



BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE



Finishing Well



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THE SIXTH STATEMENT FROM THE CROSS FINISHING WELL

"When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished." And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit." (John 19:30)

... "It is finished," quickly followed His agonizing shout, "I thirst".

It is in these words that we have the assurance of our salvation, the sure knowledge that our personal debt to the Father was paid. Lord Jesus completed His work so that, despite our uncompleted work, we might enter heaven. He successfully met God's standard to make up for our shortcomings. Yes of course we should live for God all of our lives but, as the dying thief learned; we can receive the gift of eternal life without any merits of our own.

Because of the cross, God's justice is satisfied.

Because of the cross, sinners are saved.

Because of the cross, evil is disabled.

What is the significance of Jesus crying out aloud "It is finished"?

When Jesus cried out "*It is finished*," he meant '*I did exactly what I set out to do*' or '*Mission accomplished*'. The phrase "*It is finished*" comes from the Greek word "*Tetelestai*"; which means '*to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish*'. With the shout of "*Tetelestai!*", Jesus gave the most triumphant cry in all of human history. He affirmed that He had successfully completed a great and mighty work, not as a failure but, as the culmination of an eternal plan (**Luke 9:31; John 17:4**).

Every sin has been paid for, every evil deed judged, and the full and total price of our redemption purchased at the cross. That is the power of the blood of Jesus. That is the glory of the Son of God. That is the depth of the Father's love — and it was all for you and for me so that forever, we could be with Him and even share in His nature.

Tetelestai is in the perfect tense in Greek. It's significant because the perfect tense speaks of an action which has been completed in the past with results that continue into the present. The perfect tense adds the idea that '*This happened and it is still in effect today*'. When Jesus cried out "*It is finished*," He meant '*It was finished in the past, it is still finished in the present, and it will remain finished in the future*'.

Note one other fact. Lord Jesus did not say, "*I am finished*," for that would imply that He died defeated and exhausted. Rather, He cried out, "*It is finished*," which means '*I successfully completed the work I came to do*'.

How do you describe the finished work of Jesus on Cross?

In legal speak - I am accepted by God on the basis of the merit of Lord Jesus.

Figuratively speaking, I have a new set of clothes and a clear record in heaven. The righteousness of Jesus has been successfully credited to my account and He paid the full payment for the wages of my sins or the penalty of sins. He became my personal sin bearer to set me free.

The New Testament uses three key words to describe the finished work of Christ: **propitiation, redemption, and reconciliation.**

1 John 4:10 - *...He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Ephesians 1:7 - *In Him we have redemption through His blood....*

2 Corinthians 5:18 - *Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.*

What is Propitiation?

(Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2 and 4:10)

The word "*propitiation*" has its origin in the Greek language (the original language of the New Testament) and basically means '*to satisfy wrath by sacrifice*'. The ancient pagan Greeks used this word when they spoke of appeasing their gods or doing something to obtain the favor of the gods. However, these ideas are not found in the Bible.

The Bible teaches that God is love and desires to have fellowship with man. But God is also holy and righteous. The Bible teaches that God also has wrath that is directed against sin. (See **Romans 1:18**.) The righteous laws of God demand that the "*penalty of sin is death*" (**Romans 6:23**). This is precisely where **Christ became the propitiation for our sins**. Christ did not die only to take away man's sin; but He thus satisfied or propitiated God's wrath against sin because He sacrificially took sin on Himself and suffered the righteous judgment of God against sin.

Every SIN has been
Paid for and the
full **Redemption**
purchased at the
CROSS

What is Redemption?

(Galatians 3:13 and 4:5, Ephesians 1:7, Titus 2:4, 1 Peter 1:18-19 and 2 Peter 2:1)

It is another aspect of the finished work of Christ. The Greek word used during New Testament times were particularly in reference to slavery. To "*redeem*" means '*to buy out of, and remove from, the market in order to set at liberty*'. With redemption, we have been bought back and set free from the slave-market of sin; in addition to this freedom, we have been placed as sons in the family of God.

Although we did not pay silver or gold (**1 Peter 1:18**), we must remember that the cost of our redemption was high. **The ransom price was the precious blood of Christ**. There is no teaching in the Scriptures that the ransom was paid to Satan, as some have suggested. The ransom price was simply what the righteous government of God demanded for our release from the effects of sin (**Hebrews 9:22**).

What is Reconciliation?

(Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and Colossians 1:20-22)

Reconciliation completes the three-fold view of the finished work of Christ. Reconciliation is the '*man-ward*' aspect of the finished work of Christ because it directly relates to our fellowship with God. The basic meaning of the word "*reconcile*", as determined from the Greek language, is '*to change completely*'. In reference to salvation, reconciliation is the act by which God brings man into a completely changed relationship with Himself--from enmity, hostility, and alienation to friendship, harmony, and fellowship.

A wonderful illustration of reconciliation is seen in our Lord's story of the lost son in **Luke 15:11-32**. When the son repents and acknowledges his guilt to the father, he is brought back into a happy and harmonious state of fellowship with the father.

Did Lord Jesus die only for a few people who will be saved or for the whole humankind?

The finished work of Christ is universal in its scope. Look closely at **1 John 2:2**, **2 Peter 2:1**, and **2 Corinthians 5:19** and you will see that Christ's death was sufficient to take care of all the sins of the whole world--unlimited in its coverage and provision. The finished work of Christ is only effective or powerful for those who BELIEVE.

TIPS TO SHARE CHRIST: We must be carriers of this good news to the whole world! We would truly enjoy our walk with our Lord Jesus only when we share this good news of redemption to others. Be carriers of this good news through our words and lifestyle!

- Build genuine relationship with people who are lost without Christ.
- Share the truth of Salvation at "God given opportunities" in your life.
- Invite them to church and share your own story of knowing Christ!
- Help disciple them to serve God in and through the church.
- Continue to Pray for them and be a blessing to them.

Was it necessary for Christ to die?

Yes, Christ had to die because of the Love and Justice of God towards mankind as humanity was incapable of achieving a relationship with God.

The author of Hebrews argues that since "*it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins*" (**Hebrews 10:4**), a better sacrifice is required. **Only the blood of Christ, that is, His death, would be able to really take away sins (Hebrews 9:25-26)**. There was no other way for God to save us than for Christ to die in our place. (**John 3:16**)

"He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21)

What exactly happened to the evil and Satan when Christ died on the cross?

At the cross, Satan and his unclean spirits were destroyed. The word “destroy” is from the Greek “*katargeo*”, which means ‘to put out of action, to make useless’. It is used repeatedly to show how, through the death and the return of Christ, the powers of destruction that threaten man spiritually are put out of action.

Hebrews 2:14-15 *“Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.”*

At the cross, Jesus “disarmed the powers and authorities”. The word ‘disarmed’ is from the Greek “*apekoyo*”, a double compound which means ‘to put off completely, to undress completely and thus render powerless’.

Colossians 2:13-15 *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*

What must I do now against evil and Satan?

The defeated Devil is a deceiver and schemer; **he uses strategies, tricks, and clever devices to tempt us and move us out of our focus** - to follow God.

The Holy Bible says to take up the armour that God has provided us against the enemy. Paul describes the armour for spiritual warfare in **Ephesians 6:10-12**, *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”*.

1 Peter 5:8 -9, *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.”*

How to finish well, being a follower of Lord Jesus?

When we use the phrase, “*finishing well*”, we mean ‘to follow Christ to the very end of our lives, to finish His assignments for us and to hear His words, “*well done, good and faithful servant*”’.

We start the race by the Grace of God and we finish well by the same grace of God.

Seven characteristics of Believers who finish well:

1.They stand firm in their faith and they maintain a personal vibrant relationship with God right up to the end. This is the choice - to continue to cultivate a deeper passion for God. (**Matthew 10:22, Mark 13,13, 1 Peter 5:8-9**)

2.They manifest Christ likeness in character as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. (**Galatians 5:22-25**) People often use the phrase "*like father, like son*" to refer to family resemblance. Similarly, God wants His children to bear His image and likeness too.

3.They live a focussed life with clarity of purpose and constancy of purpose. They invest time to view all the areas of their life from God's perspective and not only during different situations. They see their story as part of the grand narrative, God's Story. It also includes when they make decisions for the future, based upon God's unique shaping of their past. (**Hebrews 3:1, 1 Peter 1:13**)

4.A Christian who finishes well typically practices spiritual disciplines. Spiritual growth is not automatic and it takes an intentional commitment. So spiritual disciplines like prayer, bible reading, fellowship, fasting, serving etc helps in becoming more like Christ. (**Jeremiah 33:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Joshua 1:8, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Matthew 17:21**)

5.They maintain a life-long learning posture and are humble spirit. They chose not to rest on yesterday's learning. They make the choice of "*lifelong*" learning. They choose to return back to the Word of God and have a Bible-centered living. The choice to take responsibility for one's own spiritual growth and development is never compromised.

6.They remain faithful to the Lord until the end by enduring and persevering in the midst of trials and persecution. Truth is lived out in their lives so that convictions and promises of God are seen to be real. (**2 Corinthians 1:6-10**)

7.They leave behind a legacy of serving God in a way that God has designed them. They become a lifelong contributor to the Church of God!

Are there barriers to finishing well?

Barrier 1: Worldliness (**Matthew 13:22, 1 John 2:15**)

Barrier 2: Pride (**2 Corinthians 10:17, 18, James 4:7, Proverbs 28:25-26**)

Barrier 3: Mismanagement of finances (**Matthew 6:24**)

Barrier 4: Mismanagement of Power(**1 Peter 2:17-21**)

Barrier 5: Illicit relationships (**1 Corinthians 6:18,**)

Barrier 6: Discouragements (**Galatians 6:9**)

How can we overcome these barriers?

Hebrews 12:1-2, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."*

Philippians 3:13-14, *"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

How must one finish well in the midst of all trials and persecution?

Trials come in the form of disappointments, frustrations, misunderstandings, unfulfilled dreams, unmet expectations, great loss, loneliness, fear, criticism, persecution, and conflict. Trials come for the purpose of testing our faith. If you consistently persevere through trials and never abandon your trust in God, then you prove to have genuine faith. Apostle James says that if your Christianity is genuine, it will prove itself in times of trouble. How you respond to the trials in your life will reveal whether you really believe God and are genuinely saved, and it will also reveal how strong your faith really is.

Be Happy: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:2-5)"*

Be Focused: *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)"*

Be Enduring: *"No testing (temptation) has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13,)"*

What role do rewards play in finishing well?

The Lord's reward for all His faithful followers are varied and wonderful, and all of them are imperishable (**1 Corinthians 9:25**). The New Testament refers to them as crowns. "For those who have true saving faith and thus are faithful to live in hope until Jesus comes, there will be 'the crown of righteousness' (**2 Timothy 4:7-8**)"

Because the faithful proclaim the truth, there is promised a ‘*crown of exultation*’ (1 **Thessalonians 2:19–20**). Because of the service of the redeemed, the reward given is ‘*the unfading crown of glory*’ (1 **Peter 5:4**). “*For all who love the Lord there will be “the crown of life”*” (James 1:12). All refer to the fullness of the believer’s promised reward

The Bible teaches that while salvation is a free gift, God will reward us on the basis of our service for Him (**Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10**), and these rewards will differ among believers. Some will have their works burned up, because they were not founded upon Christ, but they will be saved yet so as through fire. Others will receive a reward for their works (1 **Corinthians 3: 10 -15**).

When do I recognize the finish line?

In this race we do not know where the finish line actually is; it could be today, it could be eighty years from now. Our challenge is to persevere no matter how long the race continues. The longer we walk with the Lord, the more we recognize that this race is not a “*sprint*” rather it’s a “*marathon*”.

We do not choose our race; it is “*set before us*” by the Lord Himself. Yet, we do choose how we run. What will be our attitude? How hard will we keep pushing forward? How much energy will we give to the race? Will we stay on track? What will occupy our minds as we run?

2 Timothy 4:7-8, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8From now on the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but to all who crave His appearing....*”

1 Timothy 6:11-12, “*But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*”

Book References:

Cries from the Cross – Erwin W Luzter

The Purpose Driven life – Rick Warren

How to Finish the Christian life – Donald W Sweeting & George Sweeting

Finishing well - Dr. J Robert Clinton

If you have any further questions, please email us at info@bethelag.in or walk into the church office for any counselling regarding this issue.

67, RING ROAD, HEBBAL, BANGALORE – 560 024

080 6568 7777 | WWW.BTHELAG.IN

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