

'It is finished'

John 19:30

Bible Verse(s):

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflection:

In John's gospel, 'It is finished' are Jesus' final words before he dies. But what does he mean by this and what is now 'finished'? You would be forgiven for thinking that he is just referring to the terrible ordeal and torture he has just endured, but this is only a small part of the story. It helps to understand the underlying Greek word here – *tetelestai* – which comes from the verb *teleo*, meaning 'to bring to an end, to complete, to accomplish'. It's the kind of thing you might say when you finish running the London Marathon or finally submit your dissertation or Good Friday reflection! So in one sense Jesus is really saying 'I have done what I set out to do'.

By completing the task given to him on earth, Jesus fully accomplishes God's will. I wonder how many of us can say the same? Of course, the answer is none of us. No-one apart from Jesus is capable of perfectly accomplishing the will of God and living the way He wants us to. Battling against sin in its many forms feels a bit like weeding the garden – something many people are doing a lot of at the moment! However much time and effort we put into it, the weeds just keep reappearing. As soon as one area is clear, more spring up elsewhere. And some weeds are so deeply rooted that we can never hope to pull them out completely. We are fighting a battle we can never win, but we keep on trying anyway, day after day, year after year. And it is right that we do so. We should never give up trying to do God's will, living according to his word and seeking his kingdom.

Luckily, this is not the end of the story and we are not left to battle the weeds alone. Hope is not lost and we are not abandoned to our fate. Jesus comes to us in our weakness. Through his death on the cross and his resurrection he has the final victory over sin and death. Sin no longer holds us hostage and death has lost its sting. This is the hope that Christians have, the hope of eternal life with God. We are promised that 'everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life' (1 Cor 15:22). What does it mean to live as people who wholeheartedly believe in this promise? How should it change the way we view suffering and death (things that are very close to home at the moment)? Now, more than ever, people need to hear about the hope that Jesus brings. Victory over sin and death is the task Jesus finished on that Good Friday so many years ago. He is the master gardener and the weeding that we fail to complete, he has completed for us. And the garden that we share with him has never looked so beautiful.