

It Is Finished

Scripture: John 19:16-30

Intro:

Chuck Colson in His book, "Kingdoms in Conflict" wrote this interesting true story...

The government of Polish Prime Minister Jaruzelski had ordered crucifixes removed from classroom walls, just as they had been banned in factories, hospitals, and other public institutions. Catholic bishops attacked the ban that had stirred waves of anger and resentment all across Poland. Ultimately the government relented, insisting that the law remain on the books, but agreeing not to press for removal of the crucifixes, particularly in the schoolrooms.

But one zealous Communist school administrator in Garwolin decided that the law was the law. So one evening he had seven large crucifixes removed from lecture halls where they had hung since the school's founding in the twenties. Days later, a group of parents entered the school and hung more crosses. The administrator promptly had these taken down as well.

The next day two-thirds of the school's six hundred students staged a sit-in. When heavily armed riot police arrived, the students were forced into the streets. Then they marched, crucifixes held high, to a nearby church where they were joined by twenty-five

hundred other students from nearby schools for a morning of prayer in support of the protest. Soldiers surrounded the church. But the pictures from inside of students holding crosses high above their heads flashed around the world. So did the words of the priest who delivered the message to the weeping congregation that morning. "There is no Poland without a cross."

Wouldn't that be wonderful if that could be said about our country? To millions of children growing up in America today the cross is little more than a footnote in history. Bill O'riley, in explaining His book, "Crucifying Jesus" said that the crucifixion of Jesus simply proved that some things are worth dying for. His understanding of the cross is common today. Sadly, most see it as historical fact, but attach no spiritual meaning to it.

But we know, that without the cross life is meaningless.

Read John 19:16-30

Pray

CPT: The last words of Jesus on the cross were, "It is finished!"

The last words spoken by Jesus on the cross were directed at His Father in heaven. Jesus cries out to Him and says, "It's over. I did it. Sin is paid for. Take me home!"

Jesus endured the cross long enough. He suffered all He needed to suffer. Jesus was done. Jesus accomplished the mission given to Him by His Father in heaven. He would never have to suffer again. The punishment we deserve was poured out on Jesus and now it was over.

CPS: Jesus paid our sin debt in full

You see, we all have a sin debt. Every person alive has a sin debt. Every time a man, woman, boy, or girl disobeys one of God's commands their debt increases. When A Christian dies and stands before God on judgment day he will not have to give account for the sin debt he incurred.

Our sin debt has been erased, forgiven, deleted from us all together. Our sin debt was paid in full on the cross by Jesus Christ.

PSS: This morning I want to encourage you to remember that you are no longer liable for your sin debt, Christ paid it in full!

All the weight of guilt is gone! All the fear you once had of dying is gone! Your old life of sin and misery is over. Now, you have purpose and drive in your life. You aren't the same person you once were. You have been introduced into a whole new life in Christ.

The pain Jesus endured would mean joy for us.
The shame Jesus endured would mean acceptance for us.
The wrath Jesus bore would mean freedom from that wrath for us

I'm reminded of what Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:17
If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

But tragically, many Christians do not live with this kind of confidence. All too often Christians live in fear and confusion about their salvation; not knowing from day to day if they truly are saved or not!

TS: This morning in the time we have together, I would like to share with you three ways you can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that your sin debt has been paid in full!

#1 You know your'e saved when sin becomes less attractive

Romans 6:1, "Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound?" In other words, Paul is asking, "Do we have a license to sin now that we have been forgiven?"
In verse 2 Paul answer himself and says, "May it never be!" How shall we who died to sin still live in it?"
Paul was arguing against a philosophy of Christianity that taught that the Christian should not worry about this sin or that sin; he shouldn't worry about being perfect, it doesn't matter because Christ has forgiven you of all your sin!"

Do you see the danger in this?
On one hand it is true, God has forgiven the Christian for all his sin past, present and future. But on the other hand, what kind of Christian abuses God's forgiveness?
-The answer is a lot.

How many times has the HS confronted you with a sin in your life where you told Him, "Oh it doesn't matter, it won't send me to hell!" How many times has our conscience told us not to listen to that song, watch that movie, or go to that place but we still do anyways?!
That's what Paul is talking about...Should we continue in sin because we know we have grace?

You know you are saved when sin becomes less attractive to you.

A Christian does not try to see how much sin he can get away with, he sees how much sin he can eliminate!

You see the more you mature in your relationship with Christ the more sin becomes less attractive to you.

For many though, Christianity sounds like a lot of work; they think it is all about what they can't do, but that's not so. Being a Christian is freeing!

It's not that we can't listen to music with gutter lyrics, it's that we don't want to. It's not that we can't watch that rated R movie, it's that we don't want to. It's not that we have to go to church on Sunday, it's because we want to.

The last words of Jesus on the cross were, "It is finished!" The "IT" is referring to paying our sin debt. Our sin debt is finished, paid in full.

But here's the problem...when sin is more attractive to us than holiness, what we are guilty of is telling Jesus, "Stay on that cross just a little longer! IIT'S NOT FINISHED YET! got one more sin I like to commit."

The Christian who feels He has a license to sin is guilty of re-crucifying Christ! Every time we intentionally sin we are re-crucifying Christ.

Of course not literally, but figuratively that's exactly what we are doing. Jesus said, "It's finished" that mean our sin is finished too.

Paul asked, "How can we who have died with Christ still live in Sin?"

The problem may be that you are not actually a Christian. You have fooled yourself, your spouse, the people around you, but not God. If you have the attitude that you can do whatever you want because Jesus forgave you, I would check yourself. Don't be presumptuous.

I Jn. 1:6... If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

Someone who has died with Christ has repented has turned from their sin and no longer wants it like they use to. The Christian longs for holiness.

#1 You know you are a Christian when sin is less attractive to you than it once was...

#2 You know your'e saved when you stop asking Jesus into your heart

Now, what do I mean by that?-Have you ever found yourself not sure you are saved, so just to be on the safe side you ask Jesus to save you again? What's the harm in that?!

Asking Jesus to save you over and over again is figuratively crucifying Christ again and again. Jesus Christ died once for our sins. He said, "It's finished! Paid in full!" So why don't we believe Him?

In 2011 the Barna Group conducted a poll and found that half of America has prayed a prayer asking Jesus into their heart even though they do not read their Bibles, go to church, or promote a godly lifestyle.

Now, within that poll, how many Christians have prayed that prayer for salvation multiple times! Listen to me, you know you are saved when you stop asking Jesus into your heart. Someone who prays for salvation repeatedly either does not have assurance of their salvation or is fooling themselves into a false hope of salvation.

Did you know that the phrase, "Ask Jesus into your heart" is not found anywhere in the Bible?! The phrase, "accept Jesus into your heart" is not in the Bible. "Giving your heart to Jesus" is not found in the Bible. These are cliches that have grown into our modern Christian vocabulary. So what is in the Bible... Well, Paul was asked...

"Sir, what must I do to be saved?' ... (And Paul said) 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved' (Acts 16:30-31).

"To the one who does not work for God's approval, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

"Whoever believes in the Son has everlasting life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

Our salvation depends on two hinges: One, do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for the purpose of removing your sin and two, do you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead accepting His offering for your sin?

Conversion to Christ is like sitting down in a chair. If you are seated right now, there was a point in time in which you transferred the weight of your body from your legs to the chair. You may not even remember making that decision, but the fact you are seated now proves that you did. Would it scare you if I told you that I can't remember getting saved! I remember the preacher coming to my house. I remember talking to him. I remember getting baptized. But I don't remember what I said to him or God! But I do remember the change in my life.

My salvation is not based upon the magical words of a prayer. It is based upon Jesus Christ's work of redemption on the cross and if you trust Him as your Lord and Savior today.

God is not worried about what you prayed when you were a child. He's concerned about what you believe about Him today.

Don't fret if you cannot remember everything you said when you came to Christ. What's important is are you in Christ today?

Here's a test to see if you are a Christian...

question #1 Do you love Christ perfectly?-the answer is probably no

question #2 Do you love him as much as you ought to?

question #3 Do you love Him at all?-The biblical Jesus?

Only a person who is born-again in Christ can love Him. Apart from the HS working in you, you cannot love God. Romans 3 says all man is a hater of God before salvation. Eph. 2 says we are dead in our trespasses and sin prior to saving faith in Christ. Loving Christ is evidence of your heart's conversion.

Listen, as your pastor I want you to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are saved.

If you have doubt ask yourself, "Do I believe Jesus died for my sin on the cross? Do I believe

that God raise him from the dead validating his offering for my sin and do I love him today? A person who asks God to save them multiple times disagrees with Jesus when he said, "It is finished!" Rest in those words! Our sins have been paid in full, not partially, not just a down payment, but in full! The Bible teaches plainly that once you have been saved by God's grace you are always saved, God never falls out of love with you.

#2 You know you are a Christian when you stop asking Jesus into your heart and you trust him when he says, "It is finished!"

#3 You know your'e saved when you stop working for God's approval

Eph.2:8 By grace are you have beens saved through faith; and faith is not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

This verse should be the most memorized verses in all the Bible. This verse removes any human boasting in salvation. It says that salvation is the gracious gift of God. Our salvation is a result of our faith in Him, but faith is also a gift God gives. In other words, God gives us the ability to have saving faith in him.

You know, before you became a Christian I'm pretty sure you were like me; I'm pretty sure you were like everyone else for that matter...your understanding of heaven and hell probably centered on your understanding of right and wrong. Good people go to heaven, bad people go to hell. Every person alive today I dare say is born with this fundamental understanding that good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell.

This of course is not true. However, before you understood grace I'm sure you operated your life like this. You did all you could do to be a good person so that one day you could go to heaven. The Bible calls that a works-based salvation and it is a dead-end road. Because the Bible teaches that not matter how good you are, your'e not good enough for God.

Do you remember the story of the young rich man in the Bible? Matt. 19

6 And someone came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" HOW DO I GO TO HEAVEN? 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 Then he *said to Him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; 19 Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

20 The young man *said to Him, "All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be [a]complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Now before e are too hard on the guy let's remember, his way of thinking is common to all of us...What good thing must I do to be saved?!

-The answer is nothing!

There is nothing you can do to save yourself. Salvation is not based upon your good works but on the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now, let's fast forward to today. Most all of you have saving fatih in Christ and faithfully serve Him. But, if we are not careful the works-based salvation mentality comes creeping back into our lives.

How?-Through check-lists. Check-list Christianity.

I'm sure all of you when you go to grocery store have a checklist or a honey-do list. One thing I've realized now being married four years, honey-do list never end! They go on and on! Checklists, honey-do lists are not bad, don't get me wrong, but when we start listing out all the "Christian Things" we need to do we can get into trouble.

When we see Bible reading and prayer as a chore, we have a works-based salvation. When we see church attendance as an obligation, we have a works'-based salvation. When we see tithing as just another bill we write out at the end of the month we are guilty of sliding back into a works-based salvation. God would rather you do nothing for Him, than to do everything for Him out of guilt or obligation. Check-list Christianity is destructive to the relationship you have with God.

And when you fail at your checklist (and fail you will) you will begin to doubt whether you are saved at all. When you place your confidence in yourself rather than in Christ you will inevitably end up destroying yourself.

By Grace are you saved. The only way you will ever have peace in your walk with the Lord is when you rest in grace.

In other words, when you understand that your righteous deeds will never make God love you any more than He already does that's when you will be at peace with God.

Remember what Jesus said from the cross?-It is finished!-That means stop working for God's approval. You got His approval through Jesus.

You know you are saved when you stop working for God's approval.

Conclusion

So what's the cross to you? Is it nothing more than a historical fact to you or is it everything to you?

The crucifixion of Jesus accomplished the forgiveness of all our sins. My sins have been washed white as snow. I know I'm saved because sin is not attractive to me as it once was. I know I'm saved because because He said, "It is finished" I don't have to work for His approval.

I have victory in Jesus!