

Sermon on **John 19:30** – Jesus’ Sixth Word – for Good Friday 4.10.20
St. Paul’s Ev. Lutheran Church – New Ulm, MN – Pastor N. Scharf

He Spoke a Word of Accomplishment

Most of you have had time to think these past couple weeks. For some of you that’s good. For some of you that’s not good. You’ve probably had some interesting, even probing conversations with those close to you. One person put it this way, “My spouse and I are playing a game where we ask each other, “Why do you do it that way?” Then they said, “No one is winning.” However, some conversations were long overdue and words that needed to be said were finally spoken. Some of you have had very few conversations but wish you could talk to someone. Words matter. Timing matters. You matter. Jesus spoke the perfect words, with the perfect timing because you matter to him. He made sure they were heard and spoke, “in a loud voice.” He made sure they were remembered and recorded by His Spirit working in His followers like John who recorded the sixth word of Jesus. Tonight, we give thanks that,

He spoke a word of accomplishment for you.

Outside the grave of his friend Lazarus, and right before he raised him from the dead, Jesus prayed to his Father out loud for others to hear, “*Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me”* (John 11:41-42). After Jesus went to the festival in Jerusalem and predicted his death and prayed for his Father to glorify his name and his Father boomed his approval from heaven, Jesus said, “*This voice was for your benefit, not mine*” (John 12:30). And on the cross. John speaks of Jesus, “*Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.”* Jesus knew everything was finished. He didn’t have to say it, that one word, the sixth word, out loud. So why did he say it? For you.

For you, wherever you are tonight, whether you are with loved ones or alone Jesus says this for you, “*It is finished.*” In complete control of his life, his soul, his mind, his work, **he spoke a word of accomplishment** to your heart so you never forget these words, “*It is finished.*”

Just what are you talking about Jesus? Are you saying that You’re finished? That’s apparent enough – why would you waste those words? Are you talking about the soldier’s work or the chief priest’s plan to kill you? That seems redundant, like a “captain obvious” thing. No, listen to Scripture. John the Baptist is the opener for the disciple John’s Gospel told of Jesus’ task, when he said of Jesus, “*Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29). Jesus spoke of his purpose often though his disciples didn’t like to hear it, because they must not have felt they needed it. “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost*” (Luke 19:10). He gave his goal, “*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45). Isaiah the prophet plotted his plan, “*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all*” (Isaiah 53). Jesus had full knowledge of his plan and its execution, “*I am the good shepherd;*

I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:14-15). He saw it, but did they?

The night of the Passover, Maundy Thursday, Jesus gave them the command to love one another as he loved them. He gave them his Supper – his own body and blood for their forgiveness. Yet that was the night they argued about which one of them was the greatest, the night Peter didn't want to be washed, the night they slept while Jesus struggled in prayer. That was the night Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, Peter denied even knowing him, and the rest fled and kept their distance. Jesus was doing all this before their eyes, for their benefit, and they could only look at how great they were and how to jockey for position in this life for honor and pride, or wilt away with a “woe is me” when their plans were dashed, and they couldn't see or remember Jesus' plan for them. Peter wept bitterly. He couldn't undo what he had done. Judas tried to make things right by giving the money back. Neither of them could take it back or make things right. Couldn't they see? Was it ever about Jesus, or was it all about “me?”

What about for you? Is Good Friday more about sentimentality, going through the emotions of feeling bad for poor Jesus on the cross for others, without really letting what we see on the cross cut us and cure us? Are we worried more about the symptoms of sin's consequences in our lives, buying band-aids rather than recognizing and repenting of the cancerous corruption of our flesh that caused Jesus' cross? If you were the only person on this earth, Jesus would still have had to suffer like he did just for you. On the cross you see just a terrifying glimpse of the hell we had coming for us for our complete corruption. *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”* If we do not listen to Jesus' words, we will never get it, we will never understand that this was all for me. Say that with me. *“This was all for me.”*

So then this Friday is rightly called “Good,” when we hear this sixth word from Jesus. *“It is finished.”* The task of taking away the sins of the world by suffering for our vile sins and sinfulness which we admit was warranted is done. His purpose and plan to pay the punishment we had coming was paid in full, and we have a peace so great we hardly even understand it. The goal to save us and secure us as God's own has been met. “Mission Accomplished” is Jesus word from the cross – spoken so you could hear it, written that you might never forget it – granting you a sense of humility when everything goes right in this world because you know it is all by grace that you live, breath and believe, granting you a sense of hope and joy when all you see is death and destruction and loss in your life because you know Jesus will never leave you nor forsake you. You can say, “He did it all for me.” The deed to that room in the Father's mansion has been signed, sealed and delivered to you. He is your Father. Your sin is gone and off your record. The courtroom of your condemnation is cleared, and you are forgiven and freed. Freed to live for him. Freed to fight in the daily struggle to not forget that Jesus did all this for you that you might have life and have it to the full now and forever in Him. You can't add to it. You can't subtract from it. All you can do is live in thankfulness and appreciation for him – peace in your heart, strength to meet whatever cross and tailor-made task he lays at your feet until he calls you home to heaven. You look at that cross and hear Jesus' Word *“It is finished.”* And you can say, “It's all for me.” **Jesus spoke a word of accomplishment** for me. It certainly is Good Friday. Amen.