

Jesus' last word is one word, τετελεσται, "finished!" The carpenter's task is complete. The job is done. He is free to go.

There is a deep satisfaction and joy in this word. "Finished!" Remember the last time you took on something big; perhaps knee replacement surgery or hip replacement surgery. You knew it would hurt. You knew the therapy would be a challenge, but the job had to be done. It hurt. The therapy was tough, but you stuck with it; you made progress until that joyous day when you walked out of the rehabilitation center on your own two feet with your third knee or hip working just fine! "Finished!"

Remember how it felt to send that last car payment, or that last mortgage payment, or your last student loan payment! The check is in the mail! "Finished!"

Jesus is looking forward to that on Maundy Thursday. He knows the job is almost done. Before he takes those final steps down the Via Dolorosa to Calvary, he needs to prepare his disciples. He breaks bread as he will be broken. He pours wine, as his blood will flow. He teaches with word and deed; washing their feet and saying, *John 13:34 (NRSV) I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.*

Holy Week can be overwhelming. We see Jesus betrayed and confront our own betrayals. We see Jesus crucified and confront the crosses we refuse to bear. We see Jesus die and confront our deepest fears; how far will we go when we "walk by faith not by sight?"

Holy Week can be overwhelming, but this year, this word, "Finished!" invites us to be overwhelmed in a different way. "Finished!" invites us to enter into the joy of our Master and embrace the deep satisfaction of a Carpenter whose job is done.

The Job

Last fall, our dryer was possessed by a demon. We knew it was possessed by a demon because every time Janice used it (and in a family of 5 that would be

a daily event), an unearthly shriek would fill our home from the basement on up, and with that wail came a deep thumping that suggested a tribal war party was about to launch an attack.

Well, if something wasn't done soon, there was going to be an attack! Thankfully, a conversation with the right person guided me to the right diagnosis which in turn led to the purchase of the right parts with the right instructions. The demon was exorcised, and there was peace in the valley. "Finished!"

The Carpenter came to do a major home repair. The Creator returned to restore His creation. That's the job; that is the task on Jesus' work order – get the world of Genesis 1 & 2 back up and running. Return the world to its original condition, restore the relationship with all us Adams' and Eves' so God can once again walk with us in the garden in the cool of the day and say, "It is very good!" "Finished!"

As with many if not most repairs, the challenge is not so much the actual repair of the broken part as it is the dismantling of the device and the reconstruction of the same. "Hmm, I wonder why I have this extra part?" is a sure sign of trouble.

The repair is very simple. The work order is given in the prophet Ezekiel, *Ezekiel 36:25–27 (NRSV)* ²⁵ *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.* ²⁶ *A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* ²⁷ *I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.*

The repair is simple – replace the heart of stone with a heart of flesh. A new heart and a new spirit will restore us to our original condition, but there is the work of deconstruction and reconstruction. So Jesus teaches us "to love one another" and washes our feet to show us how. So Jesus is betrayed so that we might put our trust in Him. So Jesus sacrifices himself on our behalf; He offers the perfect obedience we are incapable of so that we would begin to walk in

the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Deconstruction and reconstruction; take us apart and put us back together better than ever; that was the job; that was what Jesus came to do. That is what He did. *"It is finished!"*

The Task at Hand

Now, we might read Genesis 1 and 2 or today's headlines and say, "Lord, I don't mean to complain, but it seems to me that there is more work to do. I don't think you are quite "finished" yet."

And the Crucified Carpenter nods in agreement with a deeply satisfied smile. "You are quite correct," He says to us, "There is more to be done. Stony hearts remain. Creation is still infected by Chaos. We know too much of hate and too little of love. There is more to be done, but not by me. "As the father has sent me, so I send you" to accomplish the task at hand. Soften your heart, and see what happens to your neighbor. Seek peace, pursue it, and see what happens in the world. "Love one another as I have loved you," and watch my Garden blossom and grow."

That is the task at hand on Maundy Thursday: create a community that will continue the Carpenter's work in the world. Jesus has done a lot over the past 3 years. Tonight, He makes his final adjustments before His crowning achievement on the cross. As His life ends, He has the deep satisfaction of knowing that He has done what He set out to do. He has created that community. Yes, we have far to go, but we will get there! The work will get done. Creation will be set right! The world will be restored! "It is very good!" "It is finished!"

As we gather around our Lord's Table, we are that community. We have tasks at hand. We have jobs to do. We are sent to serve! We have neighbors' in need and strangers to befriend. We are that community formed by and focused on our Lord's command, "Love one another, as I have loved you."

Jesus sees what we are doing. His view from the cross is unimpaired. He sees how we take on the task at hand. He watches what we accomplish – a new

heart that loves, a new spirit that lives. He sees what we are doing, and he invites us to be filled with His joy; to see what we are doing as more than a humble effort but as the necessary and essential steps they are to God's new creation!

Deconstruction and reconstruction; we take apart, and we put back together. Step up to the task at hand! Rejoice, for our work is not in vain! The vision will become a reality! The dream will come true! We will walk in the Garden with God once again!

The Carpenter saw it all. He saw what those disciples would do, and what the Church they build would become. He saw what we would do and the difference we will make. He saw it all, and he rejoiced with the deep satisfaction that comes from a job done right and a job done well.

Do your job. Do it well, and join in the joy: "It is finished." Amen.