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BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan John 19: 25-30 "Finished!"

Summer 2023 TRANSCRIPT

Well, good morning. We are nearing the conclusion of John chapter 19 this morning and we're looking at verses 25 through 30. It begins where we left off last Sunday, verse 25, "Therefore the soldiers did these things." And the *"things"* they did, (you'll remember, there were four of them), they were dividing the Lord's clothes and they were gambling over His seamless tunic. John writes, verse 25,

"Therefore the soldiers did these things...': (*The "Therefore"*, I think, is in connection with the fulfillment of prophecy. We see this all through the crucifixion. And we continue to see it in our passage this morning, and how all of this fulfills God's prophetic Word. It wasn't done mechanically; it was all naturally done. Every fulfillment fit the circumstance, providentially. But all of it was fulfillment, all of it shows this was planned out from all eternity. No mistakes were made here: God's in control; Christ was in control.)

²⁵ Therefore the soldiers did these things.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own *household*.

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon *a branch of* hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. ³⁰ Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

John 19: 25-30

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and may He bless each of us as we continue our studies in it. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

We thank You, Father, for this day of the week, this first day of the week that speaks of the resurrection. We've read the passage that concludes the crucifixion, the triumphant conclusion of it. But the affirmation of the triumphant conclusion is yet to come, the third day, when He was raised from the dead in Your power, which was a way of saying, "Amen", to His "It is finished!"

We have a victorious Savior who accomplished the work of salvation at the cross: and this is what we think of on a Sunday morning. The first day of the week; it recalls the resurrection every week—so every week is an Easter celebration for us.

And really, we live in Christ, the risen Savior, with His life—and that means every day is a celebration of His death, burial, and resurrection. We live a new life because of Him, because of Your grace.

I speak of believers, those who put their faith in Him. I trust most, (hopefully, all of us here), have put our faith in Christ, and so this is a great day, a great place to be. It's where we're supposed to be: With Your people on a Sunday morning, doing this, reading and studying, and reflecting on Your Word. And what a thing to think about; 'The finished work of Christ on Calvary.'

We thank You for sending Him into this world to die for sinners. All of us are sinners. We have no claim on the cross, we have no claim on Your love, and heaven to

come, and the kingdom to come, and the eternal state to come; we're all debtors to mercy alone and we thank You, Father, for Your goodness, Your grace, Your mercy to us.

So help us to reflect deeply on that as we continue our studies in this great Fourth Gospel, and as we consider the final events of the cross. And Father, teach us and teach us not only what is presented here but the application of it to our own lives, that we might live faithfully for You.

Bless us spiritually, bless us materially, LORD. We pray for the health of every one of us here. We pray for the safety. Give us the safety of the coming and going, and pray that we reflect deeply on Your hand of providence which guides us at every moment.

And we pray for those that are in difficulty. Bless them. Bless all of us, again, physically, materially, to Your glory. And bless us when those things are taken away, because when that happens, it happens by Your providence and Your wisdom, and Your goodness to us. We thank You for this time together.

Now LORD, bless us as we sing our next hymn; prepare our hearts to study this glorious passage together. We look to You to bless us, and build us up in the faith. In Christ's name, Amen.

(Message) Whenever Johann Sebastian Bach finished a composition he would sign it, *Soli Deo gloria*, "To God alone be the glory!", or simply the three letter abbreviation. You can imagine the gratification he felt after working long hours on a complicated piece of music, when it was finally done and he could write "SDG" and put his pen down.

One of the greatest joys there is in life is completing a task that is done well. In fact, the harder the task completed, the greater the joy. We see that when God finished His work of creation; He "saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen 1:31). And then Moses wrote, "He rested." (Gen 2:2). It was the rest of satisfaction.

That's the satisfaction Jesus had on the cross, when He cried out, "It is finished!" The work of salvation was completed—that's the good news of the Gospel. Just as there

was nothing man could add to the original work of creation, there is nothing we can add to the Lord's work of salvation. It is complete; it is perfect. —"It is finished!"

That is the sixth of the Lord's seven sayings from the cross. They are: First, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luk 23:34) Second, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise." (Luk 23:43) Third, "Woman, behold, your son." (Jn 19:26) Fourth, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mat 27:46) Fifth, "I am thirsty." (Jn 19:28) Sixth, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30) And seventh, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." (Luk 23:46)

Three of the seven are found here in our passage. And the first of those three is found in verse 26, when the Lord spoke to His mother who was standing by the cross. She was with a group of women. John lists them in verse 25: Jesus' "mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." So in contrast to the four soldiers that were at the foot of the cross, callously gambling for Jesus' clothing, there were four women there as well, who cared deeply for Him.

The disciples had abandoned Him and they were in hiding. But He was not completely forsaken; the women were there, bravely out in the open, faithful to Him. Now they didn't understand what was happening: To them it was a tragedy, but they were devoted to Christ, and they were there to comfort Him, and to comfort His mother.

And what a sight for a mother to see and to endure: The sight of her first Son, her righteous Son, suffering the agony of the cross; and then hearing the sounds of those around her mocking Him. But it has all been foretold. 33 years earlier, Simeon told her, 'a sword would pierce her soul.' (Luk 2:35). It was now piercing it, and Jesus knew that. He was completely aware of all that was going on around Him—of her presence and of her grief.

That was one of the amazing things about the cross—that in spite of the physical pain, in spite of the loss of blood, the exhaustion and the dehydration from the heat, Christ was completely composed. He didn't succumb to delirium, His mind was clear. And He was in complete control through the whole gruesome ordeal, methodically fulfilling prophecies and providing for the needs of others. And that's what He did here for His mother.

And John gave special attention to that—because John was there. Not all the disciples had left Jesus. John had returned. Throughout the Fourth Gospel, as we have seen, he is "the disciple whom Jesus loved". (Jn 21:7). And that's how he's identified here, standing at the cross by the side of Mary. He wrote that when Jesus saw her He said, "Woman, behold, your son!" (vs26b). Then turning to John He said, "Behold, your mother!" (vs27).

It was an act of righteousness—an act of obedience to the fifth commandment, to 'honor thy father and mother.' (Exo 20:12). And it showed that He kept the requirements of the Law perfectly to the very end of His life.

But it was also an act of great compassion on His part. It was agony for Him to see His mother standing before Him, suffering at the sight of Him; and it evoked this response of love for her. Joseph had evidently died some years before and Jesus had been the provider for the family before He began His public ministry. As the oldest son it would have been His responsibility to take care of the family—and take care of His mother.

But He would be gone soon. And so to insure that she was provided for and protected, He entrusted her to the care of another—to John. "Woman, behold, your son!" It's an amazing thing: In this condition, He is concerned for her and He takes care of her.

When He last spoke to Mary in this Gospel is in chapter 2, (verse 4). He addressed her as "Woman"—and He wasn't being harsh or disrespectful. What He did in that was signal to her a change in their relationship. As He began His public ministry, she must no longer think of herself as *His mother*, and of *Him as her son*. She must now

understand that He is *her Savior and her Lord*. And so, it's no longer 'mother', but '*woman*'. And as she understood that, she would understand the meaning of His death and that would turn her sorrow into joy.

We learn a number of things from this scene with Mary at the cross. We learn that those whom the Lord loves have sorrows in this life—but we also learn that that's not the end of it. All that the child of God suffers is for his or her good. It may not seem so at the time, and it's hard for us to lay hold of that in times of difficulty, but it is true. All of the sorrows are of God, ultimately for our good—and all of those sorrows will someday be turned into joy.

I can remember visiting the home of one of our members who was seriously ill, (this is some years ago). He had invited the elders to come and pray for him, and so we did. And one of the oldest of us prayed, "LORD, you never send suffering without purpose." Now that's true. All our sorrows and sufferings have a purpose; to change us, to conform us to Christ's image—always a good purpose. Whether we can see it that way or not, it is for a good purpose.

Years earlier, in Luke chapter 1, verse 47, Mary had rejoiced in "God my Savior." It's in *The Magnificat*; and what it tells us is that Mary, the mother of our Lord, needed a Savior, too. What she would realize soon was, 'On the cross He saved her'—and she would rejoice in that. But not only would He save her, *(and us),* through His death, He would continue to save her, to deliver her throughout life and all the difficulties of life. He never leaves us—and He didn't leave Mary. She received a new Son.

Now she had other sons; we know that. The Lord's half-brothers: James is one; Jude was another. But at that time, they were not believing in Him, so He entrusted her to His disciple who shared a common faith with her. And in doing that, He showed that He had formed a new family, 'the household of faith'. One based not on natural generation but on '*regeneration*'; based on the atonement and our love for Him all, "who are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of

God." That's John chapter 1, verse 17. It is all of God's sovereign grace. We are all debtors to mercy alone, in His family.

Just as Jesus' mother and His disciple were drawn together at the cross, so too, everyone whose faith meets at the cross, becomes a member of God's family—brothers and sisters with one another. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself," Jesus said. (Jn 12:32). He has drawn us together in a new family, where Paul said, we are especially to do good to one another: That's what he told the Galatians, "Bear one another's burdens." (Gal 6:2).

But His work was not yet done. His death was near, so He completed the next step in His sacrifice, which is in verse 28, when He spoke His fifth saying from the cross. He was physically weak, and had become dehydrated under the hot, Near Eastern sun. So He said, "I am thirsty.", words that communicate the reality of His humanity.

We don't tend to doubt that today. But in those early centuries of the church, that was a big issue: 'How could God's Son be a man?' And so they had all kinds of odd ideas about that—that 'He wasn't genuinely a man', and 'wasn't a real human, He only *appeared* to be.' No, He was a real man—it's obvious from this statement; a genuine man.

And He is infinitely more than that. He is very God of very God, God's eternal Son. That's the theme of this great Gospel. But He's also a true man, with a true body, and a reasonable soul. He is a genuine human. He had to be in order to represent us in death and rescue us from judgment. Bulls and goats could not do that. It had to be a human person who did that; so He became a man incarnate.

But His cry of thirst was much more than an expression of His humanity and His physical need. It was that—all of that—but again, it fulfilled prophecy. That's what John said; it was "to fulfill Scripture". (vs28). Which again shows the Lord's complete control of events throughout this whole ordeal.

The Lord's mind was filled with Scripture. He knew the Psalms and was reflecting on them throughout the crucifixion. And when, (in the course of providence), the situation was right, He quoted the passage. He'd been meditating on Psalm 22, which is specifically about Him in His death: It begins, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1). In the chronology of events on the cross, that had just been said, (and it was His fourth saying).

This wasn't 'mechanical', as I mentioned at the beginning; He always said things at the right time—and the events, in the providence of God, provoked them—and told Him that it was time to recognize this event as a fulfillment of prophecy. And so for example, when the sky turned dark at noon, when God turned away from Him, He quotes the Psalm, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1). Well, it was the experience, (throughout that darkness), of spiritual death: The eternal death which is the penalty of sin that He suffered in the place of His people—the pain of hell itself when He made atonement—and in doing that, satisfied God's justice for us.

David prophesied that in Psalm 22—as well as the Lord's physical condition... of His dehydration; "My strength is dried up like a potsherd. And my tongue cleaves to my jaws."(Ps 22:15). That was the Lord's actual experience on the cross. And with that terrible thirst, His thoughts turned to Psalm 69, verse 21, "For my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink." And there at the foot of the cross was "a jar full of sour wine". (vs29). Seeing it there, and knowing that the end was near, in order to fulfill Scripture He said, "I am thirsty." (vs28b).

And John wrote that when He said that, "...they put a sponge full of sour wine upon *a branch of* hyssop and brought it up to His mouth." (vs29). [Now, there is a difference here between that sour wine and the wine mixed with myrrh the people offered Him on the way to the cross. It's found in Matthew and Mark; and that was a sedative used to dull the senses. It was often given to men who would face this excruciating death. It was a 'humane' thing to do and it was offered to Him out of compassion. But He refused it, (Mar 15:23), if you'll remember. He wanted to keep His mind clear through all of this, because He was in complete control.]

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Well, the "sour wine" here is different from that. The sour wine was cheap wine—like vinegar that was diluted with water. It was a common drink then, (and still is in parts of southern and eastern Europe). A jar was there, (perhaps, probably, for the soldiers), and when He cried out, one of them filled a sponge with it and lifted it to His mouth on "a branch of hyssop"—which is very significant.

Hyssop was used in connection with the Passover in Egypt: When the Israelites put the blood of the Passover lamb on their doors they applied it with hyssop. And here it is as though in using hyssop, the soldier was unwittingly pointing to Christ as, 'the true Passover lamb.' In fact, He is "the door." (Jn 10:9). And here, the hyssop was applied to "the door", the true "Door" into life and heaven. But in doing this, he's showing that Christ is the One whose death is the means of deliverance for His people. He's the true Passover—the ultimate Passover.

He knew He was at the point of death, and wanting His final words heard, he drank the wine to loosen His dry tongue. And then, in what the other Gospels describe as a loud voice, He cried out, "It is finished!" (vs30). It was not a cry of despair. It was not a cry of defeat. It was not: 'I'm finished'... but "It is finished!"

The work is done! Victory! He had accomplished His mission, finished His work, His spiritual masterpiece, and described it and declared it **done**! Soli Deo gloria!

Only then do we read, "He bowed His head and gave up His spirit." (vs30).

Now that's very unusual—in fact, that's worth noticing. Normally, a person's spirit departs, and then the head falls. But here it's the reverse. He first bows His head, then He dismisses His spirit—in control to the very end. No one took His life from Him. He laid it down on His own initiative in obedience to His Father's will. That was true from the moment of His arrest in the garden until He gave up His spirit, or handed over His spirit to His Father. "Father," He said, "into thy hands I commit, *(or commend),* My spirit" —and died. (Luk 23:46). He did it voluntarily. He willed it to happen. No one took His life

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from Him. He willed it to occur. He acted as our high priest, and offered Himself up as our sacrifice on the altar of the cross.

And when He declared that, "It is finished!", He made an end of all altars and sacrifices having accomplished salvation by paying our debt in full, by suffering the wrath of God in full, in our place.

It's been asked, 'How could Christ, in so short a time, bear the sufferings that would equal the eternal torments of hell? How is endless punishment experienced in a few hours?' Well, it's a bit of a conundrum. The answer is not found in the amount of time suffered, but in the person who suffered. Christ is so glorious that His short sufferings equal in value our eternal punishment.

For example: A dog's death has greater value than that of a fly. It's a higher form of life. The death of a man has greater value than that of an ox. It's the death of a rational creature over that of a non-rational creature. The value of death increases with the value of the victim. But still, no human death is of infinite value, because humans are finite creatures.

Christ, however, is different. He is the unique man. He is the God-man; fully God, fully man. And while He suffered in His humanity, in His human nature and His human body, (which is finite), those sufferings were elevated and dignified by the union of His human nature with the divine nature, (which is infinite). And so the *vicarious, substitutionary* sufferings of Christ are given infinite value and effect—not from the duration of time that He suffered, but from the Person who suffered: Jesus Christ is an absolutely infinite person whose death is sufficient for all our sins, for all eternity.

And so when Jesus announced, "It is finished!", He declared that the ultimate sacrifice, the final sacrifice for sin had been made—and that put an end to sacrifices. At that moment, the altar and the temple in Jerusalem were obsolete. Our Catholic friends should know that the sacrifice of the mass is meaningless, ineffective. Christ's sacrifice cannot be unfinished when He Himself declared that, "It <u>is</u> finished!" It is never again to be repeated. There is now nothing more to do—nothing to add to His perfect, complete work.

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What could we possibly add to an offering of infinite value? Nothing at all. In fact, to attempt to do that is spiritual suicide. Paul told the Galatians that anyone who attempted to add a human work to the divine work of salvation, (whether it's *circumcision*, or in our day, *baptism*), is *accursed*! ...'*Anathema*!' 'Even', he said, 'if it's an angel who does that.' "...Christ will be of no benefit to you.", he wrote to them in Galatians chapter 5, verse 2.

All a person can do is—'By God's grace, receive by faith, and faith alone, the salvation that Christ has gained by His substitutionary death.' And a person can only do that by God's sovereign, free grace. It's all a gift! —The magnificent, unspeakable gift!

In his book, *The Seven Sayings of the Savior on the Cross*, Arthur W. Pink tells a story about a Christian farmer who was very concerned about an unsaved neighbor. The neighbor was a carpenter and the farmer had tried to explain the Gospel to him—and especially the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ on the cross: 'There's nothing that we can add to it.'

Well, the carpenter didn't believe that. He said, "No, no. We've got to do works" 'We've got to do this, or that.'

So one day the farmer asked the carpenter to make him a gate. When the gate was finished he came for it and he carried it away in a wagon. He hung the gate on a fence, and then he invited the carpenter to come and see it. The carpenter came—and while he was admiring the work of his hands, he noticed the farmer standing there with a sharp axe in his hands. "What's that for?" he asked. The farmer answered, "I'm going to add just a few strokes to your work." The carpenter objected, "That's not necessary. The gate is perfect as it is. I did everything that was necessary."

But the farmer took his axe and proceeded to swing away at the gate—and continued swinging, and striking, until the gate was ruined. The carpenter stood there in utter disbelief. "Look at what you've done. You've ruined my work." "Yes", his friend answered, "And that is exactly what you are trying to do. You are trying to ruin the work

of Christ by your own miserable additions to it." God used the lesson to show the carpenter his mistake; and according to Arthur Pink, was led to trust completely in Christ alone for his salvation.

We remember Christ's sacrifice when we take the Lord's Supper. And we take it repeatedly, because He's asked us to do that. *But* we cannot repeat His sacrifice—we cannot add to Christ's sacrifice. He has done it all; once, for all. We can only receive the salvation that He obtained for us at the cross by faith, and faith <u>alone</u>. It's the only remedy for sin—and it is the complete remedy.

Christ's death was the payment for the sins of sinners. No sin was left unpaid, no sin was left unpunished. It is complete, it is comprehensive, broad, and inclusive. It's not only for the Jew but for the Gentile.

It is for "the world", as the Samaritans confessed in chapter 4 of this Gospel. (verse 42). Not for the world as in 'every individual', (otherwise, everyone in the world would be saved). He paid the full penalty for all *for whom He died*. It was for the world in every part: 'All without distinction, not all without exception.'

But it is adapted to the condition of *all without exception*. We can freely offer it to all, because it's adapted to their situation. It's for sinners...and all are sinners. It's received by faith, not by works. All men have wills, and they're invited to exercise those wills in faith, in belief. So no one can say, 'Adequate supply was not made for me.'

So if you want salvation, if you want forgiveness and eternal life, take hold of it: Believe in Christ as your only Savior. His death is sufficient for you.

But someone might say, "I've been coming here for a while, and I know what you've been teaching: That no one can believe unless God gives him, or her, the faith to do so—God has given him, or her, to Your Son as elect; and only in that way can this happen. That faith is a gift; faith is God's work; so I can only believe by God's grace, right?"

And if you say that, then I'd have to say, 'You're right! You have been listening well to what I've been teaching.' It's the clear teaching of this book. It's the clear teaching of John chapter 6—and all of the Bible. We are saved by grace alone: Sovereign grace, according to His choice and election. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." John 6, verse 44.

But that doesn't mean that *no one* can come; only that no one *can* come, no one *can* believe apart from God's grace. Since He is the source of faith, look to Him. Ask Him to draw you. If you want to be raised up and have everlasting life; if you want forgiveness of sin; if you want to be clean and justified, then throw yourself on His mercy—and ask Him to save you. Jesus said, "...the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." (Jn 6:37b). —You come to Him, He will not cast you out.

And how do we come? Well, we come in one simple way: Through faith alone. And if you do that you'll discover something: That you're one of the elect; and that He drew you; and you'll praise Him for that.

But if you don't, you don't seek the Lord, and you don't seek the salvation that He offers, and the salvation that was bought and obtained for all who believe at the cross, then you have no ground for complaints, none at all.

"It is finished!" is rich in meaning and encouragement. It is an implicit claim to deity by Jesus. He is the God-man. Only God could begin and complete the work of salvation. "Salvation is of the LORD." The prophet Jonah said that, (Jon 2:9), and it is the teaching of the Bible. What we could not do, God did, sending His own Son, His eternal Son to redeem us from sin and slavery by His death.

So, the statement, "It is finished!", is like a great *Maestro of Music* signing his completed masterpiece, *Soli Deo gloria*, "To God alone be the glory!" And since He alone did it, since, "Salvation is of the LORD", then we are all debtors to mercy alone. We are like Joshua the high priest in Zachariah chapter 3, verse 2, who is described as, "a brand plucked from the fire."

And we Gentiles are the most undeserving. God said, "I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me." (Rom10:20). Those are the Gentiles, and it's God's way of saying, 'I chose them. I did it.' And the right response to that, (to understanding God's sovereign grace from election to glorification), the right response is not conceit. We have nothing to boast of in ourselves, nothing at all. It's a mystery as to why He would choose any one of us. A mystery as to why He would choose me. No, the right response is not conceit—but humility and service from love.

Benjamin B. Warfield understood that. He was brilliant, (I've profited much from his writings). He left his studies in mathematics and physics at the University of Heidelberg to enroll at Princeton Seminary and train for the ministry.

On his first Sunday at the seminary; on a calm, September evening, he and a close friend pulled up some chairs before an open window in the hall there at Princeton where they lived. As students, they had traveled through Europe together, and they were there, reminiscing about their experiences: Old cities, hiking the Alps, when the friend asked him why he decided to enter the ministry. Warfield turned to him and said, "Because I think that in the work of the ministry I can do the most to repay the Lord for what He has done for me."

Well, that's true for all of us. —We're all in the ministry; every one of us has been gifted and placed in the body of Christ. 'Like a stone in the temple', we have our place, we have our functions. We are to be a witness for Him wherever we are. You're a minister out in the world. Some of you are businessmen, maybe you're a doctor, maybe you're a secretary, maybe you're a school teacher, maybe you're a laborer. God puts His people in all places in this world to be a Light. —That's a ministry.

You meet people I'll never meet, I'll never know. And you have the opportunity to have a ministry with them. We all are ministers. And what we are to do in this world, all that we are to do, is to be done out of gratitude for what He's done for us. We have our

duties to perform, it's true; but we should do them, not with a sense of duty, but with a sense of great love for the great love and compassion that He's shown us.

We certainly see that here as we consider: Christ did it all; and finished the work for us at the cross. We can add nothing to it; we can only receive it. And so we will do that: We will serve Him by His grace.

But that begins with faith in Christ—as God's Son and our Savior. If you've not believed, come to Him, trust in Him, and receive eternal life. And then, live for Him.

God has given all of us *time* to do that. Time seems to be working against us: The older you get, the faster it's going by. But it's His gift to us, and He's allotted us time in which to serve Him and use our lives to His glory.

But it is going by fast, and it will end. And when it is over, when we have finished our work, may it be inscribed: *Finished! Soli Deo gloria*? "To God alone be the glory!" God bless us to that end.

(Closing prayer) What a glorious thought that is, and what a great promise that is: 'All those Your Son bought He will never lose' He holds us fast; and will hold us fast to the end, bring us into the glory to come, and raise us up in the last day to a gloriously unspeakable future. Thank You for Your grace. It was all accomplished and bought and paid for at great suffering; and not just physical suffering, the eternal suffering of hell itself on the cross. We thank You, Father, for that sacrifice.

We thank You, Lord Jesus, for coming so willingly, and coming with, 'the joy set before You of obtaining a people for Yourself.' Thank You for grace. May we live lives that reflect that grace. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

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