

IN NOMINE JESU

## THE COMPLETION OF ALL SALVATION IN CHRIST

Our homily for Good Friday is taken from our inspired Gospel reading.

Hear the Word of the Lord,

*Jesus said, "It is finished!" Then bowing the head, He handed over the Spirit.<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

On this day the Church remembers the saving work of her Savior, you will also find yourselves doing some mental work. The fullness of the theme text is going to be placed into your ears from the inerrant, inspired Word of God. Since we truly have a strange language (as I overheard someone say today), we will return to the language God decided to use to communicate the fullness of the Gospel.

The good language of the Faith begins now: the Church's noontide message could be summed up with one word, *τετελεσται*, which we translate, "It is finished!" The one word theme is one of the central reasons why truly evangelical, that is, "of the Gospel" congregations expect that the sermons they are brought by God to hear focus upon Christ-crucified for the forgiveness of all sin. Those who so center on the crucifixion as the fulfillment of the entire Gospel, as we pray we continue to do, in preaching, teaching and worship practice, receive the full benefits of the Lord's death. The focus on the completion of all things in Christ, breathing His last, and dying on the accursed tree, is the Holy Spirit's focus. This centrality is given to lead

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<sup>1</sup> *John* 19:30.

the hearers, you, to the divine conclusion that your salvation is fully accomplished.

Hear again your theme for this day:

*Jesus said, “τετέλεσται!” Then bowing the head, He handed over the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>*

Some of you may know that, in order to direct your thoughts to the reality of this day in history, we placed the Second Article of the Creed on Catalina Lutheran Church’s website this week. In this part of the Church year, more than any other (when one considers the readings, hymns and preaching) God’s gift of the Word is presented to center Christian hearts, minds and souls on the eternal reality that the death of Jesus is *the* focal point for all human history. Τετέλεσται, “It is finished,” is proclaimed to be the day you were saved. (So if any of your neo-evangelical or general Protestant friends ask you when you were saved, you are free to respond with the only biblically correct answer, “Good Friday, in the year we date, AD 33.”) To reinforce that reality, hear again our text,

*Ἰησοῦς said, “τετέλεσται!” Then bowing the head, He handed over the Spirit.<sup>3</sup>*

*Ἰησοῦς* means, “Savior.” That means that Savior declares that all things are finished in Salvation. The reality of the meaning of the Second Article of the Creed is derived from those words, where the true faithful have learned:

*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord.  
who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death... (SC, p.16).*

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<sup>2</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>3</sup> John 19:30.

What does it mean to Jesus that He purchased and won you from all sins, from death and the devil by His holy, precious blood and innocent suffering and death?

It means that the Word of God, given through the prophet Isaiah, has been fulfilled in Jesus. You heard Isaiah pronounce the coming of the Promise of God through words similar to these: *He was being wounded for our transgressions, He was being bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement that made us whole (was) upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.*<sup>4</sup> Long before salvation Day, that message was given to bring hope to those whom God had chosen, before the foundation of the world, to be His children.

(If anyone, to your right biblical claim that you were saved on Good Friday says something to the effect, “I was saved on \_\_\_ day when I decided to follow Jesus,” you may point out that means that their words mean that they are the ones who decided to wound Him, bruise Him, chastise Him, and bring the lash upon Him. That is what an active decision means)! Yes, it was your sins, my sins, and the sins of the whole world that brought the wounding, bruising, chastisement and stripes upon Him. But that was God’s decision, the path chosen by Him in His infinite love. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit chose to place the burden of sin upon the Son, in our flesh, so that His suffering and mortal death would pay the blood-price human sins require. That you might remember those Biblical truths,

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<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* 53:5.

*Ἰησοῦς said, “τετέλεσται!” Then bowing the head, παρέδωκεν the Spirit.<sup>5</sup>*

The word *παρέδωκεν* just declared is often translated, “He handed over.”

The word shows willingness to do something in a self-sacrificial manner. That means that Jesus, in fulfilling that which was necessary to save you from sin, death and the devil, voluntarily handed over His Spirit. Hanging upon the cross, knowing fully all that the ancient prophets of Israel had declared about His suffering and death, Jesus completes them with the word whose meaning you know, “τετέλεσται,” and commits, as a conscious act of His Divine and Human wills, His immortal soul to the Father in perfect obedience. He did this that He might save you from the wrath of God, sin, death and hell by His blood. Salvation is all His work, it is His gift to you, and consists of nothing you do, decide, choose, or work. Hear again the word of the Lord:

*Ἰησοῦς said, “τετέλεσται!” Then κλίνας the head, παρέδωκεν the Spirit.<sup>6</sup>*

The third unfamiliar word for the day, at least to our ears, shows the humanity of Jesus with a poignant term. That is St. John’s choice of the word, *κλίνας*, indicates the failure of human strength to maintain bodily life. Jesus, having born the brutal beatings in His flesh, His back opened by the whip laced with bits of bone, glass and stone, His head scratched and bleeding from the thorn-crown that tore His brow, His hands and feet searing in the pain of the large nails forcibly driven through them as punishment and to delay His death, has taken in His flesh all that man can bear.

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<sup>5</sup> *John 19:30.*

<sup>6</sup> *John 19:30.*

Further, He has been subjected to such brutal public humiliation and mental abuse, that a lesser man would have descended into the depths of irrecoverable despair. Finally, He had suffered the spiritual fate of those who have remained separated to their last breath from God the Father, the Source and Font of Life. Jesus, Who in Himself had committed no sin, faced the sinner's ultimate death – the Father does not answer His pleas for mercy. To bring us to the finished reality of God, hear the Word of God in its inspired, inerrant form, as it has been, without error on account of the Holy Spirit's guiding, been passed on to us:

*Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τετέλεσται και κλίνας τήν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα.<sup>7</sup>*

which means, *Jesus said, "It is finished!" Then bowing the head, He handed over the Spirit.* This day, the Church here has had her language transported back and forth a couple thousand years to help her children, you, to deeply focus anew on the Word of God. As best we are able, we have heard St. John's words as they were first recorded, to drive home the reality that the Day of Salvation is a real historical event, and occurred once that you might cling to God's willful gift of His Son, Who willfully gave His life, and Spirit, that every human might have both eternal life and the Holy Spirit in them.

(That most do not have those divine realities in them is their own fault.

While no one in themselves can decide to follow Jesus, everyone in themselves can decide to reject Him).

However, you are here because you have not rejected the gift of God. That which Jesus won for you on the cross is yours because God declares it to be so. His word of completion becomes your Word of fulfillment. You can be sure and certain of this every time you remember that God has baptized you. For, in the Water and the Word, God brought the Day of Salvation into your life. You, in His sight – that is the only reality that counts eternally - you have died with Christ to the sin you inherited from Adam, from the sins that tempt you daily, and from the devil’s ownership. These words are for you, for you were saved on Good Friday, and received the fullness of that salvation in Holy Baptism:

*Jesus said, “It is finished!” Then bowing the head, He handed over the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>*

There: you have the completion of all salvation in Christ.

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

**Good Friday, Noon**

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; II Corinthians 5:14-21; John 18:1 - 19:1-42

April 10, 2009

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

**SOLI DEO GLORIA**

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<sup>7</sup> John 19:30.

<sup>8</sup> John 19:30.