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Date: April 9, 2023

Title: FINISHED OR NOT?

Text: John 19:28 – 20:7

John 19:28-37

28“Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’ 29A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. 30When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and bodies taken down. 32The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35The 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. 36These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: ‘Not one of his bones will be broken,’ 37and, as another scripture says, ‘They will look on the one they have pierced.’”

“Finished or Not?” How many think they know the answer? That word FINISHED can be a rather good word. I remember how good it felt to be finished high school. Then college. In financing a car, do you know what my favorite payment was? The LAST ONE – because it was finished. Of course, that’s usually about the time you think you need a new one. I’ve paid many a mortgage payment over my lifetime. Can you guess my favorite mortgage payment? My LAST ONE. I’m not one to be particularly fond of preparing my taxes, but I need to FINISH them. I have plans to finish them by April 15. Actually, I think Tax Day is April 18, 2023, because the 15th falls on a weekend. We can only try to imagine what it was like for Jesus to utter *“IT IS FINISHED”* after all He went through. This morning I’d like you to take a look at Calvary. Calvary – where *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.”* Calvary – where *“God commended His love toward us while we were yet sinners.”* Calvary – where *“Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body.”* Calvary – where *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,”* where the *“chastisement of our peace was upon Him”* AND... where *“by His stripes we are healed.”* In this text, we hear the cry of TRIUMPH, of VICTORY, of JUBILATION. Jesus cries out, *“IT IS FINISHED.”* The victim has become the VICTOR! The Savior’s sufferings are over. His work on earth is done and the gates of Heaven are now opened, so that any man who puts his faith in Jesus may enter. The spotless Lamb, the Lamb of God, paid the price for our salvation with His own blood.

There are three words here in the English, but in the language that Jesus spoke there is only one – *tetelestai*. In that word is wrapped up the WHOLE Gospel of Christ. In that one word we find the ENTIRE basis for our salvation. In that one word we find ALL of our hope for eternal life. When Jesus said, *“It is finished,”* He meant that He had done EVERYTHING necessary to save and bless you and me for time and eternity! In a few minutes He is going to die. The dreadful darkness is over. The precious blood has been shed. The outpoured wrath of God for sin has been endured. All that remains now is the act of death. That’s a small thing for Him, for in His mind and heart this has already been accomplished.

1. YES – IT IS FINISHED! So now He cries, *“It is finished.”* What did Jesus mean when He said that? WHAT is finished? **A. HE MEANT THAT ALL THE PROPHECIES CONNECTED WITH HIS DEATH HAD BEEN FULFILLED.** I’d encourage you to read the prophecies of the Old Testament and then go to the New Testament and see the prophecies literally fulfilled. The Bible is true because God is true. If He foretells a thing, you can know that it will come to pass. Prophecies concerning His birth were foretold hundreds of years before His birth. Prophecy declared that He would be born of a woman. That His mother would be a virgin. That He would be a descendant of David. That He would be named before He was born. That He would be born in Bethlehem.

That He would flee to Egypt. That He would be poor and needy. That He would have a forerunner, John the Baptist. That He would cause the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. All of that HAS happened. It was prophesied that He would be despised and rejected of men, that He would be hated without a cause. That He would be betrayed by friends. That He would be forsaken by His disciples. That He would be led like a lamb to the slaughter. That He would be numbered among the transgressors. That the soldiers would gamble for His garments. Now He cries, *"IT IS FINISHED,"* and we know that all of this has come to pass. There are TWO lines of prophecy in the Old Testament relating to Christ. The FIRST line had to do with His FIRST coming, and all of these prophecies have literally been fulfilled. The SECOND line has to do with His SECOND coming. As we have seen the first line of prophecy fulfilled, we can know that the second line will be fulfilled. He came the first time in humiliation – HE IS COMING BACK THE SECOND TIME IN GLORY! Down through the ages Israel had looked for the coming Messiah. They talked about Him, sang songs about Him, and they dreamed about Him. When He did not come, it seems their hope grew dim. Their prophecies became mixed up with tradition and when the Messiah did come, they had the wrong idea about Him. They looked for a king instead of a suffering Savior, and consequently they didn't recognize Him. *"He came to His own and His own received Him not."* When He was here, He said He was coming back again. The years have come, and He has not returned. 2 Peter 3:4 – *"They will say, 'Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.'" Today there are those who mix the prophecy of the Bible with the modernism of this day and say that only symbolic language was used in the prophecies. Thus, they indicate that Jesus is not coming back. Thus, they throw part of the Bible away and rob themselves and others of the Blessed Hope. Be assured that if He came the first time – AND HE DID – He WILL come again!*

B. HE MEANT THAT HIS SUFFERINGS WERE OVER. He was called the "Man of Sorrows." No man had a more fitting title. He suffered at the hands of men, Satan, AND God. God bruised Him and forsook Him on the cross because there JESUS bore our sins. His friends and His enemies inflicted pain upon Him. It wasn't just on the cross that He suffered – He suffered all through His life. Someone painted a picture of Jesus as a boy in the carpenter's shop of Nazareth. You see the sun from the window casts a shadow behind Him – it is the shadow of a cross. I suppose He lived in the shadow of that Cross all His life, knowing that one day He would hang there for the sins of all men, forsaken of God and man. Everywhere He went there was the shadow of the Cross before Him. He went to the wedding in Cana, where all was gladness and laughter, and the shadow was there. We hear Him saying, "My time has not yet come." Nicodemus came to see Him at night and Jesus talked to him about how the Son of Man would be lifted up; and there was the shadow. James and John came and asked Him to give them high places of honor in His Kingdom, and He had to talk to them of the cup of suffering and the baptism of sorrow. There was the shadow. Peter confessed that Jesus was the "Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus had to tell them, then, that He must go up to Jerusalem and be killed. There was the shadow. Can you imagine how you would feel if you knew that one day you would die a violent death and suffer as He did? You'd think of it when you got up in the morning, when you sat down to your meals, when you went to work, when you were enjoying fellowship with your friends, when you laid down to sleep at night. That is the way it was with Jesus. Still, if Jesus suffered from the SHADOW of the Cross, think how much more He suffered from the REAL thing. In the prime of His manhood His hour comes. They scourge Him, buffet Him, spit upon Him and crown Him with thorns. SOON He is on the way to the Cross, SOON He is nailed to the tree, and SOON He is raised up between heaven and earth. From EARTH the people jeered and taunted Him. From HEAVEN darkness descended and God turned His back upon Him. NOW the suffering is OVER, both the physical and spiritual suffering. The darkness is ENDED. The wages of sin HAVE BEEN PAID. The law has been SATISFIED. All the shame and suffering and agony are PAST. Never again will Jesus experience physical pain. Never again will He be reviled and cruelly treated by human hands. Never again will God turn His back upon Him. ALL His sufferings are over! **C. HE MEANT THAT HIS WORK OF REDEMPTION WAS ACCOMPLISHED.** There are three persons in the Godhead and each of them has a definite task. God the FATHER is especially concerned with the government of the world. He rules all the works of His hands. God the HOLY SPIRIT is especially interested in Scriptures. He moved men to write the Bible and He interprets it to our hearts. God the SON is especially interested in the work of redemption. He came into the world to die for sinners. Now ON

THE CROSS Christ has finished His work. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and He could say, *"It is finished."* Christ died upon the Cross only after He had finished His work. No one will ever have to add anything to it to save a soul. He looked upon the work that He had done, and He said, "It stands finished, it is complete, it is DONE." It was a word of ACCOMPLISHMENT, and word of VICTORY. Isaiah 53:6 – *"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to His own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."* Now it is done – He has borne our sins and OUR REDEMPTION IS COMPLETE. In Revelation 5:9, we hear the sons of heaven. *"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation."* IT IS ALL DONE! Redemption is complete and anyone in the world can be saved. Jesus came from heaven's glory to earth's shame for this purpose. He laid aside the robes of royalty and took upon Himself the garments of our sinful humanity for this purpose. He was born in Bethlehem for this purpose. He walked among sinners for this purpose. He sweat blood in Gethsemane for this purpose. He wore the crown of thorns for this purpose. He died on Calvary for this purpose. He has wrought our redemption. Nothing remains to be added; He has done enough to save every sinner on earth. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. It is finished. Jesus paid it all. YES – IT IS FINISHED! The prophecies concerning His first coming are FINISHED! His suffering is FINISHED! The price for our redemption is PAID! YES – IT IS FINISHED!

Now let's pick up where we left off.

John 19-38 – 20:7

³⁸*"Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. ^{20:1}Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' ³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen."*

2. NO – HE ISN'T FINISHED! In Bible days, so I've read, when someone died, it was the duty of a family member to close the eyes and kiss the cheek of the dead. When Christ died, this basically became the duty of two men: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They went to Pontius Pilate and begged for the body of the Lord Jesus. Then they had to take Him down from the cross...which was not an easy chore. First, they had to rig a ladder, and climb up the side of the cross, and then they had to pull His hands off the nails. There was no way they could get those spikes out of the wood, not from that angle, not with His hands in between the wood and the nail head. Once the hands were loosed, they allowed the body of Jesus to sag into a sheet and would then remove His feet from the nail in the same manner. They took the body of Jesus to a new tomb that Joseph had prepared for himself. They washed His body, and wrapped it in white linen, folding His arms over His chest. They closed His eyes, kissed His cheek, and placed a napkin over His face. They walked away from that tomb, and likely walked in silence...so that all you could hear was the sounds of their sadness, muffled crying, and sniffing. It must have felt like a huge ball of lead in the pit of their stomachs, as they were thinking, "IT'S ALL OVER, the end of the dream...and it only lasted for 3 SHORT YEARS." 3 DAYS felt like an eternity...and some surmise that the birds refused to sing, and the sun refused to shine. For 3 DAYS, the demons of hell rejoiced, and Satan and the forces of darkness thought they had won a great victory. For 3 DAYS, the Jewish

leaders, as well as the Roman government, congratulated themselves on their brilliant scheme. BUT... ON THE THIRD DAY, something wonderful and miraculous happened, as God the Father said to an angel in heaven, "Go get Him!" And when the angel's feet hit the ground, the stone rolled away, and UP FROM THE GRAVE HE AROSE...He lives! In our text, MARY MAGDALENE comes first to the empty tomb. She sees the stone rolled away and it frightens her. And so, she runs to get Peter and John, and they run together to the tomb as fast as they could. John outran Peter, and when he got there, he looked inside, and saw those grave clothes lying there in disarray. Then Peter arrived and, just as we'd expect of him, he went right in. He also saw the linen clothes lying there, but there was something unusual in that scene. Something caught their eye that was very interesting. The Gospel of John tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded and was placed at the head of that stony coffin. Is that important? I think it might be. Is that significant? You decide for yourself. To understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand a little bit about Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the Master and Servant, and I've been told that every Jewish boy knew this tradition. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and... The servant would not dare touch that table until the master was finished. Now if the master was done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the table. The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, "I'm done." BUT... If the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it aside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because... The servant knew that the folded napkin meant, "I'm NOT finished yet." The folded napkin meant, "I'M COMING BACK!" (Excuse me while I shout!) Peter and John had walked with Christ for 3 years. They had watched as He opened blind eyes and deaf ears. They watched as He literally raised people from the dead. Then they watched Him die...and as they watched, all their hopes, all their dreams were shattered! All they could think was, "It's over. It's all over!" For 3 long days they were in the depths of despair...the lights of their soul had gone dim. Peter even said, "I'm goin' fishin'." In other words, "I'm goin' back to what I used to do." Then AFTER 3 days, they saw an EMPTY tomb. Not only did they see an empty tomb, but they saw a folded napkin in that empty tomb! I'm inclined to believe that when they saw that folded napkin God spoke to them in their being and said, "He's NOT finished yet...HE'S COMING BACK!" I thank God today that HE'S not finished yet! IT is finished. The final payment has been made, BUT... HE'S not finished. Hebrews 7:25 (KJV) - *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."* The tomb is empty! Our Savior is alive! The napkin is still folded! I submit to you today that... **A. HE'S NOT FINISHED SAVING SOULS!** The folded napkin says that He's not finished saving souls. The Bible says that Jesus came into this world for one reason - TO SAVE SINNERS. John 3:17 - *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* Acts 4:12 - *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* For that reason, there are 2 kinds of people in this room today. And the distinction has nothing to do with skin color... God doesn't see us that way. It's not rich or poor, educated or uneducated, Republican or Democrat. In the eyes of God, there are: Those that ARE saved and those who NEED TO BE saved. Many people have the mistaken idea that good people ARE saved, and only bad people NEED to be saved. Certainly bad people NEED to be saved...and SO DO "GOOD" PEOPLE. May I say it as clearly as possible - no one exists who's so bad they CAN'T be saved...and no one is so good they don't NEED to be saved! Romans 3:23 - *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* In God's eyes, there's no difference...there are no big sinners and little sinners, JUST SINNERS. In God's eyes, there are sinners who HAVE BEEN forgiven and sinners who have NOT BEEN...but certainly CAN BE forgiven! ILLUSTRATION: Years ago, the great evangelist Billy Sunday was preparing to go into a certain city to do a major crusade. He wrote ahead of time to the mayor of the city and said, "Would you please send me the names of people in your area who need serious spiritual help?" To Billy Sunday's surprise, the mayor sent him the TELEPHONE BOOK! (In case you've not seen one - it is basically a huge book with all the names and phone numbers of people in a in

John 20:1 that one of the women that went to the tomb that morning was named Mary Magdalene. Let me share a bit about her. When Mary first met Jesus, the Gospel of Mark tells us that she had 7 demons! Not 1, not 2, not 3...BUT 7! That's Mark's way of saying that she was hopelessly consumed by the demoniac. Her life had been a mess. With 7 demons, she would have looked like she was mentally ill. She was grossly immoral. Scripture says she was a prostitute. Her life was lies built upon lies. Immorality layered on top of each other. Everyone thought of her as beyond redemption. Imagine her life BEFORE Jesus - hopeless, destitute, an outcast, forgotten, given up on, BUT... In Luke chapter 8, she fell at Jesus' feet and found healing. And to think that she's the first person Jesus appears to! This might be the most beautiful scene in all the Gospels. Mary Magdalene is in the garden, and she mistakes Jesus for the gardener, BUT... Jesus said her name, "Mary," and she recognized him. What an incredible moment! Calling her name triggered something. It woke her up. He's doing that with others today. He's calling YOUR name! That voice has the power to put back together whatever sin has broken. Listen to Him. Follow Him. You can be a new creation. You'll watch old things pass away and BEHOLD! All things will become new! The napkin is still folded...He's still saving souls! **B. HE'S NOT FINISHED RECLAIMING BACKSLIDERS!** A few days before Christ died, He took His disciples aside and told them what was about to happen. He said, "I'm going to be betrayed, arrested, beaten, and crucified." Then He looked at the disciples and said, "All of you are going to desert me when the heat is on." ILLUSTRATION: PETER. The Apostle Peter rose up in typical style and said, *"Not me, Lord. Though all shall be offended, yet will I never be offended."* In other words, "Lord, I don't know about the rest of these bums, but you can count on me!" Then he said, *"Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee."* Can't you just see Jesus shaking his head, saying, "Peter, you're gonna deny me three times by tomorrow morning!" Then the Roman soldiers came to arrest the Lord Jesus...with swords and shields and spears. AND...Courage welled up in Peter's heart, and he took out his sword, and even took a swing at them. He lopped off the ear of one of them. I doubt he was aiming for his ear! The Lord did something incredible. He picked up that ear, and supernaturally reattached it to the man's head. I don't know about you, but if I were a Roman soldier that day, and I saw that miracle, I think I would have changed sides! "Hey fellas, I came with you, but I'm leavin' with Him!" They arrested Jesus and subjected Him to sheer torture. And while this was happening, Peter's courage turned to butter. A young lady approached and said, "I know you; you were with Him." And this same man who had just stood up to the entire Roman army, now backed down and said, "I don't know the man!" Another came up and said the same, and again Peter denied Christ. Yet another said, "Your accent betrays you, you're a Galilean, you're one of His disciples," and he not only denied Christ that third time, but for emphasis threw in a few cuss words..."I don't know the blankety-blank man, leave me alone!" The rooster immediately crowed, and Peter REMEMBERED the words of Jesus. He looked off into the distance, and there stood Christ, and their eyes connected, AND... When he saw the sadness and sorrow in the eyes of Jesus, it broke his heart. He went out to a rock and pounded on it and said, "Oh God, how could I have done this...how can you ever forgive me?" For 3 days he lived in shame, guilt, and misery, realizing he had denied the Lord. Listen now, let me drop a blessing in your heart. Look at Mark's account of the Easter story: Mark 16 - ¹*And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.* ²*And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.* ³*And they said among themselves, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?'* ⁴*And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.* ⁵*And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.* ⁶*And he saith unto them, 'Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.* ⁷*But go your way, tell his disciples, AND PETER that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.'*" Can't you see it in your mind's eye...these ladies run to the disciples to tell them the good news. "He's alive! He's alive! He's risen from the dead!!" Can't you see Peter, in the corner of the room, shocked, saying, "What? What did you say? Is it true?" "Yes, He said to meet Him in Galilee!" And Peter, who has been in the depths of depression for 3 days, stunned at the reality of the Resurrection, and almost encouraged, is once again plagued in his mind at his pitiful denial of Christ, and is dragged right back down into his pit of despair, and thought, "Surely He

doesn't mean for me to come... I denied Him 3 times, I swore...surely, surely, He doesn't mean me!" AND... The ladies said, "Oh, Peter, by the way...HE MENTIONED YOU BY NAME!!! Yes, He mentioned you by name!" "He did? What'd He say?" "He said, go tell the disciples...AND PETER." Why did Jesus want to see Peter? To rebuke him? NO, He wanted to RESTORE him! Another of the sweetest scenes you'll ever see in scripture is Peter and Jesus, coming together, and Jesus hugging him and saying, "Peter, do you love me?" Not, "Peter, are you gonna curse anymore?" NO! He said, "Do you love me?" That's the real issue.

CONCLUSION. If you're here today and you know you're a backslider, let me ask you, was there a time when you WERE right with Him? The real question today is "Do you love Him?" HE LOVES YOU! The napkin is still folded: He's still saving souls. He's still reclaiming backsliders. Maybe, like Mary Magdalene, you're literally struggling against spiritual forces. Maybe you are struggling with addictions or sinful habits you struggle to break. Maybe there are relationships that you have destroyed. Maybe your life seems so hopelessly wrecked by sin that you don't see a way out. Mary would say to you this morning, "I know. I was there. I had 7 demons." But know that there is more healing in Him than there is sickness in you. As dark as the sickness is in you, the light of Christ can dispel it. There is more forgiveness in Him than there is sin in us. I have a sense that Mary Magdalene's story may have resonated with someone this morning. I'm not saying you have a demon, just that there's some addiction, some physical curse, that you can't seem to shake. The resurrection of Jesus covers everything in your broken life. It is more powerful than every weapon in Satan's arsenal. If you're here today and you need to be saved, OR you need to come BACK to God, I want to remind you there's coming a day when another supper will take place...it's called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and I have a feeling that at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, that at the end of the meal, Jesus will stand at the head of the table, and He's gonna wipe His fingers, mouth, and maybe clean His beard, and He's gonna take His napkin, and cast it aside... When that happens, it IS over! The last soul that's gonna be saved, has been saved. The last backslider that's gonna come home – has! I beg of you, don't wait until it's too late! Right now, the napkin is still folded! Remember the prodigal son. When he came home, his father welcomed him with open arms! Today, Jesus is calling you home, the napkin is still folded! Good person or bad...YOU NEED TO BE SAVED! Maybe you want to pray for a wayward one in your life. Again, in conclusion – What is the most important question I could ask you this morning? DO YOU KNOW HIM? If not, may we introduce you to my King?