

GOOD FRIDAY SERMON “IT IS FINISHED”

There is an unusual liturgical thing we do just once a year and it happens in this service at the conclusion. It is called the *strepitus*, Latin for a crash, a great noise, an uproar. It is a tradition going back to the 9th Century, where a loud noise is made to symbolize the closing of the tomb. If you are not paying attention, I guarantee you will jump.

And then, after we hear the loud jarring noise, we hear these three words: “It is finished,” the very words Jesus spoke from the cross just before his head lowered and he died.

It is finished. So, I would be missing a once- a-year opportunity if I failed ask you on this Good Friday, just what exactly is finished? For you, what is finished? For all of us, for us and for our salvation, what is it that is finished?

Just what does Jesus' death accomplish? What does it finish? Jesus' sinless life and atoning death finish your shame, your regret, your condemnation for sin, your slavery to sin, your future judgment, your enmity and alienation from God. On the cross, Jesus took the whole cup of God's wrath for you and drank it down to the dregs, flipped it over, slammed it down on the table and cried out "It is finished."

You're not your past, you're not your temptations and sins, you're not God's enemy and you're not going to Hell. Through the death of Christ, it is finished! Our Lord Jesus looks at each one of us with the matchless love of God in his eyes and says, "Believe me, for you, it is finished, completed, and accomplished. Once and for all. Believe me."

But, and there's always that but, isn't there? But even though Jesus said, "It is finished," we know it is not over. The work of Christ did not stop at the

crucifixion. In fact, it is now being made whole in us, in each and every one of us. We will continue to do the work of Christ in the world.

We continue to work toward becoming new creations, bringing hope to all people. His work is finished, our work continues.

When you feel like you can't go on, that life is hard, please know that your work is not done. We have more to do. We have the resurrection of Jesus to celebrate. We have a resurrection of hope that will inspire and empower us to live Easter lives each and every day.

Let us remember that going from death to life is hard work. Jesus was dead, in the grave for three days. We don't hide from the difficult and dark moments in our lives. In fact, we

understand that it is in the hard moments where God will birth something beautiful. The last words from Jesus on the cross are only the beginning, the beginning of our work of following Christ, the beginning of a changed world.

On the cross, Christ became all that we are so we could become all that he is.

But oh, no, our work is not finished... not yet. Amen.