

## It is Finished

Sermon for *Tre Ore* by Nancy M Raabe  
[John 19:28-30](#)

Luther Memorial Church, Madison WI  
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“It is finished”: These are God’s three greatest words of grace.

“It is finished.” All is accomplished that the Father had given his Son to do.

Jesus’ work on earth is done. There on earth, he proclaimed the advent of God’s kingdom. He told us—and showed us—what that looks like: The last come first; the outcasts are welcomed to the banquet table; the meek will inherit the earth; those who think they see are revealed as blind, while the blind are proclaimed as having true sight. There on earth, Jesus told the disciples of all that was to come, so that their faith might be strengthened for future leadership, even as they doubted.

“‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” Jesus’ last words in John are not an admission of defeat but a cry of triumph. Jesus has fulfilled God’s will and allowed things to be done to him that needed to be done, so that—through God’s abundant mercy—all humanity might be freed from bondage to sin and be born anew to eternal life, here and now.

At the cross we learn what it means to become obedient to the point of death. Earlier in John’s gospel, speaking about what is to come, Jesus says to his disciples, “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.” Obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Let’s glance back at the crucifixion itself. The scene in the synoptic gospels is one of apocalyptic gloom: In Matthew, Mark, and Luke, darkness covers the land for three hours and at Jesus’ death the curtain of the temple is sheared from top to bottom.

In John, however, the picture is not of desolation but of human interaction—haggling between the priests and Pilate over the inscription on the cross; a conference among the soldiers as they divide Jesus’ garments; and most of all, the dialogue between Jesus and the four people standing nearby.

Here at the foot of the cross new community is born and the church is begun: “Woman, here is your son”; and to the beloved disciple, “Here is your mother.” His mother as the church; the beloved disciple as the first Christian.

It is finished. But now, what remains for us?

It is in our utter obedience to God in our darkest hour that our faith is strengthened. God's innocent Son is crucified, horribly, as one rejected by his own people. But God does not abandon us. We may feel abandoned, rejected, despised. But our conviction that God is there, and that God is faithful, brings us into the suffering of God's Son and thus into the suffering of the world. It is our loving obedience to God, allowed by his saving grace, that justifies us and makes us righteous in God's sight.

It is for us to proclaim God's kingdom on earth as we take every opportunity to testify. It is for us to preach Christ crucified as we daily die to the world and rise in Christ.

Jesus' work is finished, but ours is just beginning.