

## **“It Is Finished.”**

### **John 18-19**

*In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

1 It was finished on a Friday. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, but not until Friday did He complete His work. On Friday, the sixth day, He created Adam from the dust of the ground. But He still wasn't finished. No suitable helper for Adam was found, so the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall over Adam. While he slept, the Lord took a rib from Adam's side and from a piece of Adam, from his side, the Lord created a companion for him, Woman. And God looked at all He had created and declared it "very good."

2 But not for long. It seemed so harmless, they simply wanted to be more like God, knowing the difference between good and evil. But Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator. They took it upon themselves to be their own gods. And so their rebellion alienated them from the One who lovingly gave them life. Their rebellion became genetic. Every child from the lineage of Adam and Eve has inherited their sin. Every crying baby, every tantrum-throwing toddler, every insolent adolescent, every wayward teenager, every "free-thinking" college student, every self-serving spouse, every belligerent adult, every hot-tempered parent, every stubborn elder bears witness to this fact: you are born rebellious against God and against one another. Adam's tendency is your fate: you will be your own god.

3 This plight was finished on a Friday, too. The Creator against whom all mankind was in rebellion did not leave us to fend for ourselves or account for our own sins. In the beginning was the Word. He was God, and He was with God. All things were made through Him, even Adam and Eve were created through the Divine Word, the Second Person of the eternal Triune God. He became flesh, and they named Him Jesus because He was born to save His people from their sins. He was born to save Adam, Eve, Peter, Judas, Pilate, Barabbas, the Pharisees, the criminals crucified with him, and you from your sins.

4 Do not weep for Jesus on the cross. He didn't get caught against His will and brought to cross as a captive. He went there willingly. Do not weep that He died. His death is not a tragedy. It is the greatest love story the world has ever known. Do not weep for Him. Weep for your sin that made such sacrifice necessary. But rejoice that no sacrifice was too great that the Lord would not endure it for you.

5 It was not good for the Man to be alone. The Second Adam, Jesus Christ, was born to end creation's alienation from her Creator. The Lord caused a deep sleep, the sleep of death, to fall on Jesus and took from his pierced side blood and water. From this blood and water, the Lord has created a Bride for this Christ. She

is His Holy Church, whom He has cleansed through the washing of the water and the Spirit, St. Paul says.

She is His Bride, made pure and spotless, pure from sin because her Savior bore her sins in her place.

6 It is finished. Your rebellion against God is finished because Jesus died on the cross. He became the rebel, the chief sinner. Jesus the Christ, who was the Sinless Son of God, was punished as the worst sinner of all. There on the cross, His cry of dereliction "My God, why have You forsaken Me?" means that God will not forsake you. It is finished. The hell that you deserved for your sin is endured by the dying Savior on the cross. It is finished. Your sins are no longer counted against you. Your condemnation, your punishment, your eternal separation from the Lord is finished.

7 Finished. The Lord has given His life on the cross to purify His bride and to claim her as His own forever. You are a part of His Holy Bride, the Church, because He has washed you with the waters of Holy Baptism and fed you with His very body and blood which was crucified for you. So, "sing my tongue, the glorious battle; sing the ending of the fray. Now above the cross the trophy, sound the loud triumphant lay; tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, as a victim won the day. Tell how, when at length the fullness of the appointed time was come, He, the Word, was born of woman, Left for us His Father's home, blazed the path of true obedience, shone as light amidst the gloom. Thus, with thirty years accomplished, He went forth from Nazareth, Destined, dedicated, willing, did His work, and met His death; like a lamb He humbly yielded on the cross His dying breath. Faithful cross, true sign of triumph, be for all the noblest tree; none in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit thine equal be; symbol of the world's redemption, for the weight that hung on thee."

Finished.

*In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*Soli Deo Gloria*

Pastor Jeff Hemmer

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Good Friday Vespers, A☩D 2008