

4-4-1947

## Lenten Meditation: It is Finished, 1947

O.P. Kretzmann  
*Valparaiso University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann\\_collection](https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann_collection)



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "Lenten Meditation: It is Finished, 1947" (1947). *O.P. Kretzmann Collection*. 144.  
[https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann\\_collection/144](https://scholar.valpo.edu/kretzmann_collection/144)

This Collection Record is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in O.P. Kretzmann Collection by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at [scholar@valpo.edu](mailto:scholar@valpo.edu).

April 4, 1947  
# Wayne  
#

March Cresset 1957

"IT IS FINISHED."

If a group of thoughtful people in the modern world were asked the question: What is the greatest tragedy and most continuing sorrow in life? there would at first be many different answers. Some would point to the fear of death both for themselves and for those whom they love. Others would be quite sure that the steady, relentless weight of financial worry is more tragic for the human spirit than any other single thing. And still others would point to the loss of friends who were on the way with us for a little while and then went away again. Perhaps many, under the storm and stress of modern life, would mention the secret fears of humanity, the inward hidden hurt, the fears and anxieties which men and women try to hide from themselves and from one another.

As the discussion proceeded, however, it is entirely possible that the group would agree that the most tragic thing in the modern world is its sense of incompleteness, of unfinished tasks, of things that men would like to do and cannot do. This is, of course, a characteristic of human life throughout the ages. There is always a profound sense of loose ends and frayed edges in all men and women who are aware of the undertones of life and living. //

It is true, of course, that men often say, "This is done," "This is finished." The business man closes a deal and feels that the transaction is done. The housewife finishes the tasks of the day. Momentarily we have a sense of achievement and accomplishment. And yet when we say, "This is finished," we mean only: "This is the best I can do now. Perhaps some day I can do better." The end of anything in life is never complete and final. Time and life are too fluid and dynamic for that. Nothing is ever quite finished, complete, and perfect. All that men can do is to go endlessly from one task to another.

// In all the long story of man's life on earth there is only one exception to this general rule. Once, and only once, in the long story of human completeness there was one task that was done -- completely, finally, absolutely -- by every standard of measurement human or divine. The work of our Lord from the first cry in the manger to the last cry on the Cross was a divine symphony coming to its final and inevitable end. In a single stroke His cry "It is Finished" transformed our human sense of incompleteness, ~~our~~ our unfinished lives, our loose ends and frayed edges, into something new, holy, complete, and eternal.

(THE GOOD FRIDAY SCENE)

In order to understand that one must look at Good Friday more closely. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. The hour of the end. The crowd had become more quiet. It was awed into silence by the strange noonday darkness and by the words of the Man on the Cross in the center. Men always grow still when they are face to face with death. Suddenly, into the mid-afternoon stillness, came the cry, "It is finished."// The head went up under the crown of thorns. The eyes of the sufferer were clear and victorious. To the mob standing around the Cross these words must have sounded like the crack of doom. They were killing this Man, but He seemed to feel that He had won a victory. Had they after all lost? They had. At that moment God the Father reached down from Heaven and touched the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth. The arms of the glorified Cross reached out and covered humanity. Under them stood St. Paul crying: "Because He was obedient unto death, even the death on the cross, therefore God hath also highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name." In a flashing moment the dying Man on the Cross had become the of the Lord of the Universe, on His head the many crowns of universal kingdom and in his hands the sceptre of the Universe.



What is the meaning of His cry "It is Finished?" He was not referring only to the fact that His agony was now ended, that the malice and the hatred, the pain and the heart broken with sorrow, were done and set aside forever. Nor was He merely saluting death, as so many brave men have done. Nor was He merely saying goodbye to life. The years flashing swiftly through His mind, tired of Himself and tired of life.

This was something far different. The cry of Jesus Christ "It is Finished" <sup>This</sup> was the cry of a worker whose work is done, of a soldier whose victory is won, of a savior whose purposes had been accomplished. The Son of Mary was going home leaving no chips in his shop, and the Son of God was returning to glory leaving no souls unredeemed. Here on Good Friday we have the cry of finished redemption, of accomplished atonement. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself! To many in the modern world -- both within the Church and beyond its borders -- all this does not mean very much. It has been worn by much use. Its meaning has been darkened by centuries of unbelief and mockery. It is time for us to see as the world balances on the edge of darkness that this is the greatest truth in all history. In one moment it restores the ancient, divine, and eternal balance between justice and mercy. Let modern man never forget that the justice of God demands punishment for sin. There is no way of getting around that. The figure of divine justice is not blindfolded. It sees sin in all its horror and blackness. There is no evasion of it. There is no getting away from it under the sobbing sky.

The Cross, however, also tells us something else. God does not only see sin, but He also sees the sinner. He sees him only in mercy. Since the cry of our Lord "It is Finished" there is now a perfect balance between justice and mercy. Everything is tied together. There are no frayed edges and loose ends. Everything is done. Justice and mercy have met. This is final.

The modern world must see this if it is to be redeemed from its confusion and darkness. On Good Friday our Lord was the only one who was completely quiet and uncompelled. Everyone else was excited and disturbed. So it is also today. It isn't He who does not know what to do, or what He wants. It isn't He who is afraid, bewildered, or worried over the future. He has in His grip also these days, and these years, and what we have done to one another and to Him. His is the power of a finished task and a completed redemption. Let the modern world see that power and that mercy, and we shall have one more chance from the hand of God to find our way out of the noise and confusion of our anxious years.

\* \* \* \* \*