

It is Finished (John 20:16-36)

When I was younger my friends and I used to enjoy listening to a Welsh comedian called Max Boyce. He had certain catch phrases. Such as whenever he was asked how he liked something new he would always say "It'll be nice when it's finished". His most famous one was : "I was there" because he was a supporter of Llanelli Rugby Club and his team had an historic win over the All Blacks in 1973. Few international sides ever beat the All Blacks, yet the Scarlets beat them. "I was there!"

Someone once said that you will always remember where you were on great occasions in history. It's true. I can remember what I was doing on 9-11 because the horror of the situation becomes fixed in your mind and you never forget what you were doing at the time.

This is true of John too. Unlike the other three gospels, the writer is describing what he saw with his own eyes and what he heard. That's why we get a lengthy record of what Jesus said rather than what He did in John. People needed to know and in John's gospel we read words that we have nowhere else.

Possibly John's gospel was the final one to be written and he seems to have desired to fill in the gaps by giving a personal account of the person he had become close to. I don't think he was boasting when he said he was the disciple whom Jesus loved - it was possibly what he was noted for by other people who knew Jesus and John. It's important because he gives us a full account of things that happened at the crucifixion and subsequently the resurrection. Most of all it's *his* testimony because he wants people to understand what happened and believe. Jesus died and rose again.

35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.

So as we hear him recall this terrible scene, he relates to us why the soldiers needed to cast lots for his undergarment. He gives us a critical piece of information that leaves us in no doubt that Jesus died - a spear was thrust upwards into His chest bringing forth blood and water - a sure sign of death.

He also brings us a touching scene where Jesus asks John to look after His mother Mary which John does. Because he was close enough to hear Jesus, we also have some words not recorded elsewhere. First of all he said

28 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

Why say them? The words come from Psalm 69

I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none. 21 They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.

There is also a reference to thirst in Psalm 22 which many believe Jesus was trying to quote at this equivalent time in the other Gospels as that Psalm starts with those words "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?"

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

In Psalm 69 like in other psalms of this type, the anguish of the psalmist is tempered with the promise of victory: *29 I am in pain and distress; may your salvation, O God, protect me. 30 I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving. 31*

*This will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with its horns and hoofs.
32 The poor will see and be glad-- you who seek God, may your hearts live!*

Psalm 22 is the same: 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! 24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. 25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows. 26 The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him-- may your hearts live forever! 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.

Both Psalm 22 and Psalm 69 are Psalms that have the psalmist crying out because all seems lost. In Psalm 69 he is in a right mess, he's been crying out and it seems as though God hasn't been answering him. But at the end there is victory and promise. That's the end to in Psalm 22 too.

28 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

How was the scripture fulfilled? Jesus on the cross looked like failure to the world - abandonment by God who was supposed to be with Him. By saying these words we see in the death of Jesus we have a victory that brings life. He has suffered to bring people life - eternal life - that they may live forever. He has died so that the nations are drawn to Him.

So we see in John's recollection of that phrase that Jesus had made a statement of victory. Through His suffering He had brought people life. There is another small phrase that John records: *30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

These words are just one in the Greek "Tetelestai" which was a word from the market place. It was used to close a deal to say the price was paid in full. Jesus was referring to a transaction here. What had he bought? We have already seen that he brings life to people, to the nations. How had he done that? Buy paying a price. As we look at Him on the cross in grief and agony we find that our sins were laid on Him and he died for our sins. Our sins were placed on Him and he has bought us our freedom and in His death the deal was sealed and the price was paid in full.

As we come around communion this morning, this Good Friday is a poignant day because we know that it was on this day that he went through all this for us. So we remember afresh that broken body and shed blood because it is through this suffering the price was paid for our redemption and the means that we could have life forever was purchased.

And that's what it is about in the final analysis, he died so that men and women like you and I could know God as the eyewitness John knew Jesus. Do you know Him? If you don't then maybe today is the day when you accept that Jesus died for you and receive the offer of sins forgiven and eternal life - a new life in Jesus.

For those of us who know Him, let's come before Him in joy and praise Him for what Jesus has done for us on Calvary and be thankful.



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