

Week of May 6-12

## **PAID IN FULL**

**Scripture Reading:** Read John chapter 19

The gospel writers record seven sayings Jesus uttered while on the cross. Although it's impossible to determine the exact order for the seven, by comparing the four gospels, we can make a reasonable guess. **1) *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*** **2) *Dear woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.*** **3) *I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*** The final four sayings were uttered in the last few minutes of Jesus' life right around 3:00 PM on Good Friday. **4) *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani – which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** **5) *I am thirsty.*** **6) *It is finished.*** **7) *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.***

Of these seven sayings, John records the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> in today's chapter reading. While each saying carries weight, it is the sixth one that has particular significance to John's gospel. Several times in John (John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4), Jesus makes reference to finishing the work the Father gave him to do. As he hung there on the cross in the last minutes of his life, Jesus was able to declare with conviction, "It is finished." Don't miss this. His was a cry, not of defeat, but of victory. It's probably why, in addition to fulfilling Scripture, Jesus stated that he was thirsty. He wanted to be heard by all present when he declared "It is finished," and receiving a drink to quench his parched throat and mouth would be necessary in advance of his cry. After his victory shout, Jesus uttered saying #7 and gave up his life, not as a defeated martyr but as a victorious savior!

The phrase "It is finished" had additional significance in the 1<sup>st</sup> century that is worth noting as well. When a person fell into debt, they would be thrown into a debtor's prison and a list of all their debts would be posted near their cell. When the debts had been paid off, the list would be stamped, "Paid in full" and the person released. The phrase, "Paid in full," is a translation of the same word Jesus cried out on the cross when he said, "It is finished." Do you see the connection? All of our sinful debts were figuratively nailed to the cross, so when Jesus declared, "It is finished," he was making it known that our debts had been paid in full! We are forgiven of our sins. We are no longer in spiritual debt.

Tragically, some Christians live their spiritual lives as if they're still in debt. As a result they try to do good works to pay for their sinful mistakes. Such works are called dead works in Scripture and are not acceptable to God because they do not flow from grace. We are called to trust that "Paid in Full" means just that. There is nothing left to pay. We are simply called to believe and walk in his forgiveness.

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Take some time to reflect on whether you're still living in a debtor's prison today and, if so, ask the Lord to forgive you for not trusting in his completed work. Pray for spiritual eyes to see what Jesus did on the cross on your behalf.

**Take-away:** *Jesus didn't make a partial payment on your sin...he paid in full!*