

## **“It is finished!” Based on John 18-19.**

Probably you know it. Most certainly that you have heard about it. Most of you have heard it many times. But we still tend to forget about it. For it sounds almost impossible. At least unbelievable. We are afraid to believe it.

What are we talking about? About the fact that you are loved more that you would ever deserve. That you are loved more that you could ever hope for. That you are loved by this all powerful and eternal Being who is love itself.

That you were loved before you were born. That you have been loved since your conception. That you are loved every day and every minute of your live. That you will be loved till the end of your live, and then... then you will meet the One who loves you and will be with Him forever.

As Paul apostle puts it: “Nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:39) We tend to forget about it, and Good Friday is a great time to reflect on God’s love, to see how He reveals it to us.

How can we know that someone loves us? Sure, they can say it to us. But sometimes we may doubt their words. What would be a stronger proof? That’s right, actions. If someone shows their love with their actions, that is how we are assured that what they say is true.

The Triune God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit says that He loves you. But He also goes to incredible length to reveal His love in actions. What comes to mind when we think about God revealing His love in His actions?

Jesus life, death and resurrection are the obvious ones. As John so wonderfully put it: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

That’s a great answer, but the Bible reveals even more. To us is given even fuller a picture of what God’s love is like. Let me bring up a few verses. Listen carefully, for that is a very big reality that is revealed to us.

Jesus tells us that those who are blessed by the Father will inherit “the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Mat 25:34) Paul gives thanks to God the Father “who chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” (Eph. 1:3-4)

Peter and John speak about the Lamb of God, who was foreknown and slain before the foundation of the world – for us. (1Pet 1:19, Rev 13:8). What is

going on we may wonder? What are these things being done and decided already before the creation of the world? Everything happens according to the will of the Almighty God. Thus, already before the creation of the world He knew what He was going to do and what He was going to accomplish.

From the very beginning the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, whom we know as Jesus Christ, was destined to accomplish His mission, to reveal God's love towards us and to open doors for God's people so that we could receive the eternal life.

Do you remember what were the last words of Jesus? "It is finished". The word 'finished' doesn't express the full meaning of what Jesus said. It wasn't simply a relief that all sufferings are over.

There was so much more. The meaning of the word 'finished' is more along the lines of "mission accomplished", or "to bring an activity to successful finish". This is what Jesus did on the cross.

He brought to the successful finish what God had began already before the creation of the world. He had loved us from the very beginning, and now He had revealed the incredible depth of His love.

He knew that we will fail Him. This is, why Peter and John speak about Jesus as the Lamb slain already before the foundation of the world. The Son always knew what His love towards us will cost Him.

When our first parents failed, when they turned away from true God, when sin and death came into the world, that was the Son of God who came looking for them. "Where are you, Adam?"

He still comes looking for all of us. For all people. "Where are you?" That was the Son who gave Adam this promise, that He will defeat sin and death, even as it will cost Him His life. He was ready to do that, to show His love in action.

God kept repeating this promise throughout ages. And finally, two millennia ago, He was born as one of us. Born with the one purpose. To die. To die on the cross. Revealing His incredible love and redeeming us from sin and death.

How can you know that God loves you? For He not only has said it, but He has showed that you are more important for Him than His own life. Where else can you find such love? Who else will love you so unconditionally and fervently?

We just heard what happened during these last hours in Jesus' life. And we have these two contrasting plot lines emerging side by side. Jesus and us, His beloved human creatures. How do we look in these plot lines?

We have all the embarrassing bouquet of human vices on display. And it is not only people back then, it is us as well. We are no different. So, what do we have here? We have Judas, who betrayed His saviour.

How often do we betray our Lord, how often we trade Him to something that we desire more than Him? We have the leaders, who were afraid that Jesus would take away their power and influence.

What about us, how often are we ready to forget about Jesus, so that only we could keep things the way we want them to be. We have the disciples. They all run away. 'Faithful and courageous' followers who had just promised that even if they must die, they will not deny Jesus.

How about our good intentions? To live as Christians in words and actions, to share the Gospel about Jesus? How often we are like Peter keeping silent and hoping that no one will notice that we are disciples of this mocked Jesus?

We have Pilate. He knew what the right thing to do was. But his selfish interests triumphed. Justice is important, by my well-being is more important. How about us? How often we know what the right thing to do is, but... we wash our hands pretending that it doesn't apply to us.

We have the mob shouting in blind hatred: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" As one of our songs puts it so wonderfully, – we can hear our voices in this crowd as well. The ugly list goes on and on.

This is the picture of us ... of fallen human beings, whom God so loved that He didn't spare His own life to save us. What kind of love is that? No wonder it is hard to believe it is true.

But then we have the other plotline in these events of the last hours. Jesus. On His way to accomplish His mission. All the way from the very beginning He has been determined to reveal His love towards us.

Nothing could stop Him. Nothing could shake Jesus' commitment to us. We could see it especially during the last hours of His life. Judas lead a cohort of soldiers to capture Jesus.

However, when Jesus stood before them and said: "I am Him," remember what happened? They all drew back and fell on the ground. They couldn't even stand before Him... they didn't capture Jesus. Jesus chose to go with them.

When Peter tries to protect Jesus, He stops Him: "Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?" "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions [more than 100,000] of

angels?” (Mat 26:53) No one forced Jesus to go to the cross. Jesus chose to go there. To do whatever it takes to get it finished.

But the message of these words “it is finished” is not confined with Jesus’ mission only. These words have the deepest meaning for us as well. On that cross by voluntarily giving up His life for us, Jesus, we could say, completed our creation.

By taking upon Himself everything that is wrong with each one of us, He made us good, He made us complete, He made us perfect. He did everything to prepare us for the eternal life in the presence of the Holy God.

This is what these words mean to us. You are made good in God’s eyes. Jesus did it. Regardless of how much you have sinned, or how much you have been shaped and broken by the sins of others, now you are made good. Very good.

It is easy to remember these three words “It is finished!” Can you say them? Now, I want you to remember to use these words in your own life. How? It is very easy. Every day we encounter situations and thoughts that remind us that we live in broken world and that we are fallen people. Not perfect.

When you are exhausted trying to manage all your family responsibilities and begin to look at yourself as failure, say aloud: “It is finished!” I don’t need to prove anything, I am good enough for Jesus.

When you worry about failing to achieve your own goals and standards, or the standards set by the society, don’t worry, say it: “It is finished!” Jesus has made me perfect, He values and loves me as I am.

When you realize that you haven’t lived your life as you should have and are afraid what will this Holy God say when you die, say it: “It is finished!” Jesus has done everything to bring me into His Kingdom.

Whatever worries you may have, whatever concerns, keep reminding yourself: “It is finished! Jesus has taken care of everything. He loves me, always has, always will.” And as Paul exclaimed, you can be sure that ...

... “neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39) This is most certainly true.

Amen.