can't stop it. I can't forget it. I can't get over it. Do you have an it that defines you and even defies your will? And at times has the power to defile you. Our it is not always sinful, but often it is. When Jesus said, it is finished, did that have anything to do with our it?

I think it did. Jesus' words, it is finished in Greek, is the word tetelestai, which means to complete a process, to finish the journey completely. Tetelestai.

To carry out an obligation fully. To pay off a debt in its entirety. It is finished.

What did Jesus completely complete that day on the cross? Well, we heard a little bit from Isaiah 53. We often go to that portion of scripture on Good Friday.

Let me read from verse four. Isaiah, the prophet wrote, Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried, yet we ourselves esteemed him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep have gone astray, each one of us has turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. The first aspect we see that Jesus accomplished was that your sin and mine has been carried.

SIN IS CARRIED

He has bore the weight of our sin. He has taken the burden. Some of us would remember the name John Bunyan.

John Bunyan was a Baptist minister in England in the 1600s. Before he became a Baptist minister, he was a tradesman. And he was preaching at a time when you needed a licence to preach.

And he didn't have a licence, so he got arrested and was sentenced to prison. And he was put in prison, in jail, for 12 years in Bedford County Jail in England. And while he was there, he wrote the allegory, Pilgrim's Progress.

The main character, a man named Christian, is carrying a huge burden on his back. You might remember the story. It represents his sin, his guilt, maybe his it.

He can't get rid of it. He tries to run from it. He tries to fix it.

He even tries to be good enough to remove it. But no matter what he does, the burden stays. And then at a pivotal moment in the story, Christian comes to the cross, and his heavy burden is loosened and ultimately slips from his shoulders.

Remember, the prophet said he will carry our sorrows. The prophet said the iniquity of us all will fall on him. If there is an it that you are carrying this morning, can I encourage you with these profoundly true words, Jesus has carried that burden.

He carried our sorrows when he went to the cross. It's part of what he meant when he said, it is finished. I have taken the burden all the way, the full length of the journey.

I know it sounds very simple, but can I encourage you to consider trusting him? Let go of the burden. Give it to him.

It is finished means your debt and my debt has been cancelled.

DEBT IS CANCELLED

Jesus took the penalty for my sin. Colossians 2 says, when you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ.

He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us. He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. Sin creates a real guilt and debt before a holy God.

Some of the scriptures that deal with this are Romans chapter 3. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's us.

Romans 3.19. So that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. The Bible teaches clearly that we are made in the image of God as human beings and we are made responsible and accountable.

Amen. Romans 6 speaks of this in legal terms. For the wages of sin is death.

Matthew 6.12 explicitly describes sin as debt. Forgive us our debts. Matthew 18 verse 23.

Jesus tells a parable about a servant who has an unpayable debt and the king cancels his debt. Sin equals a debt we cannot repay. Does anyone remember what this is?

This next bunch of numbers and letters. That is an Amazon gift card code. I thought of that because when you put the Amazon gift card code in, someone gives you it as a gift or a voucher.

It's sort of quite magical. It just takes away the debt. It takes away the price.

And again, sounding so simplistic, when Jesus died on the cross and he said, it is finished, he paid our debt, our sin debt, completely. Tetelestai. The debt is paid to the very end.

Our burden has been carried. Our debt has been cancelled.

SHAME IS REMOVED

Our shame has been removed. Jesus took our shame on the cross. Hebrews 12, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Guilt says, I've done something wrong. Shame says, there's something wrong with me, doesn't it? Guilt is about action.

Shame is about identity. Guilt says, I made a mistake. Shame says, I am the mistake.

What did Jesus finish? He took our shame, the shame that sin produces. And he did it in dramatic fashion, didn't he?

The public humiliation is awesome, horrific. Jesus was stripped and exposed and mocked and ridiculed. This is after having the skin of his back removed in a flogging.

He was rejected and abandoned. Honestly, can I ask you, does your it involve shame? Some of us know that we've been forgiven, but we still feel ashamed of it.

When Jesus said it is finished, he took our shame. Can I encourage you to give it over to him today? Or start the process?

Maybe again. He has paid for and taken our shame.

THE POWERS ARE DEFEATED

When Jesus said it is finished, the powers have been defeated. Hallelujah. Jesus took away the power that enslaves.

Colossians 2 says, having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Isn't that just extraordinary? The picture of the cross is suffering and vulnerability and loss and death.

But in that moment, he was disarming and defeating the powers.

Romans 6 says, for we know that our old self was crucified with him, so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin, because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Jesus paid for our sin.

His blood covers our sin. But he also broke the power of sin, death and the devil. He disarmed the powers of this world, so that we should no longer be slaves to sin.

There is a truly cosmic aspect to what we celebrate and remember today. He satisfied in his death on the cross after his perfect life. Jesus satisfied the holiness of God and in so doing defeated the power of darkness.

What does it mean to be a slave to sin? It sounds a lot like addiction, doesn't it? To be enslaved.

The cycle of addiction looks a bit like this. There is a painful it that happens. And we don't often know how to deal with it.

And so we find some discovery, some self-medication, some way of acting out that brings relief for a period of time, but there's a relapse because the cycle of addiction, which is that it's a picture of, is one of diminishing rate of return.

And the circle gets faster and smaller. I wonder if you can relate to that. When Jesus said, it is finished, he was declaring that every it that enslaves has lost its power.

That's the truth. We have to appropriate that by grace. But may we remember this morning and tomorrow when you might reflect on your it that maybe has a power over you that feels like an enslavement.

John 8 36, the son, if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Hallelujah. There is hope for you if you are stuck under a power that enslaves.

Can I encourage you call out to Jesus? There's nothing sort of magical about it. It's just honestly saying, Jesus, I need you to set me free.

I know you've made it possible, but I need to, I need to receive it.

SUFFERING IS SHARED

Finally, it is finished. Tetelestai means Jesus suffered in the cross, not just on the cross, I think in the power of the cross. The suffering of the world has been shared.

Isaiah 53 tells us he was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain.

Maybe the most common it is the it of suffering, the loss of a loved one, the diagnosis of a terrible disease, an accident that changes our life forever, an injustice perpetrated against us or someone we love.

Obviously, many of those things are not sin, but some are caused by sin.

And then our response to the events that happened to us and to others we love really put us in a difficult space where we often choose, as the cycle of addiction tells us, to find hope in strange places. Suffering is a mystery, isn't it?

And next to suffering is the power of evil. And so often we say suffering and evil is a very challenging issue to understand. Suffering leads to us expressing words like it is not fair.

I can't handle it anymore. Why did it have to happen? Why did God allow it to happen?

While we can't always find answers for it, we can know that our God is not indifferent to it. Amen. Our suffering, that it, that we can't get our head around, Jesus is not indifferent to it.

He came, got in human flesh, and suffered as a human with us. His it leads to us understanding our suffering. It's through the cross.

CONCLUSION

Can our it be finished? Yes, I truly believe it is not just a token throwaway in Christian ease at the local church service.

This is the truth of the universe, that in the death and resurrection, the perfect life, death and resurrection of Jesus, there is a power that can heal and bring hope to any it. Anything at all. I know that's a massive statement.

When you truly realise that through faith in the death and life and resurrection of Jesus, there is a burden lifted, he carries our sin, there is complete cancellation of debt, there is the removal of shame, there is the breaking of chains of every

power, there is sharing and redeeming of every suffering, we can, by the grace of God, forgive those who have played a part in causing that suffering. And again, that is not possible without going through the cross, amen. It's not possible.

You can accept it and become a stronger person by the grace of God, because Jesus died to reverse the power and effects of every sin.

Jesus came from heaven, an infant born at Christmas, he lived a perfect life for 30 years before he started his ministry. He served and taught and performed miracles for three years, and then he was brutally killed on a cross. Tetelestai.

It is finished. Meant that Jesus had walked the entirety of the road marked out for him. He completed the messianic journey, the lamb of God's journey.

The calling was finished. No other human could do it, but he did it.

And he invites you and I to bring our journey with all the pain of it, and all the joy of it, and the confusion of it, and the exhaustion of it, the guilt and shame of it, and trust him with it. Hand your life over to Christ.

Maybe for the first time this morning. But if you've got tangled up in it, can I encourage you to do it again? To hand your life over again, and say, Lord Jesus, I trust you with it.

Here's my life. Because you believe that it is finished. Sin carried, paid for, shame removed, chains broken, suffering redeemed.