

John 19:31-42 | Sunday December 29, 2024

Since John 12 we have been studying the last week of Jesus life. John puts a tremendous focus on these final actions and teachings of Jesus. Last week we saw the death of Jesus. He was the perfect sacrifice who declared in victory “It is finished.” Sins’ payment was finished, His own righteousness was finished, the law was finished, and there are so many more. Yet this victory cry and all it accomplished would mean nothing if the story stopped there. It is estimated that 30,000 people were killed on Roman crosses, it is valid to ask what made Jesus’ death so unique? Anybody can declare “It is finished” but what verifies this claim? What proves He accomplished all He claimed to? **The Resurrection**. This week sets the stage for Him to be risen.

John 19:28-42 ESV

(28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” (29) 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. (30) When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. (31) **Since it was the day of Preparation**, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross **on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)**, the Jews asked Pilate **that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away**. (32) So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with Him. (33) But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.(34) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. (35) He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. (36) For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of His bones will be broken.” (37) And again another Scripture says, “They will look on Him whom they have pierced.” (38) After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away His body.(39) Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. (40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.(41) Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.(42) **So because of the Jewish day of Preparation**, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Death on a cross was a slow agonizing process. Some criminals would be on the cross for **two to three days** before they died. One of Rome's main goals of using the cross was its public nature so that it would be a deterrent to crime and uprisings. The Romans would let the person's death drag out as long as possible. Then often the dead body would be left on the cross to start decomposing and to be eaten by the vultures. This common practice was not followed because the Jews were on a time crunch. It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was about to start. By Jewish thought **this happened at sunset on Friday**. This Sabbath was special because it was during the Passover Feast. So, the Jewish leaders made two more request of Pilate. They wanted the criminals' legs broken (including Jesus) to speed up death and for the bodies to be taken off the cross, so that the Sabbath and Passover feast would not be defiled. (Deut 21:22-23)

John 19:32-33 ESV

(32) So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with Him.

(33) But when they came to Jesus and **saw that He was already dead**, they did not break His legs.

Pilate agrees to the request and ordered the soldiers to break their legs. The Romans would use heavy mallet to break the legs of a crucified person so that they could no longer push up to get a breath of air. Once the legs were broken death was imminent. The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus but saw that Jesus was already dead. Jesus had many beatings and floggings before He even reached the cross. Jesus alone had the authority to give up His spirit, these Roman soldiers could not take His life from Him. Yet, these soldiers had been given a direct order and failure to ensure Jesus was dead would have led to their own death.

John 19:34 ESV

(34) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, **and at once there came out blood and water.**

There can be no doubt that Jesus physically died on the cross. These soldiers were well trained in execution and knew how to verify death. When the spear pierced Jesus side, blood and water came out. There are multiple medical explanations of why this proves Jesus death. Depending on what exactly was pierced by the spear, this fluid came from **Jesus' heart and the fluid in the pericardial sac** or from **hemorrhagic fluid that built up in the rib cage and the lining of the lungs**. This fluid separates out with a clear serum on top and a deep red on the bottom. Either way, physical death would have been confirmed for the Roman soldier. The apostle John gives these details in part to combat false teaching that had arisen. Some taught that Jesus only seemed or appeared to have a human body. John gives these bodily details to help prove that **Jesus had a physical flesh that really died on the cross.**

John 19:34-35 ESV

(34) But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, **and at once there came out blood and water.**

(35) **He who saw it has borne witness**—his testimony is **true**, and he knows that he is telling **the truth—that you also may believe.**

John was the only disciple who stayed and watched the crucifixion, the others had scattered before this. He was an eye witness and could attest to the **authenticity** and **genuineness** of what he was writing. Seeing the blood and water come out of Jesus made an impact on John. He even makes reference to it in 1 John 5.

1 John 5:6-8; 11-12 ESV

(6) This is He who came **by water and blood—Jesus Christ**; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

(7) For there are **three that testify**:

(8) **the Spirit and the water and the blood**; and these three agree.

(11) **And this is the testimony**, that **God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.**

(12) **Whoever has the Son has life**; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

This passage has many layers, yet what is clear is that John says the Spirit, water and blood all agree in their testimony. Then he tells us what the testimony is, that **Eternal life is found in Jesus**. John can attest to seeing firsthand the water and blood coming out of Jesus. **The word who had become flesh, Jesus, died**. He is the perfect sacrifice, through His death He can now offer eternal life. It cannot be found in anyone or anything else. If you have Jesus, the Son, you have life. Even the details that happened after Jesus' death were in perfect accordance to scripture, to further prove who He was and what He accomplished.

John 19:36 ESV

(36) For these things took place that the **Scripture might be fulfilled: "Not one of His bones will be broken."**

God had given so many prophecies pointing to Jesus. He was the perfect Passover lamb.

Exodus 12:5; 46-47 ESV

(5) **Your lamb shall be without blemish**, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats,

(46) It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, **and you shall not break any of its bones.**

(47) All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

Over a thousand year before Jesus came, God made sure to instruct Israel that the Passover lamb could not have a broken bone, the sacrifice had to be perfect. Israel will even be chastised by God in Malachi 1:8 for trying to offer lame and sick sacrifices. **An unblemished sacrifice pointed to the perfect sacrifice**. Jesus is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 15:7)! The Roman soldier had no clue that He was fulfilling prophecy as He pierced Jesus instead of breaking His legs.

John 19:36-37 ESV

(36) For these things took place that the **Scripture might be fulfilled**: "Not one of His bones will be broken."

(37) And again another **Scripture says**, "**They will look on Him whom they have pierced.**"

I am amazed at the accuracy of the word of God. Verse 36 says that His bones not being broken **fulfilled** scripture, yet notice the word change in verse 37, "**Scripture says.**" This quote is from Zechariah and Jesus being pierced fits the passage but **it has not been completely fulfilled yet**, there is still a future piece left.

Zechariah 12:10 ESV

(10) "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem **a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him**, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over Him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

This prophecy points to when Jesus is going to come back. The Jewish people will be restored and desire to have a walk with Jesus. The nation of Israel will realize what they have done, and how they missed their Messiah. They will mourn and weep bitterly. **This is why “Scripture says” because this day is still to come.** Jesus came as the suffering messiah but that is over. When He comes back He is the conquering King. The world will have to deal with the death of Jesus one way or another.

Philippians 2:8-11 ESV

(8) And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

(9) **Therefore God has highly exalted Him** and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name,

(10) so that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

(11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The world will look on the one who was pierced, the perfect payment for sin, the only way to have eternal life. He is worthy and deserves all praise and every knee will bow. For believers it is out of worship, for the world it seals who they rejected.

John 19:38 NAS95

(38) After these things **Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews,** asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

If a crucifixion victim were to be taken off the cross then they were buried in a common grave for criminals. The Jews would not have allowed someone who was cursed by the cross to defile a family grave. Joseph of Arimathea intervenes and does not let the body of Jesus be taken to the criminals grave. Joseph of Arimathea **was rich** (Mat 27:57), and **a good righteous man** (Luke 23:50-51) **but he had a fear problem.** Joseph was a member of the **Sanhedrin**, the very group that helped condemn Jesus to death and He was a disciple of Jesus. Joseph kept this secret because he feared the Jews and what they would do if they found out that he believed Jesus.

We must read this verse carefully, Joseph did not become a disciple that night, **He was one already.** He just wanted to keep it quiet. Joseph wanted to follow Jesus and keep his life as untouched and unchanged as possible. There is one big problem with his plan, God works in believers lives.

Philippians 1:6 ESV

(6) And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in **you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.**

Once someone is saved God goes to work in their life. He wants to grow them and help them mature in their relationship with Him. He is faithful to this work even when we reject and rebel against Him. God will finish it perfectly, not on this side of the grave, but at the day of Jesus. Meaning when we see Jesus face to face in heaven, or at the rapture, our sin nature will be gone and we will have perfect fellowship with God. **This is true even of the prodigal, who refuses**

to grow, God never quits working on them. God was working on Joseph of Arimathea, and he had a choice to make, would He fear God or men?

Mark 15:43 ESV

(43) Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, **who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage** and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Joseph decided to live for the eternal and not the earthly. God was working on His heart and strengthened him to have courage and be willing to ask Pilate for Jesus body. **This would effectively out Him as a disciple of Jesus and forever change Joseph's life.** I guarantee from this side of eternity Joseph has never regretted this decision. In the verse next verse we have another example of God continuing to work on someone.

John 19:39 ESV

(39) **Nicodemus** also, who earlier had **come to Jesus by night**, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee who out of fear came to Jesus by night. In John 3 Jesus taught Him how to be born again. Jesus taught that He would be lifted up just as the snake in the wilderness, and all who believe will have eternal life. We don't know when Nicodemus believed but **God had kept working on His heart**, and here he is bringing an extravagant amount of myrrh and aloes to care for the body of Jesus. These were meant to help the smell of decomposition, and to care for the body with dignity. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea started to walk in what God had for them **when they stopped fearing man and looked to Jesus.**

Ephesians 2:10 ESV

(10) **For we are His workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus for good works, **which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

We are God's **workmanship, His creation, a masterful poem.** He has gifted each of us uniquely to walk in good works that He has prepared. He grows and matures us to be ready for each one and empowers us to walk in them. As sinners we can choose not to walk in what we have been called to. **It is a tragic waste, and we will be held accountable.** There is so much joy in watching a believer start walking in what they have been called to, a deepening walk with Jesus.

John 19:40-42 ESV

(40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

(41) Now in the place where He was crucified there **was a garden**, and **in the garden a new tomb** in which no one had yet been laid.

(42) So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, **they laid Jesus there.**

The author of life was laid into a tomb dead. It is no accident that this grave was in a garden. **This echoes the garden of Eden where man first fell and sin and death entered the world.** He remained obedient as the second Adam when the first Adam had failed. His body laid in the tomb dead but what was accomplished was just about to be seen.

1 Corinthians 15:45-47 ESV

(45) Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a **living being**”; the last Adam became a **life-giving spirit**. (46) But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. (47) **The first man was from the earth**, a man of dust; **the second Man is from heaven**.
