

6 Hours

Pastor Ken

Week 5, March 17, 2024

When was last time you did something for the first time for Jesus' sake?

About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). (Matt 27:46)

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." (John 19-NIV)

Welcome to Bethel Life Center, Danice and I want to tell you how much we love you. If you are here in person or on-line you have picked a great Sunday to attend. We are in a sermon series, one that I think will be a game changer for many of you-**6 Hours!**

Once and for all we are learning that Jesus Christ dealt a death blow to sins hold on our lives. While your sin can be cancelled because of Jesus substitutionary death, sometimes I don't know (1) **when I sin** and I don't know (2) **what the penalty is for my sin.**

(1) I don't always know the occasion of my sin.

There are times when I sin, and I do not even know it. How about you? I was in my teenage years, and in catechism before I realized putting smoke bombs in people's dryer vents that extended outside the house, was a sin.

How do I pay for the damage? Do I get a pass because it is youthful children's ignorance?

Is it wrong to play golf on Sunday instead of going to church? Oh, what if God thinks, the way I play golf is a sin?

And what about secret sins? Even as I am preaching, I am sinning because I want people to be pleased. I want people to make a post.

Is it wrong to want a little recognition for the hard work. Late night study sessions. The painstaking, parsing of Greek verbs, the exhausting labor to turn a phrase, the torturous hours to humbly put these landmark and life changing, earth shattering and memorable thoughts together. On paper. Online.

And what about the sins of omission? Anything on the ledger? Did you miss the opportunity to give up a seat on the bus? Overlook a chance to forgive. Did you neglect to

open a door, shut your mouth or say, "God bless you, after a co-worker sneezed?" After all they know you are a Christian and where is that God bless you?

(2) I don't know the cost of my sin.

Just as worse as not knowing when I sin, sometimes I do not know the cost of my sin. While I do know the price of gas and eggs. The price of gas in Wichita-Casey's, \$2.85. The price of eggs-Large, White, 30 count, \$6.49.

It is not so clear cut with my sin. It's not. What is the charge for getting mad in traffic? Getting ticked off when someone cuts in front of you when a new grocery store checkout line just opened?

What do I pay for my crime? Drive 5 miles under the speed limit for being mad in traffic? Recovering and returning all the shopping carts, when the temperature is below 20, for my attitude at the checkout counter?

And what if I wake up in a bad mood? What if I wake up my spouse accidentally on her sleep-in day? What if I oversleep for work?

Do I get a mulligan because of my mood? Is the charge for oversleeping less on the days the boss is on vacation?

Simply put, the cost of your sins is more than you can pay. The gift of God is more than you can imagine. More about this in a few minutes.

If I were to ask you, what is your biggest problem in your life right now? What would you say? The biggest problem is just sin. And God has solved that dilemma, difficulty and even death during 6 hours on the cross.

The hill is called Calvary or Golgotha. The sky is dark. You will need a flashlight to see the details of Jesus final hour. We have spent 4 weeks at this place outside of Jerusalem. We have watched Jesus as he was crucified at 9am, and we are now about 6 hours later. It is almost 3pm.

Take a deep breath. This portion of scripture is rated "R" for Ransom. Redemption. From 9am to 3pm, the vilest of wickedness has been poured out on God's only Son.

Men have gambled for Jesus clothes. Strangers hurled insults. All of this Jesus endured under the watchful eye of a Heavenly Father noting...

...every act of agony.

...every effort to breath.

...every drop of blood that drips to the ground.

Nothing goes unnoticed from a Father that has experienced eternal unity with Jesus for all of time. And nothing goes unnoticed in your life. King David, the sweet singer of Israel, makes this truth blindingly clear in Psalm 139,

*You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.*

²*You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

³*You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

⁴*Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.*

This is comforting for those whose lives are under the control and surrendered to an Almighty and merciful God. But, for those who are on the fence about God or have continually rejected God, this is **frightening**. Don't resist God another minute. Trust Jesus Christ today to forgive your sins and lead you into the purpose God has designed you for.

Then out of the Eastern sky rolls in the storm clouds of darkness. A hellish blackness drops out of the atmosphere and settles on all of Palestine.

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all of the land. (Matt 27:46)

Many struggled that day to make sense of what was happening. All of eternity knew.

The angels looked in horror.

The saints of heaven shuttered.

The Father and Holy Spirit watched as 3 kinds of darkness enshrouded Jesus.

That day, 3 apocalyptic horsemen rode into Jerusalem. The first horseman was physical darkness. The second horseman was relational darkness. And the final horseman was, spiritual darkness.

The sinless savior turned sin bearer hung suspended between heaven and earth. Separated. A tear in the Godhead had occurred. The trinity had been dismantled. Unity was now division. God the Father and God the son were now estranged. Why have you forsaken me, Jesus asks? God questioning God.

They are no longer one. The relationship is dissolved. Now, 2 separate entities. The only time God ever turned his back, happened at that moment.

For 3 hours the Son, the Savior and the Sin bearer carried our sins. You sin. My sin. My anger. Your anger. My addictions. Your addictions. My selfish attitude. Your selfish attitude.

God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of Christ. (2 Cor 5-NIV)

When you find yourself slipping and sliding and wondering if God really wants you. Pull up this verse. Memorize it. Meditate on it. Make it a part of your daily walk with God.

This act of love includes a question. **God, why have you forsaken me?** Years later, the apostle Paul gives us a glimpse of what was happening at that moment in 2 Cor 5:20-21-MSG,

Become friends with God; he's already a friend with you. ²¹*How? you ask. In Christ. God put the wrong on him who never did anything wrong, so we could be put right with God.*

A wail from the cross, My, My God! The wail rises from Jesus parched lips. I Thirst. The word is one word in Greek. Dipsos! Jesus started His ministry hungry, and He ended his life thirsty.

The holy heart is broken. The sufferer for our sins, screams as he wanders through an eternal wasteland of **Godless living**.

Wanders through an eternal wasteland of **Fatherless love**.

Out of that eternal wasteland come the words of all who walk in a **desert of rejection**.

The class valedictorian who never quite made the grade in life. The aging Miss Kansas. Alone. Lonely. Feeling rejected. The hand raised in class that never gets called on when they finally have the correct answer.

I am here today to encourage the **worn out and wounded hearts** of those whose phone never rings on Friday night. For those whose pastor doesn't know their name. I am here today to encourage the one who looks in the mirror daily only to see only themselves.

Jesus words of rejection, offers hope to those who are on the receiving end of rejection. The text or message that never offers a date. A politician standing on a loser's platform. A kid sitting on the end of the bench or in the dugout, never getting into the game.

God has turned his back on Jesus, so that he will never turn his back on us.

We are not abandoned. We are not alone. We are not rejected.

The writer of the Hebrews 18: 5b, reminds us, *"never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5b-NIV)*

Forsaken. Abandoned. Rejected. The saddest words in the English dictionary.

It results in a mid-air collision between a court room and the judges gavel announcing, divorced.

It results in a mid-air collision at a traffic accident where the EMT tells you the fate of those in the accident "I am sorry, your son is dead."

It results in a mid-air collision between your pregnancy and the words of a doctor "I am sorry, your baby is no longer alive."

Jesus could have decided to end His suffering; but He chose to endure it until it was completed. (tetelestai)

Every bit of pain and suffering - he did it for you and me. We are not the chief sufferers of the universe. Jesus is! And it was all done as a part of God's sovereign plan.

The cross was not accidental.

The cross was not incidental.

The cross was God-ccidental.

²³ This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. (Acts 2-NIV)

Jesus Christ suffered alone for those three hours, carrying our sins that you and I deserved for all of eternity. We deserved to be forsaken. We should have been banished. We deserved to be rejected.

No matter how hard we try to cover up sins effect or deny its existence, sin will eventually awaken from its slumber and shake off the covers.

A man purchased a **white mouse** to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust.

A tiny mouse had a serious problem on his hands. At any moment he could be swallowed alive. Obviously, the mouse needed to come with a brilliant plan. What did the terrified creature do? He quickly set to work covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem.

The solution, however, came from the outside. The man took pity on the silly little mouse and removed him from the cage.

So, often we think that just covering up our sin, will make it go away. But were it not for the saving grace of Jesus on the cross and the Father accepting the Son's atoning sacrifice at the end of those three hours, **sin would eat us alive.**

Jesus wants us to know, He knows what it is like to have a really bad day! A bad week! Even a bad life!

At the end of the 3 hours, Jesus said, ***"It is finished."*** The work was done. Man was ransomed from Satan's clutches. On that day, Satan released mankind and instead took into the slave markets of eternity the life of Jesus Christ.

Satan was quick to accept the prize, which he perceived as more valuable than your soul or my soul. Up to that moment we were held in slavery because of sin.

Satan did not realize that wrapped in Jesus' human flesh was the deity of Christ. The holiness of God. All of equality with God, existed in Jesus. The ability to conquer death, hell, and the grave. It lies dormant. In hibernation. All the power to break the chains of sin, waited for that moment.

This deity of Christ was hidden so that Satan would accept Jesus as the ransom. Did God deceive Satan? Satan gained his initial advantage over man through deception, God was only offering the same bait, and Satan took it hook, line and sinker.

You're free. You're unfettered. You're unchained.

Now, go and live like it. Take back that which the enemy has stolen. Go and announce your freedom from captivity. Sins power no longer holds you in bondage. When you sin, don't go back to ground zero. Confess. Repent. Receive a clean slate and keep going.

From Jesus lungs came a final cry: It is finished. Jesus 'said, ***"It is finished."***
Not words of tragedy, but words of triumph!

Suddenly a cry of victory. Jesus pushes his feet down on that Roman nail, one last time and cries out, ***"It is finished!"***

One Greek word, 3 words in English. Tetelestai. What was finished? The eternal history making plan for redeeming mankind was finished.

Even though the earth was flooded because of sin in the time of Noah, eternity declared, ***"It is finished."***

While mankind built a tower of babel to God, showing their arrogance, heaven announced, ***"It is finished."***

While an Egyptian monarch committed mass genocide against God's people in the Exodus, one day God's people would hear from a cross, "It is finished."

When Joseph fell into a pit and Goliath fell to the ground, heaven shouted, "It Is Finished". Can I suggest when you slip up, and sin up, announce, "It Is Finished!"

When you are run down or run over, shout it out, "It Is Finished!"

When you are left for dead, and can't get out of your head, can't get out of bed, say it with me, "It Is Finished."

The works done by Jesus on a cross as human, as a man, as the son of Man, were now complete. The task of leaving a narrative about healings, teachings, deliverances, love, affection, making right injustice, elevating women, **was now complete.**

The disciples had been selected. The demons had been delivered. The prophecies had been predicted, **was now complete.**

If Jesus could have removed a fist at that moment from the cross, I dare he would have offered a triumphant fist bump that punched through the dark sky toward his Father, and said, "It Is Finished."

A cry of tragedy? No, a cry of triumph!
God's history making plan for redeeming lost mankind is now complete.

(30) When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." (John 19-NIV)

Three simple words in English. None more than two syllables. Simple. Loud. Triumphant. The perfect tense announces, "full completion." Nothing further needed to be done. This New Testament word is pregnant with meaning, "teleo."

...Matt. 19:1 "When Jesus had finished these sayings"...

...Luke 2:39 "When they had performed all these things"...

...Luke 22:37 "Must be accomplished in me"...

...Rev. 17:17 "Until the words of God shall be fulfilled "...

...Rev. 20:7 “When the 1000 years are (lit. should be) expired” ...

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been **finished**, and so that Scripture would be **fulfilled**, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “**It is finished.**” (John 19-NIV)

Finished. Performed. Accomplished. Fulfilled. Expired. **Tetelestai**. It is finished. It will always be finished. A Greek word in its ninth month of pregnancy. It is too uncomfortable to ignore. It sticks out for all to see. No head is unturned as it walks by. The word “*tetelestai*,” is used in so many ways.

*The market was crowded. The deal was about to be consummated. The transaction was accomplished when the merchant said, “*tetelestai*.” This debt has been paid in full.

*When the job was completed for the servant he would announce to his master, “*tetelestai*.”

*At the temple altar after the inspection by the priest just before sacrifice, the priest would declare, “*tetelestai*,” which means it is perfect without blemish.

*The final brush stroke was placed on the canvass. The artist stood back and declared, “*tetelestai*.” The smile on his face communicated a finished work.

*“It is finished” is God’s **announcement** and action that sinners are righteous in His sight.*

*“It is finished” is God’s **acceptance** of you, without you having to do anything to earn your salvation.*

*“It is finished” is God **allowing** you to be released from the liability of punishment and sin.*

*“It is finished” is God’s **adoption** plan to bring you into His family.*

It is finished! Do you really believe it? Or do you think the only way to curry favor with God, is to add something to your faith? Works? Inability to forgive yourself? Perhaps Arthur Pink can shake you free from this misconception with this story:

The farmer with faith, sought to set before his neighbor a carpenter without Christ, the Gospel of God's grace, and to explain how that finished work of Christ was sufficient for his soul to rest upon. But the carpenter insisted in the belief that he must do something himself.

One day the farmer asked the carpenter to make him a gate, and when the gate was ready, he carried it away to his wagon. He arranged for the carpenter to call on him the next morning and see the gate hung in the field. At the appointed hour, the carpenter arrived and was surprised to find the farmer standing by with a sharp ax in his hand.

"What are you going to do?" he asked. "I am going to add a few cuts and strokes to your work" was the response. "But there is no need for it," replied the carpenter, "the gate is all right as it is. I did all that was necessary to it." The farmer took no notice, but lifting his ax he slashed and hacked at the gate until it was completely spoiled. "Look what you have done!" cried the carpenter, "you have ruined my work!" "Yes," said the farmer, "and that is exactly what you are trying to do. You are seeking to nullify the Finished Work of Christ by your own miserable additions to it!"

As one author has said, in describing the difference between religion and Christianity. Religion says, "do!" Christianity says, "done!"

You make the choice. Prior to Christ's death, each sacrifice for sins could only **cover** the sins, never **take away** sins. With the announcement, "It Is Finished," a new day had dawned. Not only were sins covered by the blood, now you are declared clean. You have a fresh start. A clean slate.

(14) Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, the old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ's cross. (Col. 2-MSG)

God's ultimate act of grace and mercy. The creator of the universe hanging on a Roman cross. God on a cross. **God had one objective that day, to go the distance and show us that we can too!** (28) *Later, knowing that all was now completed. (John 19-NIV)*

Is It Really Finished? Yes! Is He Really Finished? No!

Word has it that Jesus is preparing another creation. A new home for you and me. One that is so glorious that angel's shudder. Saints of old walk by and bow. He is preparing a place for you and me.

Father,

I accept your Son, Jesus Christ's atoning 6-hour death on the cross to cover my pile of sins. There is no other name under heaven by which I can be saved. And I can add nothing to Jesus Christ's salvation work that declares, "**It Is Finished!**"

Thank you, Jesus, for enduring 6 evil and horrific hours of pain and suffering on my behalf.

Because of Jesus' promise, **It Is Finished**, as a sinner I am forgiven and made righteous in the image of Jesus.

Because of Jesus' promise, **It Is Finished**, I don't have to add anything to my salvation.

Because of Jesus' promise, **It Is Finished**, I am released from the liability of punishment of my sin.

Because of Jesus' promise, **It Is Finished**, I am adopted into God's family.

In Jesus Name, Amen!