The Gospels record seven statements Jesus made while dying on the cross. Three of these statements are recorded in John 19. John 19:26-27 record the word of compassion: “When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother.’” John 19:28-29 record the word of suffering: “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.” John 19:30 records the word of victory: “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Feel the tension between the word of suffering and the word of victory. “I thirst” is the only reference to the physical sufferings of Christ at the cross in John’s Gospel. Beaten nearly to death, Jesus hung on the cross for six hours in the Judean sun. The pain of crucifixion was so intense that a word was coined to describe it: EXCRUCIATING. Acute pain, loss of blood, and near suffocation created extreme dehydration. As he died on the cross, the WATER OF LIFE needed something to drink. So he cried out, “I thirst.” But the word of suffering was not the last word. From the parched lips of this crucified Savior comes a shout of victory: “It is finished!”

What was finished? This cry of Jesus inevitably refers to the physical suffering and spiritual agony of the cross. Verse 28 says: “After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” The word “finished” in verse 28 is the same word used in verse 30, where Jesus says, “It is finished.” But Jesus did not say, “I am finished.” He said, “It is finished.” This is not the concession of a defeated man. This is not the resignation of a doomed man. This is not the relief of a dying man. This is the victor's shout of triumph: “It is finished!”

In John 17:4, Jesus prayed, “I have glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.” At the age of thirty-three, most people are saying, “It is only the beginning.” At thirty-three, Jesus declared, “It is finished.” But this is about more than the end of his journey. It is about the completion of his mission. In Matthew 1:21, the angel told Joseph concerning Mary, “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Jesus was born to die. The accomplishment of his death was the purpose of his life. At the point of death, Jesus cries out, “It is finished.” WARREN WIERSEBE wrote: “Since salvation is a finished work, we dare not add anything to it, or take anything from it.” This is the message of the sixth word from the cross: Sinners can only be made right with God by the finished work of Christ at the cross. The finished work of Christ saves completely, exclusively, and eternally.

I. THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST SAVES COMPLETELY.

John 19:30, “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” This cry of Jesus is one word in the Greek: tetelestai. CHARLES SPURGEON wrote: “It would need all the other words that ever were spoken, or ever
can be spoken, to explain this one word. It is altogether immeasurable. It is high; I cannot attain to it. It is deep; I cannot fathom it."

Tetelestai declares the only basis sinners can be saved from divine judgment, holy wrath, and eternal condemnation. It means to finish a task, complete an assignment, or accomplish a goal. Servants used this term when they completed the task ordered by their master. Artists used this term when a work of art was finished. Warriors used this term after they prevailed in battle. It is the word you would use after you graduate from college. It is the word you would use after crossing the finish line of a marathon. It is the word you would use after you have pay off your credit cards. In fact, tetelestai was most often used commercially. When a person paid a merchant, paid a debt, or paid his taxes, tetelestai was written on the receipt. It meant, “Paid in full.”

God demands perfect righteousness. All of us fall short of the glory of God. Good intentions, good efforts, good works cannot pay the debt of sin. But what God demands, God provides. We owed a debt we cannot pay. Jesus paid the debt he did not owe. Romans 6:23 says: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Sin is a debt you cannot afford to pay. But you can receive the free gift of eternal life through faith in the finished work of Christ. What sin is keeping you from God? Let me give you the right answer in four words: IT. DOES. NOT. MATTER. When you trust the blood and righteousness of Christ, tetelestai is stamped over every sin in your life.

- Abortion. Paid in full!
- Adultery. Paid in full!
- Bribery. Paid in full!
- Disobedience. Paid in full!
- Divorce. Paid in full!
- Embezzlement! Paid in full!
- Homosexuality. Paid in full!
- Murder. Paid in full!
- Pride! Paid in full!
- Slothfulness. Paid in full!

If I left your sin out, add yours to the list. Then write tetelestai over it. It is paid in full by the finished work of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

You are deep in debt. But you go to the ATM by faith, hoping for a miracle. To your surprise, the ATM dispenses cash. When you see the receipt balance, you have to go into the bank to rectify this mistake. A bank representative explains that an anonymous benefactor has made a deposit in your account. He also put money in your account to cover whatever future debts you may incur. Do not except anyone to do that for you. But that is exactly what God did for you through the finished work of Christ.

**Jesus paid it all,**
**All to Him I owe;**
**Sin had left a crimson stain,**
**He washed it white as snow.**
II. THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST SAVES EXCLUSIVELY.

A man under conviction showed up late to a gospel crusade. But he sought out the evangelist and desperately asked, “What must I do to be saved?” The evangelist replied, “It’s too late! You cannot do anything!” The alarmed man asked again, “What must I do to be saved?” The evangelist replied again, “It’s too late. You cannot do anything. It is already done.”

This is the essence of the gospel. Religion teaches what sinners must do to be saved. Christianity asserts there is nothing the sinner can do to be saved. But the good news is that it is finished. Could God have saved us by any other person except Jesus? Could God have saved us by any other method than the cross? The cry of Jesus, “It is finished,” answers that there is no salvation with the Person and Work of Christ.

A. THERE IS NO SALVATION WITHOUT THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

In John 14:6, Jesus declares, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” It is considered a foolish, arrogant, narrow-minded to claim that there is only one way to God. Yet Jesus emphatically declared that no one comes to God the Father except through him. Why is salvation through Christ alone?

The one who saves must be fully God. Salvation is a divine accomplishment, not a human achievement. Jonah 2:9 says, “Salvation belongs to the Lord!” Scholars call this Monergism. Synergism is when different elements work together to produce a greater result. Monergism means God does not need any elements to help him produce salvation. The only thing we contribute to salvation is the guilt of sin. God does the rest! Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The one who saves must be fully human. The holiness, wrath, and justice of God would not permit him to forgive sin without a penalty paid. Humanity sinned and humanity must pay the price. This is why the blood of lambs, bulls, and doves could never fully satisfy God’s demands for justice. A second Adam had to represent humanity to fix what the first Adam messed up. But not just any man qualified. The Savior had to be perfectly righteous. More than that, the Savior had to be fully man and fully God to faithfully represent both parties. Only Jesus qualifies. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

- We got into trouble in a garden. We got out of trouble in a garden.
- We got into trouble with a tree. We got out of trouble in a tree.
- We got into trouble with a woman named Eve. We got out of trouble with a woman named Mary.
- We got into trouble with a man named Adam. We got out of trouble with a man named Jesus.

In Acts 4:12, Peter declares, “And there is no under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

B. THERE IS NO SALVATION WITHOUT THE WORK OF CHRIST.
The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, was asked what he thought was the most important word in the New Testament. He answered, huper – a Greek preposition that means “on the behalf of” or “in the place of.” When Barth called huper the most important word in the New Testament, he meant the most important truth is that Jesus took our place and bore the punishment of God for our sins on the cross. Christ did not die on the cross merely as our representative. He died as our substitute. When Christ died on the cross, he took your place. Isaiah 53:4-6 says, “Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Arthur Pink wrote: “The cross of Christ is the grave of our sins.” The sinner only needs to trust what Christ has accomplished on our behalf at the cross. Romans 10:9-10 says: “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” You can only be saved by trusting the finished work of Christ. Ray Pritchard wrote: “If Jesus paid it all, you don’t have to. If you try to pay for your salvation, it means you don’t think he paid it all. There is no middle ground between those two propositions.”

A Christian farmer who witnessed to an unbelieving carpenter. But the carpenter would not trust the finished work of Christ. One day the farmer asked the carpenter to make him a gate for his fence. When it was finished, the farmer picked installed it on his fence. He later invited the carpenter to see the newly installed gate. When he arrived, the carpenter was shocked to see the farmer standing with an axe in his hand. “What are you doing?” he asked. “I am going to add a few cuts and strokes to your work,” answered the farmer. The carpenter protested, “But there is no need for that. The gate is complete just the way it is.” But the farmer proceeded to hack until the gate was destroyed. “Look what you have done!” cried the carpenter. “You have ruined my work.” “Yes, said the farmer, “and that is what you are trying to do. You are seeking to nullify the finished work of Christ by your own miserable additions to it!”

Lifted up was He to die,  
“It is finished!” was His cry;  
Now in heaven exalted high:  
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

III. The finished work of Christ saves eternally.

On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush landed on the USS Abraham Lincoln that was docked near San Diego. President Bush then gave a live address from the aircraft carrier to announce the end of major combat operations in Iraq, as a banner that read “Mission Accomplished” hung in the background. The event became controversial after guerrilla warfare increased during the Iraqi insurgency. The vast majorities of causalities of the war – both military and civilian – occurred after the speech. This triumphant celebration of a mission accomplished became the ongoing reminder that there was still much more to be accomplished before the mission was over.
When the Jesus declared “It is finished,” it was no premature celebration of an incomplete mission. The work of salvation was done. The scriptures were fulfilled. The debt was paid in full. John 19:30 says, “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” Having finished his work, Jesus bowed his head, as if resting it on a pillow. And he voluntarily gave up his spirit in death. In John 10:17-18, Jesus said, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life for the sheep. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.” Jesus willingly laid down his life, because his work was finished.

The verb tetelestai is in a grammatical emphasize that means: “It is finished, it stands finished, and it will be finished.” Our salvation is eternally secure. Salvation is not purchased on the installment plan. Jesus said, “It is finished.” He did not say, “I made a down payment.” It is finished once and for all. Romans 8:31-34 says: “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God’s who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised, - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.”

Mr. Yates owned a farm in Texas. The Great Depression came and he had trouble making payments. The bank gave him thirty days to make back payments or face foreclosure. With three weeks left, a man old company representative came asked Mr. Yates to give the company a lease to drill on his farm for oil. Yates agreed. The oil company hit a gusher – eighty barrels of oil a day. Mr. Yates immediately became a multi-millionaire. When did Mr. Yates become a millionaire? When the oil company struck oil? Nope. Mr. Yates was a millionaire the moment he bought the farm. But he lived in poverty because he did not know what was underneath the ground. And when you trust the finished work of Christ, you are eternally rich. Start digging!

BLESSED ASSURANCE, JESUS IS MINE!
O WHAT A FORETASTE OF GLORY DIVINE!
HEIR OF SALVATION, PURCHASE OF GOD,
BORN OF HIS SPIRIT, WASHED IN HIS BLOOD.

PERFECT SUBMISSION, PERFECT DELIGHT,
VISIONS OF RAPTURE NOW BURST ON MY SIGHT;
ANGELS DESCENDING BRING FROM ABOVE
ECHOES OF MERCY, WHISPERS OF LOVE.

PERFECT SUBMISSION, ALL IS AT REST
I IN MY SAVIOR AM HAPPY AND BLEST,
WATCHING AND WAITING, LOOKING ABOVE,
FILLED WITH HIS GOODNESS, LOST IN HIS LOVE.

THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG,
PRAISING MY SAVIOR, ALL THE DAY LONG;
THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG,
PRAISING MY SAVIOR, ALL THE DAY LONG.