

### Famous Last Words #3 - "It is finished"

We are studying the last words of Christ as He hung on the cross and today we are looking at time when He said, *"It is finished."* The Bible says, *"With that, He bowed His head and He gave up His spirit."* John 19:30

Now, when Jesus said it is finished, He used the Greek word **tetelestai** (te-tel-les-tai). Τετέλεσται and it can be translated in these ways.

It can be translated "to end" or "now complete" or "to discharge a debt". Jesus, knowing that all was complete, said to the Father what really was a word of victory, tetelestai, it is finished; it is complete. *"I have done what You sent Me to do."*

If someone hired you to do a job, when you got done you would tell them, "tetelestai" *"I have finished the project that you sent me to do."*

It was used in another way, when someone would bring a sacrificial lamb before a priest, he would inspect the animal to see if it was worthy of sacrifice. If the animal didn't have any blemishes, the priest would say tetelestai. *"This is worthy to be sacrificed. This animal is perfect."*

Jesus said, "Tetelestai. It is finished." **What was finished?** The perfect work of Jesus Christ was finished, and He said to the Father, *"I've finished the work that You sent me to accomplish. It is finished."*

And Jesus is saying to you this morning, *"Now, the debt has been paid in full. There is nothing left. Your sin has been paid for by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Tetelestai."*

This was the perfect sacrifice. Nothing more needs to be added. Now, when you place your faith in the perfect work of Jesus Christ, tetelestai. It is enough. It has been finished and accomplished.

Jesus did everything that the Father sent Him to do, **but you have not**. You still have some unfinished business, and so do I. If you are still breathing, you have unfinished business.

**As long as you are alive**, God still has, according to Jeremiah 29:11, plans for you, plans to bless you, plans to prosper you, plans to give you a hope and a future. God has His good and perfect will planned out for you. You, my friend, still have some unfinished business.

Many years ago I owned a roofing company in California. And I got a call from a woman that their house had a leak. So I went over to look at it and in their kitchen they had a 35 gallon garbage can full of water! It was raining and the water was just pouring in.

And what had happened is they had a small leak, just a drip, no big deal they will take care of it later. It got to dripping even faster but they put a pan under it and it wasn't a big deal – easy enough to walk around the pan.

You already know the rest of the story – right? They let it go and let it go until it had become an **enormous problem**. Now they would not only need to get the roof fixed but they would have to replace the ceiling and all the ruined sheetrock.

Now maybe you have some small thing you need to take care of, it's no big deal; it's a very small matter. But if you don't deal with it quickly and with integrity, that issue may grow and become an enormous problem.

**You have unfinished business in your life**, and maybe God is going to call you today to take care of it. Let the word of God speak to you.

Jesus was talking to the church in Sardis in Revelation 3:1-2, and this is what He said, *“I know your deeds. You have a reputation of being alive but you are dead.”*

Maybe you have a reputation of having a good **marriage**, and everyone says, *“They are a happily married couple,”* but you know deep down that there's no real intimacy in your marriage. You have a reputation of being alive, but in fact, you are dead.

Let's talk about finances. People say, “You have a nice car. You have a nice house.” You have a reputation for being **financially strong**, but the truth is, you are mired in financial debt, and it is hurting you day in and day out.

**Spiritually** speaking, people may look at you and say, *“Certainly, he's close to God”*, but the truth is, you know your relationship with God is flat. It's dead. There's no real intimacy.

Jesus said, *“You have a reputation for being alive, but you are really dead.”* Verse 2, He said, *“Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.”*

You have some unfinished business. **Wake up**. Strengthen what remains. The problem may be small today, but over time, it will be enormous. God wants to help you complete the task. To be able to say “Tetelestai,” it's finished. It's been done.

In Acts 20:24, Paul said, *“I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.”*

What was the task? He said, “The task for me is to testify to the gospel of God’s grace.” That’s what I’m supposed to do. I have some unfinished business, and so do you.

**In your notes**, I’ve given you a place to write down what your unfinished business would be. **Identify what your unfinished business is.** If you still have a breath in you, you have some unfinished business. God is not through with you, yet.

Identify your unfinished business. Some may say, *“Well, Bob, Baxter Church is my church home, I’m kind of committed here.”* **Really?** Maybe you have some unfinished business.

Are you involved in any way? In the **Men’s** program? The **Women’s** program? **VBS?** Maybe you are helping with the **Youth** or **Children’s** ministries? The **Sunday school** needs people to step up and help. If you are not involved in anything, you have some unfinished business.

Maybe this is your church and you are here kind of observing. You are receiving, you are a consumer. **Receiving is fine but God also calls you to give back**, and if you are not serving anywhere. You have some unfinished business.

God calls you to use your gifts to minister to His family of Christ. You have unfinished business.

Maybe, **financially**, you have unfinished business. It’s time for you to seek God, get on a budget, plug the hole in your boat, so you stop sinking, and to honor Him with a Biblical plan for the resources He trusts you with.

Maybe, you made a commitment to tithe. Biblically, the Bible calls us to worship the Lord through the local church with ten percent of what He trusts us with. Then, He’ll pour out blessings upon you.

Maybe you had **good intentions**, but you are not tithing. You had good intentions, but you haven’t followed through.

Maybe your **marriage** is suffering, and it’s easy to point your finger at your spouse, and maybe God says, *“No, there’s a finger pointing back at you, and rather than criticizing, you need to get on your knees and repent, and let the Spirit of God correct you.”* You have a reputation of being alive, but in fact, you are really dead.

It could be that God called you to give something to **someone in need**, and you have yet to obey. You have unfinished business. Maybe there's someone that God wants you to **reach out to** and share with them the love of Jesus Christ, and you haven't done it.

Identify your unfinished business and let the presence and the voice of God speak to you about finishing strong. How do we finish strong? The Bible teaches us two principles that we'll apply.

**I. To Finish strong**, God's word teaches us to **make a decision to commit** to do what you know God wants you to do. To make a decision to step across the line and to say, *"I am deciding to commit."*

You are where you are today because of decisions you made yesterday, and you will be where you are tomorrow because of decisions you make today. And, let me please remind you that **indecision in a decision, as well.**

**Commit to finishing a decision.** Jesus illustrated this thought when He told this parable.

Luke 14:28-30, *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish it.'"*

**What do you do?** You seek God. You seek wise counsel. You listen to those that you Biblically trust. You seek God in His word, and when you hear from Him, you make a commitment.

Don't wait to you have all the facts, we won't ever know all the facts. If we did, it wouldn't be a faith decision. Commit to a finishing decision. Jesus did.

When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and He prayed, *"Father, if it is possible, may this cup of suffering be removed from Me."* He was saying, *"If there is any other way to accomplish what it is You want accomplished please let's do it that way."*

And then, what did He do? He made the decision that **no matter what**, *"I will do what the Father sent Me to do."* He said, *"Nevertheless, not my will, but the will of God be done in my life."* Matthew 26:39

It didn't matter how much pain, or how much ridicule, or how much torture, He was going to have to endure. He made the finishing decision. No turning back. *"Your will be done, Lord. Not mine."*

If you want to become the man or woman of God that God wants you to be you're going to have to learn how to step across a line called commitment.

You have unfinished business, and you may be robbing others of some of the blessings that God wants to give. You need to step across a line called commitment.

How does this play out in our life? There are at least **two benefits**.

1. A finished decision **motivates** you to endure short term pain for long term gain. It motivates you to endure some of the hassles.

Hebrews 12:2 says, *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Why? For the joy set before Him. The finished decision empowered Him to endure the short-term pain.

2. A finished decision **reduces** negative influence. It doesn't make it go away, but it steals its power. It silences the voices of the critics. Even when the critics are your own family members or your closest friends.

Jesus said, *"I've come to give my life."* Peter said, *"No! Don't die!"* Jesus said, *"Get behind me, Satan."* It weakens the negative influence. You have unfinished business. It's time to finish. Tetelestai. It is finished. It is completed. The first thing that we do is, we commit to a finishing decision.

**II.** The second thing that we do is we **execute finishing actions**. Or as we say in Texas, **"Get er done!"** We commit, and then we execute. We fight to the finish.

You commit to the decision and then you execute, you go through with it. 2 Corinthians 8:11, *"Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means."* You don't just hope to do it. You take some forward steps.

Remember the movie, *"What about Bob?"* Bob's a guy who couldn't do anything without his doctor. What does the doctor tell him? **Take baby steps.** Take a step in that direction. If God has called you to do something, take a step in that direction today. Finish the work.

Here's a tip, when you feel that God has called you to a certain assignment, write down the **top three things** in the order that you believe God wants you to do them.

Now, it may take a hundred or more steps to complete the assignment, but when you write down the top three, it brings accountability and it brings bite size steps for you to take in that direction.

Commit and execute and don't give up. In the movie, *"The Passion"*, there was a scene where Jesus was taking a beating for our sins, and He fell down to the ground and they stopped when He was on the ground.

When you saw that it made you want to yell, **"Stay down."** But what did He do? He knew His work wasn't finished, there was more pain for Him to endure on the way to the finish line.

So, what did He do? He could have stayed down, but He stood back up to finish the work. Some of you have fallen down, and with the **same power** in you as the power that raised Jesus from the dead, **He calls you to stand back up and fight another day, to say to your spiritual enemy, "This fight is not over. I will finish the race and complete the task that the Lord Jesus has given me."**

In 1968 in Mexico City in the Olympics, there was a runner named John Steven Aquari. He was from Tanzania, and during the race he fell down and was badly injured. They carried him off in a stretcher. The race went on without him.

After the race was finished, the stadium was clearing out. About a third of the crowd had already left. Then there was the sound of a siren as an ambulance drove up to the track, and the injured runner got out, and with blood coming through his bandages, he ran to finish the race.

The race was already over, and yet, he still ran. Afterwards, a reporter asked him, *"Why did you re-enter the race when the race was finished?"* and he said, ***"My race was not finished."*** He said, *"My country did not send me 7,000 miles to start a race, my country sent me 7,000 miles to finish the race."*

Jesus didn't come to earth to just start a race, but to see it through. And we were not created to just live a meaningless life – we have a race to run.

You have some unfinished business. Step across a line called **commitment** and **execute**, and let God fulfill His perfect plan for your life. Tetelestai. In my heart, the decision is finished. Now, it's time to execute.

Ask yourself, “What is your unfinished business?” It could be that there is **sin** in your life. It’s been there a long time, and today, you make a decision. No more. It could be a **relational** decision. It could be a **spiritual** decision.

It could be a **financial** decision. I don’t know what it would be for you, but there are probably some things that come to your mind and you need to make a commitment to step across the line, to step across a line called commitment, and then to execute what God puts before you.

Philippians 1:6, “*Be confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it out to completion.*” God wants to finish what He started in your life.

There are those of you that need to say, “Yeah, I have unfinished business. **But no more.** I’m stepping across a line of commitment and saying, ‘Lord, I’m going to do what You called me to do. I know what it is and I’m going to do it.

Now, Lord I pray that you will give me the power to execute. *“I pray that You would bring this to completion. Lord, that I would be able to complete what You started in me.”*

**Do this.** As you pray, tell Him you’re in a hundred percent. No turning back. If you are ready and you mean business, make your promise to Him. *“I commit. I will do it, Lord.”* Step over a line called commitment.

Now, pray and ask God to show you what He wants you to do. It may be one thing. It may be a list of a hundred things. **Whatever it is, pray for Him to show you the order He wants you to do it, and then, do it.** Even if it’s just a baby step in that direction.

The most important decision that you are ever going to make is, **“Who’s going to be first in my life?”** Really.

Joshua said it this way, “*Choose for yourselves this day who you are going to serve.*” He said, “*As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*” Joshua 24:15. What about you? Not just in word, but in a life with integrity.

Who are you going to serve? Are you going to finish well? Are you going to be able to come to the end and say, “tetelestai”?