

BIBLE STUDY HELPS

TITLE: It Is Finished

TEXT: John 19:17-30

TARGET: SESSION IN A SENTENCE

Jesus provided for our redemption through His death on the cross.

LOOK UP: FOCUSING THE GROUP

Ask: How many of you work from a “to-do” list for a day, a week, or a specific project? Do you ever finish your “to-do” list? If so, how does it feel when you finally complete it?

Jesus had a “to-do” list that resulted from a plan God had in place when Adam and Eve sinned in Genesis 1-2. They doubted the goodness of God, rejected His wisdom, rebelled against God, and were banished from God’s presence. Because of their sin resulting in the separation of all men from the presence of God, Jesus had an extensive “to-do” list to restore what had been lost between man and God. This “to-do” list had been unfolding throughout the time and history leading up to Jesus demonstrating His love by going to the cross for our sins. Today we will examine the final things that needed to be “checked-off” of Jesus’ “to-do” list so that man might have the opportunity, once again, to have a restored relationship with Holy God.

Previously, Jesus had stood before Jewish high priests, Pilate, and then Herod. He had been betrayed, denied, accused, mocked, and beaten. After this, John 19:16 simply tells us, “*They took Jesus away.*” That simple statement envelops the scene of a bloodied man as He carried His cross toward Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. Yet none of this was by accident.

As we look at Jesus’ “to-do” list, remember that since before time, Jesus had His list prepared. He emphatically, simply, and systematically, yet painfully, worked through it to bring the hope of salvation to a lost world. The first of the final items on this “to-do” list was to bear the pain of the cross.

LOOK IN: UPACKING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Bear the Cross—John 19:17-24

¹⁷ Carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called Place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him and two others with him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹ Pilate also had a sign made and put on the cross. It said: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. ²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Don’t write, ‘The king of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the king of the Jews.’” ²² Pilate replied, “What I have written, I have written.” ²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. ²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who gets it.” This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that says: They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. This is what the soldiers did.

Jesus *went out* from the place where He had been sentenced and tortured. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John did not describe how the soldiers forced Simon of Cyrene to take up Jesus’ cross. Eventually, Jesus arrived at the *Place of the Skull*. Named *Golgotha* in the *Aramaic* language, this hill stood outside Jerusalem. Three short words, “*They crucified him,*” cannot convey the cruelty of this horrific form of execution.

Bearing the cross involved much more than just carrying the cross. The “to-do” list contained multiple actions that pointed back to God’s plans that were prophesied in the Old Testament. Bearing the cross was not a painless or simple task either. Let’s examine what John’s brief description of a difficult task really involved as we examine the plans that were accomplished through this task.

Direct: Everyone silently read Isaiah 53:1-9 and Psalm 22. Work in twos or threes to identify the prophetic plans that were fulfilled as Jesus bore the cross for you.

Discuss: What Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled as Jesus completed His task? When you consider all that was involved in Jesus bearing a cross that was meant for you, how should you respond? What are one or two words that describe how you feel regarding what Jesus did?

Bearing the cross was a part of God's redemptive plan. This was no afterthought. Although Roman soldiers conducted the execution at the request of Jewish authorities, God had a plan that had to be executed because of our sins. Jesus bore the cross for your sins and mine. Yet, behind it all, God was working out His plan for His glory (Acts 2:23). The next thing on Jesus' "to-do" list was to take care of His family.

☑ **Take Care of Your Family—John 19:25-27**

²⁵ *Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.* ²⁶ *When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son."* ²⁷ *Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.*

Guide: Someone read Luke 2:25-35. Do you suppose Mary recalled this prophecy from Simeon when she was standing by the cross of Jesus? What do you think was going through Mary's mind as she observed all that was unfolding?

No one can imagine the pain and suffering Mary was experiencing as she watched her firstborn hanging on that cross. Perhaps she did recall the prophecy of Simeon shortly after Jesus' birth. This elderly man named Simeon told Mary that a sword would pierce her heart (Luke 2:35). This was fulfilled as Jesus' mother and her companions were *standing by the cross*.

Jesus, in pain and near death, did not stop caring for others. He saw His mother standing there and knew she would need someone after He died. From the cross, His agony did not diminish His concern for her. Although He knew He would rise in three days, Jesus wanted to provide for Mary for the long term. He had several half-siblings who could have taken care of their mother, but they had not come with Mary. In addition, at this point, they did not believe He was the Messiah (John 7:5). So, He made another arrangement. Jesus left no loose ends as He provided for His mother.

Discuss: How does Jesus' love for His mother help us understand more fully the following verses: Luke 14:26-27, Mark 7:9-13, and 1 Timothy 5:8. How does one honor his father and mother while following Christ?

When Jesus made the statement in Luke 14 that one must "hate" his or her father and mother (Luke 14:26-27) He wasn't referring to an emotional hatred for them. He is simply stating we must count the cost of being disciples. Jesus illustrated this by remaining on the cross as He watched His mother's pain and agony as she observed what was happening to her son. Jesus gave up everything to fulfill His plan for salvation, including His mother.

GotQuestions.org explains it this way: *"Following Jesus requires commitment and faithfulness, even if our parents choose not to follow the Lord. If and when we are faced with the painful choice of loyalty to family versus loyalty to Jesus, we must choose Jesus. Even if our family members disown us—or worse—for being Christians, we must follow Christ. We are to prioritize our relationship with Jesus over our relationship with parents, siblings, and other family members.*

Of course, it is right to love our family members, and we want them to love and follow God. Elsewhere, Jesus confirmed the fifth commandment that we honor our fathers and mothers (Mark 7:9-13). And Paul sternly warned that "anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). Jesus' statement that we "hate" father and mother must be seen in relation to the whole of Scripture. His point is not that we are to be heartless toward our families, only that we must love Him more." (Source: <https://www.gotquestions.org/hate-father-mother.html>)

We see a beautiful picture of Jesus' love for His mother, yet His love for His mother or His family did not stop Him from obeying His Heavenly Father. Finally, Jesus finished His "to-do" list for this part of God's redemptive plan.

☑ **Jesus Finished His "To-Do List"—John 19:28-30**

²⁸ *After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, "I'm thirsty."* ²⁹ *A jar full of sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it up to his mouth.* ³⁰ *When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished." Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.*

John did not attempt to record all that occurred during the crucifixion, but he does tell us that Jesus finished the work given Him. He completed the sacrificial atonement necessary for our salvation. Jesus *finished* everything the Father had set out for Him to do. He omitted nothing and *fulfilled* every Scripture. From the messianic prophecies of Psalm 22 to Isaiah's words about the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53), the Scriptures about Jesus' death were completed. His "to-do" list was completed for this part of God's plan.

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LOOK OUT: LIVING OUT THE TARGET

Now Jesus focused on another “to-do” list. That list included:

- His resurrection and his ongoing intercession before the Father – *“Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.”* (Romans 8:34)
- Sending the Holy Spirit – *“It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you.”* (John 16:7)
- His return! – *“If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.”* (Luke 14:3)

Respond: Jesus is constantly at work, moving to accomplish God’s plans. We, as believers, are to join Him in that work. What are some actions God expects us to take on our “to-do” lists as followers of Christ? How are you doing at accomplishing the list of “to-do’s” God has given you?