

"Loving With The End In Mind"

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;



I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26

So we don't close our eyes and simply hope for the day of perfection. No, we open our eyes wider than ever, relying on God's promise, looking for opportunities to learn more about Him and His Word, and watching for ways to love. God's reshaping, polishing, finishing work will be happening as we are loving. God is completing us when we love our spouses and our children, when we love our neighbors and

co-workers, when we love our life-long friends and the strangers we'll probably never see again. Don't doubt the passion and ability of God to fulfill the plans of God for you and for the world. For sure, there will be a glorious, full, after-death removal of all sin (Revelation 21:4) "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." (Revelation 21:27) "But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." No one will die without some sin still to be forgiven and washed away, however much glorious progress they made along the way (1 John 1:8) "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But Paul's hope and joy in Philippians 1:6 wasn't penned merely to be a wait-and-see prayer, but a press-on-in-the-work prayer for the spread of the Gospel — first in their own hearts and holiness, and then to more and more who have not yet heard or embraced the Good News. God will be completing what He's been doing among us, in each of us and through us to the world around us (Isaiah 55:11) "So shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." — all through love, a love formed and carried along by the truth.

Don't lose heart. Don't give up. Don't doubt the passion and ability of God to fulfill the plans of God for you and for the world. Set yourself to love more and more whoever God has put in front of you, and know that He will be preparing you to stand in front of Him. "His Lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'

(Matthew 25:21)

"Truly This Was The Son Of God!"



Matthew 27:54

"When He had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, He bowed His head and gave up His Spirit." (John 19:30) Of the last sayings of Christ on the Cross, none is more important or more affecting than, "It is finished." Found only in the Gospel of John, the Greek word translated "It Is Finished" is

Tetelestai, an accounting term that means "Paid In Full." When Jesus uttered those words, He was declaring the debt owed to His Father was wiped away completely and forever. Not that Jesus wiped away any debt that He owed to the Father; rather, Jesus eliminated the debt owed by mankind—the debt of sin. Just prior to His arrest by the Romans, Jesus prayed His last public prayer, asking the Father to Glorify Him, just as Jesus had Glorified the Father on earth, having "Finished the work You have given Me to do" (John 17:4). The work Jesus was sent to do was to "Seek and save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10), to provide atonement for the sins of all who would ever believe in Him (Romans 3:23-25), and to reconcile sinful men to a Holy God. "All this is from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). None other but God in the flesh could accomplish such a task.

"Jesus Completed The Whole Will Of God"

The whole will of God; as that He should be incarnate, be exposed to shame and reproach, and suffer much, and die; the whole work His Father gave Him to do, which was to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and obtain eternal salvation for His people, all which were now done, or as good as done; the whole righteousness of the law was fulfilled, an holy nature assumed, perfect obedience yielded to it, and the penalty of death endured; hence a perfect righteousness was finished agreeably to the law, which was magnified and made honorable by it, and redemption from its curse and condemnation secured; sin was made an end of, full atonement and satisfaction for it were given; complete pardon procured, peace made, and redemption from all iniquity obtained; all enemies were conquered; all types, promises, and prophecies were fulfilled, and His Own course of life ended.



His Life and Death was sure and certain, and so complete, that nothing need, or could be added to it; and it was done entirely without the help of man, and cannot be undone; all which since has more clearly appeared by Christ's resurrection from the dead, His entrance into heaven, His session at God's right hand, the declaration of the Gospel, and the application of salvation to all who would believe in Him. "It is Finished" are the most powerful words of Jesus' entire ministry. It was also His Last Words

spoken from the cross and these are the words that turned this apparent tragedy into a scene of Victory that shook the earth, split rocks, changed history and tore away the temple curtain that separated us from God.

"Jesus Is Not Finish With Us"



If you are in Christ and have known this promise, you've known it is precious. "I am sure of this, that He Who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). God, by His unequalled, infinite power, will one day

remedy everything wrong about you. Now, you are counted perfect through faith in Jesus. Then, you will be presented perfect — no sin, no shame, no guilt, no doubt, no fear — nothing broken about you. It's an Unwavering Word when all around us seems shaky and unsure. It's a Comforting Word in weakness or pain. It's an Inspiring Word when we need motivation to press on in the faith, working out our salvation. Philippians 1:6 assures us of how it all will end for us, and that our end will be good, beautiful, and holy before our God.

"A Work in Progress"

As flawed, broken, needy sinners we love knowing that end, but what does the promise mean for our lives now, until that day? Paul's joy in and hope for the Philippians wasn't only about completion on the last day, but about progress today, as well. He wasn't merely celebrating that everything would work out

for good, or that God would miraculously make us holy on the last day. He was seeing fruit and growth and boldness and obedience in his relationships and ministry with these friends, and so he believed that that progress would continue. He was sure that the work God had started in them and among them — the work that Paul was witnessing — would increase, develop, and multiply until the end when God would finally finish the work.

"How God Works"

So, to be "complete" in Christ is to be "pure and blameless" before Him. How does that happen? Here, it happens as we increasingly "approve what is excellent" (Philippians 1:10). That means being purified and prepared to meet God involves more and more accurately discerning right from wrong, good from evil, praiseworthy from profane. Godliness is wrapped up in whether our minds and hearts respond rightly to God and rightly to everything else around us. That's a huge part of the work God does to change and complete us for heaven, and then the new earth.

"Love Is Work"

What is the substance of that work and progress? Love. Again, "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:9-10) True love, effective love, world-changing love is an enlightened love, a love sharpened with and filled by truth. You can't love like God loves unless your mind is engaged rightly. Good loving requires good, right thinking. And this love — an affection for others grounded in and stirred by the truth — is what God builds into our hearts as He works to complete us. It's the heavy reconstruction our hearts need in order to meet Him on the last day. This love that completes you is a compassionate love (Philippians 1:16) and a unifying love (Philippians 2:2). It's gentle (1 Corinthians 4:21), humble (1 Corinthians 8:1), and patient (Ephesians 4:2). It is sacrificial — willing to die to ourselves that others might live, a love after the example of our Savior (1 John 4:9-10). And this love — worked in us by God — fulfills the whole law (Galatians 5:14) and is absolutely essential to the faithful and meaningful life (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). God is completing us by producing in us more and more love fueled by truths about Him and His world. He is sharpening our minds and hearts around what is good, and that love — built on the iron beams of knowledge and discernment — prepares us for Him, for a perfect, Holy God. God makes us ready for that day by teaching us more of His truth and making us more loving toward others. God does the work.