

# THE FIRST 15

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Today is Thursday, May 23 and we are studying the Gospel of John chapter nineteen.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Blessed Lord God, In the morning I come to this quiet place and draw near to your side. I calm my mind, slow my breathing and center myself completely on your holy presence. Open the scriptures to me and communicate the personal message you have for me today from the Gospel of John. Walk with me on this journey to the cross of Calvary and reveal your amazing grace and relentless love. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. John 19:28-34***

## REFLECTION

Jesus cries out in thirst from the cross and is given vinegar to drink not water. This fulfills the prophecies from the Psalms which say, "For my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:21). A sponge filled with vinegar is placed on the stalk of a hyssop plant. At the first Passover the traditional herb hyssop was used in a powerful way. The hyssop plant was dipped in the blood of the Passover Lamb and spread on the door frame at the moment death would pass over the Israelites and strike down the firstborn children of the Egyptians. Jesus is offered hyssop at the moment of his "passing over" into death. The blood of the Paschal Lamb Jesus was shed for the sins of all the world.

When he receives this vinegar drink, Jesus says, "It is finished." A casual reading may imply that he has given up. It might sound like he relented. "Things didn't go well, if only it had gone differently, but here we are at the end. It is finished."

Jesus' exclamation "It is finished" should be heard in a different way. It is an exclamation of triumph and achievement. It is what Michaelangelo would exclaim when he completed a masterpiece. Jesus Christ has done it. He laid down his life for his sheep. He bore the iniquities of his people. He suffered for the love of humanity. He took on the sins of the world. He sacrificed himself for the souls of many. He accomplished the blood atonement for the salvation

of lost sinners. This is a pronouncement of victory! Evil may think it won, but Christ won. The Paschal Lamb atoned for the sins of a lost and broken world. Since the Fall of humanity, God was determined to rescue us, redeem us, ransom us, save us, and be with us. It would take the sacrifice of his Son. God has done it. Christ has done it. It is finished!

Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled as the Passover Lamb is slain without a bone being broken (Exodus 12:10, 46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20-21). The two crucified on either side of Jesus have their legs broken, but this does not happen to Jesus. He is already dead. The soldiers pierce his side with a lance and blood and water pour out. Blood and water flowed from our crucified Lord. The blood of the Eucharist and the waters of Baptism. The blood of his body shed for me. The waters of Baptism that cleanse me. The blood of the New Covenant poured out for the forgiveness of sin - my sins and the sins of many.

**Ask:** How do Christ's words from the cross, "It is finished" apply to me? How do John's record of the events of the crucifixion help me believe in Jesus and have life in his name (John 20:30-31)?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and loving, crucified and risen Lord Jesus. I need a Savior. Thank you for willingly going to the cross, to suffer and die for my salvation. The shedding of your precious blood atoned for the eternal stain of original sin upon my soul and provided the forgiveness I desperately need for redemption. Without you I would be forever lost, imprisoned in death and without hope. In the quiet of the morning dawn, I praise you and lift my hands in reverence and awe. Amen.*