



HIGHLIGHT: John 19:28-30

H

²⁸After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, “I’m thirsty.” ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it up to his mouth.

³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

EXPLAIN

E

Leaders: Feel free to use any of the “Explain” materials to guide discussion as it is needed or to expound on a certain area of the text as it comes up during your Life Group time, but the purpose of this section is to deepen your own personal understanding of the Word. Your members have access to all of this material as well.

After enduring a day full of torture, ridicule, and excruciating pain, Jesus utters His final words from the cross: “It is finished.” *Tetelestai*. This was one of the costliest sentences ever uttered, but one of the most beautiful—and understanding the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf will change us forever.

v.28 “The Scripture” here could refer to two—or even three or four—different things. If John’s statement refers to the utterance that Jesus makes (“I’m thirsty”), it’s likely that he refers to Psalm 22:15. If it refers to the actions that those officiating the crucifixion undertake (a sponge full of sour wine), it refers to Psalm 69:21. If it refers more to Jesus’ spiritual thirst to return to the Father, John may be referring to Psalm 42:2. Of course, it’s also likely that John intended each of these, for Jesus fulfills everything ever said about Him.

v.29 Hyssop is important in Scriptural salvation. David says in Psalm 51, “Purge me with Hyssop.” See, during the Jewish captivity in Egypt, just before the Passover, the Israelites were to use it to paint their door frames with the sacrificial lamb’s blood. So when David writes this, he means, “Cleanse me with blood. Based on the fact that an innocent victim provided the blood that saved me from death, regard me as cleansed!”



v.30 The Greek word for “It is finished” is *tetelestai*. We find it only in two places in the whole New Testament: John 19:28 and John 19:30. It has rich significance, according to Warren Wiersbe, for it was traditionally used by four different groups of people:

- **Priests**
When an animal was brought to the Temple as a sacrifice, a priest had to examine it to ensure it didn’t have any blemishes. If it passed inspection, the priest would say, *tetelestai*: “The sacrifice is perfect”
- **Servants**
When a master would summon his servant for a task, the servant would first kiss the master’s hand and then listen to the request. When he finished it, the servant would return, take a knee, and say, *tetelestai*: “The task is done.”
- **Artists**
When an artist put the final touch on a painting, he would say, *tetelestai*: “The work is finished; not a single stroke couldn’t be added or taken away, because it’s complete.”
- **Merchants**
When a business transaction had been completed, the merchant would essentially hand the customer a receipt that said, *tetelestai*: “The debt has been paid in full.”

A

APPLY

*Your Leader Guide will have material that the member guides do not have. The **bolded** material is what the people in your group will have, the other material is only for you to help guide discussion.*

This guide can be as strict a script or as general a resource as the leader needs it to be.

- 1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?**
- 2. Describe a time someone has sacrificed so that you could have something. How did their sacrifice benefit you? How did it make you feel toward that person?**
- 3. Why was it necessary for Jesus to die? What did His death accomplish? How might it be dangerous for us to become “too familiar” with the cross?**

Through the years, many have mischaracterized God as a cruel, bloodthirsty deity. Nothing could be further from the truth. The reality is that if a holy God overlooks sin, He cannot be called “just,” as well—the problem is that we are a rebellious people, quick to replace God’s Kingship with our own in our lives. The beauty of the Gospel is that God saw fit to provide a sacrifice on our behalf, so that we don’t have to pay the price for our own sin—our own treason. Jesus was the only one who ever lived a spotless life; His sacrifice is the only one that could possibly cover all who apply it to the record of our wrongs and bring us into right standing with the Father.



4. What about Jesus' death and resurrection is hard for people to believe? Why do you think the Cross is, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:23, "a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles"?

People have all kinds of reasons for finding belief difficult. To the Jews, they saw His crucifixion as weakness, indicating He was a false messiah. They wanted a strong leader who would overthrow a political regime they found oppressive; they didn't want an innocent lamb who would die on our behalf. The Gentiles, on the other hand, had no expectations of what a messiah should look like, even if they had conceptions of what God should look like. The notion that God would embody human flesh and die so that we could have fellowship with Him wasn't so much weakness, like the Jews would have thought, but a pure absurdity. That wasn't what they thought God was like!

This is why Paul argued that it was more important than ever to preach Christ crucified—it tells the truth about A) What God is actually like, B) How we can know Him, and C) What our lives should look like in response to the truth.

5. What do you think that Jesus meant by "It is finished"? How might Hebrews 9:22-28 help us understand part of it? What has Jesus' death "finished" in your life?

"It" is not one thing. It is all things up to that point—the ritual sacrifices, the grip of sin, the victory of Satan, the messianic prophecy, all of it. Jesus is precisely whom history was waiting for, and He showed up, did the most spectacular work ever accomplished, and gave us the opportunity to be in right standing with the Father. When we recognize and accept what Jesus did for us—what He finished for us—He changes everything about who we are.

R

RESPOND

Challenge your group to answer:

- **What reaction do you have to the message of the cross? What is God leading you to do as a response to that?**

Note: Do not take for granted that every person in your group is saved. For the unbeliever, the response to the Cross is repentance and faith. For the believer, it is obedience. Encourage people to have honest responses, even if it is just personal and individual.

Encourage one another through email, text messages, or coffee dates throughout the week to build up and encourage each other.

