

'It is finished'

John 19:30

Hebrews 10:1-4, 11-14

In our series on Jesus' words from the cross, we come to another saying that is just one word in the Greek. A crucified person can't preach sermons; they are limited to mere words. This word of Jesus would have reminded Jews of Psalm 22:31, 'He has done it!' In other words, Jesus is saying, 'I have reached the goal;' 'My mission is accomplished!'

So what has been done? Which work is finished?

1. Jesus has identified with humans to the bitter end. He has lived the human life on earth without sinning. Older people can also feel that their life's work is done. That's a good feeling. That's God's grace. Then they can leave it to God to decide the time to call them home.

2. The proclamation of the good news. Jesus has spoken about the love of God and the Kingdom of God to all who wanted to hear: in Galilee, in Jerusalem and even to some foreigners.

[If you believe in these two things alone, you're a bit of a liberal. These two are true, but there is more.]

3. Jesus has been exalted, glorified, as he had foresaid (John 3:14, 8:28 and 12:32). In a way his crucifixion is his glorification.

4. The sacrifice has been made, once for all – so Hebrews. Jesus has carried away the sins of the world – so Isaiah 53 and John 1:29. Atonement has been made for our sins (my sins and your sins) and for the sins of the whole world.

What does this mean for us?

1. God's wrath has been satisfied. Jesus has born it. There is forgiveness for us! You only have to accept the offer of forgiveness.

2. This sacrifice does not require repetition. The author of Hebrews takes many chapters to explain this in detail. It was once for all. It would be incorrect to wear an ornamental cross with a Jesus figure on it. In Protestant churches the cross on the wall is empty. This conviction separates us from traditional Roman Catholic thinking. For them Communion is a repetition of the sacrifice of Jesus. We disagree. We think that the bread and the wine remain bread and wine; they only *remind* us of the body and blood of Jesus.

3. This finished work ends our situation of death and despair. The world is forever changed. The path to the Father is free, unblocked. As Hebrews says it, we have been made holy. As Stuart Townend makes us sing, 'The price is paid, the chains are loosed, and we're forgiven, And we can run into the arms of God.'

4. Believers in the Old Testament looked forward to this moment. In fact, on Good Friday the Old Testament truly becomes *old*. No more animal sacrifices are needed. The new covenant is made in the blood of Jesus!

5. John 19:31 hints at the fact that the work is completed, finished, late on the Friday, the sixth day of the week, just before the Sabbath. This detail reminds us of Genesis 2:2, where we read that God completed his work of creation on the Friday (afternoon), just before the day on which he rested. Jesus brings our re-creation.

The work is not accomplished by an ordinary human but by the Son of God, the Son of Man. Shame on us? No, we share in the honour given to Jesus! The day on which Jesus dies was a truly good Friday!