

IT IS FINISHED

A LENTEN STUDY OF CHRIST'S FINAL WORDS ON THE CROSS

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

It Is Finished is a six-week Lenten study designed to assist you in going as deep into the study as you choose. There are a variety of sections and practices for you to engage in as you revisit Jesus' final words from the cross. Use the sections that work best for you and your group and/or develop new spiritual practices throughout this season of Lent.

OPENING PRAYER

Recite these historic prayers to prepare your heart for the hearing of Jesus' final words.

BEFORE WE START

Before you begin the study, ponder these questions.

VIDEO LESSON

Watch the lesson. If you want to explore the content deeper, watch the bonus conversation attached to each lesson.

INTO THE WORD

Read aloud the verses for the week. There is profound power in reading Scripture aloud.

TWEETABLE WORD

Use the hashtag #itisfinished on social media as you share quotes, Scripture and/or what you've learned from each lesson throughout Lent.

AFTER WORDS

Take time to answer these questions. Answering them can take the form of a small group discussion or a personal devotional for Lent. Through answering and discussing these questions, the content becomes personal.

OTHER WORDS

Read and discuss the quotes of these famous church leaders, which are centered around the topic of each lesson.

YOUR WORDS

This section is an invitation to journal your thoughts after each lesson. This makes for a great practice to engage in throughout Lent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN.....	3
WEEK 1 : Forgive Them.....	4
WEEK 2 : Paradise.....	12
WEEK 3 : Family.....	20
WEEK 4 : OMG.....	28
WEEK 5 : Thirst.....	36
WEEK 6 : Final Breaths.....	44

WEEK 1

FORGIVE

THEM

*Father, forgive them, for
they do not know what
they are doing.*

Luke 23:34

OPENING PRAYER

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient [people]. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. - *United Methodist Hymnal*



BEFORE WE START

As Christ has forgiven you, is there someone that you need to forgive in your heart?

Take a moment to consider this.



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson One of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud Luke 23:32-34.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. - 1 Timothy 1:15

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21

“Jesus had forgiveness on His mind while He was on the cross, and He still has forgiveness on his mind...”

“Thinking about forgiveness makes me contemplate the unfathomable love of Christ.”

“Our job is to have forgiveness on our minds.”

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

Forgiveness means different things to different people. How do you define it? Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines it as: “To stop feeling anger toward someone who has done something wrong; to stop blaming someone.” Is this a proper definition of Biblical forgiveness?

In the video, Jason quotes from 1 Timothy 1:15 where Paul writes, *Christ Jesus come into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst*. Why do you think Paul sees himself this way? Is there even such a thing? Explain.

Jesus is executed in a very painful and methodical way. Crucifixion was an excruciating method by which to die. Still, the first words out of Jesus’ mouth are words of forgiveness. In the words of the great Charles Wesley song, “How can this be?”

Have you ever considered the notion that Jesus is still teaching us from the cross? That His words are not haphazard mumblings of a dying man, but final teachings of God in flesh? Does this change the way you read the crucifixion account?

Lent is a time of preparation of our hearts going into Easter. How do Jesus' words of *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing* prepare us for Easter?

According to Jason, our job is to have forgiveness on our minds the way Christ did. What two things happen when forgiveness stays at the forefront of our thoughts?

On a personal level, how do you know that you are forgiven?

What is the relationship between love and forgiveness? Do you have to love someone to forgive them? Can you love someone and not forgive them?

If there are people in your life you have not forgiven, what is the challenge there? Be honest because some situations are more challenging than others. Is there any way to move forward in forgiving them?

OTHER WORDS

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

- **Martin Luther King Jr.**

“Forgiveness is the remission of sins. For it is by this that what has been lost, and was found, is saved from being lost again.”

- **Saint Augustine**

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”

- **Corrie Ten Boom**

“And you know, when you’ve experienced grace and you feel like you’ve been forgiven, you’re a lot more forgiving of other people. You’re a lot more gracious to others.”

- **Rick Warren**

“Forgiveness is God’s command.”

- **Martin Luther**

YOUR WORDS:

WEEK 2

PARADISE

*Truly I tell you, today you will be with
Me in paradise.*

Luke 23:43

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner.

- The Jesus Prayer



BEFORE WE START

Recite the Jesus prayer as you breathe. (Inhale) "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God" (Exhale) "Have mercy on me, the sinner." Do this 10 times. How does this prepare your heart and mind for study?

Explain your experience.



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson Two of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud Luke 23:35-43.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

Jesus, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom. - Luke 23:42

"Sometimes seeing God at work in the world requires us to see what shouldn't be here but is."

"For our sakes, God went where He had no business to go to fix a problem that we had no business asking to be fixed."

"Are ye able to remember, when a thief lifts up his eyes, that his pardoned soul is worthy of a place in paradise?"

"Either we live our lives with question of 'God, what can You do for me?' or we just plead 'Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'"

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

David describes old hymns from his childhood surrounding the time of Lent and Good Friday. Are there songs that you identify with this time? What are they? How have they impacted you?

What memories of Lent and Good Friday do you have?

This wasn't an ordinary execution. Jesus was well known in the area, so his death stirred a crowd. There were those there to cheer and others to mourn. What do you think went through the minds of the two criminals who saw the crowd's reaction?

Dying is a very personal thing. Yet the one criminal interjects in the conversation to defend Jesus? Why do you think that he does this?

“Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” Why is this statement so profound?

David says, “God is unfair.” Do you believe this? Why or why not?

Do we ever pre-judge people, labeling some as “scum” or “unworthy” and others as “good” and “deserving”? How does our vision of people match up with God’s grace shown to this criminal?

Given the definition and history of the word “paradise” in the Bible, what do you think Jesus really meant by telling the criminal that he would be “in paradise”?

What kind of hope do you have of paradise? How do you envision it?

Define God’s grace.

Describe how God’s grace was at work here in this story. How is God’s grace at work in your story?

OTHER WORDS

“Love is a portion of the soul itself, and it is of the same nature as the celestial breathing of the atmosphere of paradise.”

- **Victor Hugo**

“He that does good for good’s sake seeks neither paradise nor reward, but he is sure of both in the end.”

- **William Penn**

“Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man could stake his life on it a thousand times.”

- **Martin Luther**

“O God, ‘in the midst of wrath, remember mercy!’ Be glorified in our reformation, not in our destruction!”

- **John Wesley**

YOUR WORDS:

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Horizontal lines for writing on page 21.

WEEK 3

FAMILY

*“Woman, here is your son...”
“...Here is your mother.”*

John 19:26-27

OPENING PRAYER

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, That my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, That my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, That I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, To defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, That I always may be holy. - Saint Augustine



BEFORE WE START

The Holy Spirit gives us strength in the most difficult of times. What do you need the Holy Spirit to do in you right now?



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson Three of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud John 19:23-27.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

“They’re playing games in the shadow of the cross. Many people are doing the same today, playing games with their lives.”

“Even on the cross, Jesus had other people’s interest in mind.”

“When the power of sin is destroyed, love has no limits.”

“When I’m with my family, as one who has the Holy Spirit within, caring for them and loving them, I’m on holy ground – I’m in the holy land.”

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you. - 1 Peter 5:7

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

The Roman soldiers show complete indifference to others’ pain and suffering. Are there ways that we have become numb to the pain and suffering to those around us? In our community?

Do you find yourself casting your life on Jesus or on someone or something else?

When you see Old Testament passages like Psalm 22:18, which says, *They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment*, fulfilled in the life of Jesus, what does that make you think? Does it impact you to realize that old things written came to life with Jesus?

With some of His family gathered at the foot of the cross, Jesus instructs John to take care of His mother. In the midst of pain, Jesus is still looking out for His family. What does that say about God's view of family? What is your view of family?

Notice the absence of any of Jesus' siblings at the cross, and that Jesus asks His cousin, John, to take care of His mother. How do you think Jesus' view of family contrasts with His siblings' view of family?

Jason says, "When we are loving our family in the way Christ would, and when we're loving others with His love, when we are casting down our lives for our family, wherever we are, that place is holy — it's sacred ground made possible only because and through the love of Christ!" How does love like this make things "holy"?

How do we cast our anxieties upon Christ as 1 Peter 5:7 calls us to do? What does it mean to be without anxiety?

Jason says that we are to cast our lives down for Jesus and for our families. From a practical standpoint, what does that look like in your life?

OTHER WORDS

“The great danger for family life, in the midst of any society whose idols are pleasure, comfort and independence, lies in the fact that people close their hearts and become selfish.”

- **Pope John Paul II**

“You have not chosen one another, but I have chosen you for one another.”

- **C.S. Lewis**

“I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.”

- **Martin Luther**

“Our anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strengths.”

- **Charles H. Spurgeon**

“Lord, grant that I might not so much seek to be loved as to love.”

- **Francis of Assisi**

YOUR WORDS:

WEEK 4

OMG

*“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”
(which means “My God, My God, why
have You forsaken Me?”)*

Mark 15:34

OPENING PRAYER

Have mercy on us, O God, have mercy on us, for in You our souls take refuge. We will take refuge in the shadow of Your wings until the disaster has passed. Our hearts are steadfast, O God, our hearts are steadfast... We will praise You, O Lord, among the nations; we will sing of You among the peoples. For great is Your love, reaching to the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies. - adapted from Psalm 57



BEFORE WE START

Take a few moments to sit in silence. What heavy things are on your heart? What prayers do you need to lift up to God?



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson Four of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud Matthew 27:45-56.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

“Oh my God... One way of using this is as a place holder; the other is a cry to the Divine to enter into our place.”

“Because of the cross, it's so easy to be forgiven that we can miss the absolute destruction that sin causes in our lives.”

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21

“Sin separates... Jesus died so it doesn't have to separate us anymore...”

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

Be honest, how often do you use some incarnation of OMG? When is it a profound usage and when is it a verbal crutch?

What does this say about Jesus' humanity that Jesus is crying out in loneliness and pain?

The Trinity is a difficult concept to wrap our minds around. What is your understanding of the relationship between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

Define Sin.

Do you have experiences with sin separating or destroying your relationships? Why did it separate/destroy that relationship?

Do we think of sin as a big deal or something akin to a minor infraction? How does our view of sin impact the way we treat it?

Have you ever considered the emotional weight of sin that Jesus carried? What do you think that was like?

Sin separates so much that even Jesus feels the pain of it. Do you ever feel separated from God? Explain.

Sin is a nasty thing. It is something to be hated. Do we hate sin or do we tolerate it? Explain.

Including the part of the story about Elijah seems trivial. Can you think of why the author of Matthew includes it?

WEEK 5

THIRST

"I am thirsty."

John 19:28

OPENING PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. – The Lord’s Prayer



BEFORE WE START

As we talk about Jesus’ thirst from the cross, remember what he said about a different thirst. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
– Matthew 5:6



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson Five of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud John 19:28-29.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

“Jesus experienced real pain, real suffering, real agony, there was real blood... He is God and He is human.”

“Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.’”

“Because He experienced pain, shame and thirst, all those who place their trust in Him will never have to go thirsty again.”

“Jesus doesn’t ever offer us the cheap stuff. The kind of water He gives is expensive; it came at a high price.”

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

This entire passage tells the tale of Jesus’ humanity. While we are so aware of our own physical needs, do we ever consider that Jesus had physical needs and limitations? Or do we conceive of Jesus as a superman, impervious to physical wants, desires or needs?

John 1 tells us *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...* How would the Bible define “Word”? Can you describe what it means for the Word to become flesh? What does it mean for you?

Jason talks about the popular philosophy of Gnosticism at the time of Jesus. Do you think that Gnosticism, this idea that spiritual things are good while physical things are bad, is still popular or common today? If so, where do you find examples of this?

Jason makes this statement, "Throughout the gospels and especially John, Jesus and water go hand in hand." Can you think of instances throughout Scripture where this is true? Why?

John 4:14 says, *But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.* Describe this kind of water.

Are you spiritually dry? Are you thirsty for something only Jesus at work in you can quench?

Jesus was offered cheap wine, while He only offers high-quality, thirst-quenching "water". Have we ever taken the cheaper alternative to Jesus? Have we filled ourselves with what only satisfies for a moment?

What kind of "water" are we offering others who are in desperate need of relief?

OTHER WORDS

“To know the Cross is not merely to know our own sufferings. For the Cross is the sign of salvation, and no man is saved by his own sufferings. To know the Cross is to know that we are saved by the sufferings of Christ; more, it is to know the love of Christ, who underwent suffering and death in order to save us. It is, then, to know Christ.”

- Thomas Merton

“The body of the Word, then, being a real human body, in spite of its having been uniquely formed from a virgin, was of itself mortal and, like other bodies, liable to death. But the indwelling of the Word loosed it from this natural liability, so that corruption could not touch it. Thus it happened that two opposite marvels took place at once: the death of all was consummated in the Lord’s body; yet, because the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished.”

- Athanasius of Alexandria

“Incarnate Deity has no wall of fire about it. ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,’ is the joyful proclamation of God as He appears in human flesh.”

- Charles H. Spurgeon

“Behold Him, all ye that pass by, The bleeding Prince of life and peace! Come, sinners, see your Maker died and say, was ever grief like His? Come, feel with me His blood applied; my Lord, my Love is crucified.”

- Charles Wesley

YOUR WORDS:

WEEK 6

FINAL

BREATHS

"It is finished."

John 19:30

*"Father, into Your hands
I commit My spirit."*

Luke 23:46

OPENING PRAYER

I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what Thou wilt, rank me with whom Thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for Thee or laid aside for Thee, exalted for Thee or brought low for Thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Thou art mine, and I am thine.

— Covenant Prayer by John Wesley



BEFORE WE START

Be silent. Now take a few minutes and focus on nothing but your breathing. After a few minutes, think about Christ's final breaths. What comes to your mind and how does it make you feel?



VIDEO LESSON

View Lesson Six of the *It Is Finished* study.



IN THE WORD

Read aloud
Luke 23:44-49
and
John 19:30-37.



TWEETABLE WORDS

Quotes from the video:

“Into Your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, Lord, my faithful God.”

“Be grateful for accounts of Scripture that don't fully match up. They give us a glimpse that real life actually happened.”

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again.”

“I've always had in the back of my head this idea that Jesus chose this, that he cooperated with his own execution. That kind of love will mess you up. That kind of determination will breakdown everything in front of you.”

AFTER WORD | Explore the following questions:

“*Father into Your hands I commit My spirit*” is a declaration. What declaration do you live by? What declaration will you die by?

Compare these last words of Jesus to Psalm 31. How are they similar? How are they different?

David said in the video that Jesus drops many “not-so-subtle Easter eggs revealing that He is the Messiah.” Can you think of some specific things He said or did that pointed to His Divinity?

Why do you think the author of Luke records this as His last words?

Have you ever noticed before the differences between the Gospel accounts? Jesus' final words are an example of that. Does it bother you? Does it inform you?

Do your best to describe what Jesus meant by "*It is finished.*"

David talks about how Jesus cooperated with His own execution. Have you ever conceived of the cross this way? How does this kind of love "mess you up"?

C.S. Lewis wrote these words in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* regarding the innocent character Aslan dying in the place of the guilty boy Edmund, "Death itself would start working backward." How did Jesus dying for us cause death to work backward?

Notice in both Gospel accounts, after Jesus uttered these phrases, He breathed his last. Jesus knew it was coming to an end. Describe what you think was rushing through His mind as He saw His task to completion.

Finishing this study, in what ways have you seen Christ's suffering? Has it made you appreciate His sacrifice differently? Has your concept of sin changed? Why or why not?

OTHER WORDS

“Jesus Christ lived in the midst of His enemies. At the end all His disciples deserted Him. On the Cross, He was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause He had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes.”

- **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

“Even on the cross He did not hide Himself from sight; rather, He made all creation witness to the presence of its Maker.”

- **Athanasius of Alexandria**

“Just as Christian came up to the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, fell from off his back, and began to tumble down the hill, and so it continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre. There it fell in, and I saw it no more!”

- **John Bunyan**

To shame our sins He blushed in blood; He closed His eyes to show us God; Let all the world fall down and know; That none but God such love can show”

- **Bernard of Clairvaux**

YOUR WORDS:

IT IS FINISHED

It Is Finished by pastors David Dorn and Jason Nelson is a six-week study built around the final words of Jesus from the cross. This study, designed to be done either as a personal devotional or in a small group environment, gives the viewer the ability to engage and respond to the words of Christ. Each lesson dives into the historical and practical significance surrounding each of his phrases while giving the viewer different spiritual practices to participate in throughout Lent.

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