

March 29, 2013 – Good Friday Service

John 19:16-37

16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus away. **17** Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, *Golgotha*). **18** There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. **19** And Pilate posted a sign over him that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." **20** The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

21 Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

22 Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. **24** So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it. This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did.

25 Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. **26** When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "**Dear woman, here is your son.**" **27** And he said to this disciple, "**Here is your mother.**" And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "**I am thirsty.**" **29** A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. **30** When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "**It is finished!**" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

31 It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. **32** So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. **33** But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. **34** One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. **35** (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also can believe.) **36** These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken," **37** and "They will look on the one they pierced."

The road to Golgotha is now known as the "Via Delorosa," the "road of sorrow." Along this road Jesus carried His cross (v17). It was the custom that the condemned man,

surrounded by four Roman soldiers, would carry the cross to the place of execution. Jesus carrying His cross suggests the voluntary nature of His sacrifice.

At Golgotha the four Roman soldiers crucified Him (v18). This type of execution was the cruelest and most horrifying death. There are no words to describe it. Jesus was executed as a common criminal along with two actual criminals on each side of Him with Jesus in the middle. It was customary that a board with either the name of the condemned person or his crime or both would be placed on the cross. So Pilate did this, having written on the board: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (v19). He was careful to write it in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek so that all who passed could read it for where Jesus was crucified was near the city (v20). The three languages representing religion, government, and culture was a prophecy - without knowing, Pilate was announcing the universal kingship of Jesus Christ.

Pilate meant for it to be an insult to the Jews; and indeed the leading priests objected. They said, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'" (v21). But Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written." (v22). This board above the cross was called a "title" and once written and put on the cross, it expressed a legal decision.

For the work that they did the four Roman soldiers received the clothing of the victims. They probably didn't get much from the two criminals. John was an eyewitness and so he describes how the soldiers divided Jesus' clothes among the four of them. There was something special though about His robe. It was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom (v23). Dividing it would destroy its value, so they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it" (v24), to see who would get it. This fulfilled the Scripture found in ...

Ps 22:18

They divide my garments among themselves and throw dice for my clothing.

John is witnessing these things and writes that we might believe or continue to believe. Except for John the other disciples abandoned Jesus, but there was a group of faithful women who were standing near the cross: Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene (v25).

On the cross Jesus' thoughts were for His mother. Evidently, John was standing near her and Jesus said to them, "Dear woman, here is your son." And to John, "Here is your mother." And from then on John took her into his home. John would now care for Jesus' mother, Mary (v26-27).

Then John provides us with something very profound about Jesus' words, "I am thirsty." Even at the moment of His death Jesus is fully conscious and dedicated to completing His mission. Jesus knowing His mission was "finished" said, "I am thirsty" (v28). The soldiers had brought along a jar of sour wine, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips (v29).

This too fulfilled Scripture.

Ps 69:21

... they offer me sour wine for my thirst.

Jesus was physically thirsty, but what else was he thirsty for? He was thirsty for the glory of God, He was thirsty to accomplish our salvation. Some scholars point to

Ps 42:2

I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him?

Ps 63:1

God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.

Mark records that earlier

Mark 15:23

They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it.

He refused it because He wanted to be conscious through the entire process. But He accepts this wine that is not drugged, although it is sour wine that has turned to vinegar. And when Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" - the same exact word He used in v28 when it says He knew His mission was "finished"—same word *tetelestai* (v30). The word means "accomplished," "fulfilled," or even "paid in full." There is another Greek word for "completion" but the word Jesus uses adds the idea of completion in terms of a set goal. Every part of this verse stresses the voluntariness of His sacrifice with an emphasis to the idea of perfect completion.

Our redemption was Christ's goal. That is why He suffered and died to fulfill that goal. His act on the cross is the perfect completion. It is the perfect completion of all prophecy, the perfect completion of the Scriptures, the perfect completion of salvation. The plan of redemption is complete both in history and in its perfect adequacy to meet every need of sinful people.

Jesus said, "It is finished!" Then He bowed his head and released His spirit. There it is that is the precise moment that your redemption was purchased and accomplished.

Jesus is the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin; and now we can freely approach God because of what Jesus did for us. Those who believe in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection can live eternally with God and escape the penalty that comes from sin.

He bowed His head and released his spirit. Jesus voluntarily yielded His spirit to God. Jesus' life was not taken from Him; He gave His life willingly. This shows Jesus' sovereignty over all — He was even in control of His death!

Tetelestai is not a cry of relief that all is over; it is a shout of victory.