

# The boldness of the Cross

## When Jesus said “It is finished,” what exactly did he mean by that?

Seconds before Jesus died on the cross, he said, “It is finished (**John 19:30**).” They have to be the three most important words ever spoken, and the boldest, too.

They’re immensely important, first of all, because they meant that Jesus’ job of saving us had been successfully completed. The salvation of all humankind had been wrapped up. All that was necessary had been done. You’d think our salvation would involve some sort of contribution from us, but it didn’t. Christ had done it all.

How wildly bold those three words then become as well, because they fly in the face of all those religious folks who would have us believe there are things that we must do to be saved. “It is finished,” however, destroys that notion. According to Jesus’ last words our salvation is complete because of him. It’s a done deal.

It was his death on the cross that did it. Because of the cross, God removed the penalty of eternal death we’d brought on ourselves (**Colossians 2:13-14**), made his peace with us (**Colossians 1:20**), forgives everything we’ve ever done wrong (**2 Corinthians 5:19**) and brings us into his presence as people without fault and blameless (**Colossians 1:22**). Because of the cross, Christ opened up and accomplished all this for us, totally, completely, willingly and successfully.

It’s the best news possible for people labouring under the belief that their salvation is partly, or even mostly, up to them. It isn’t. It’s all been done for them. Christ paved the path of salvation for us before any of us were even born, and all God asks of us in the process is one simple thing, belief (**John 3:16**), and that’s it. Our salvation is complete, but will we believe it?

Unfortunately, this becomes a huge sticking point for people. Even when faced with the best news possible, there are clearly some who won’t accept it, or simply aren’t interested. And it’s for these people that Jesus had some tough things to say (**John 3:18, 36**). He does not mince words: God is angry.

I can understand why God is angry, though. Imagine being a Dad like God and telling your children, just as God tells us, that all their needs are taken care of because you love them dearly, even at their worst (**Romans 5:8**), and you’re more than willing to make whatever sacrifices are needed on their behalf because serving them is your greatest joy.

And what do they do in return?

They don't believe you! They look at you as some sort of alien who doesn't mean what he says at all. They believe, instead, that you love them only if they're good. So they put enormous burdens on themselves to try and convince you how good they are. You try to explain to your children that none of these burdens are necessary, but they insist on them anyway!

You wonder why you bother. Why do these silly children not get the point? They could, if they believed you, be charging into life, utterly carefree, knowing they're loved and all their eternal needs are taken care of. But instead they live in fear and guilt that they're not good enough, or they're not doing enough and they should be doing more. No wonder God gets angry, and especially at those who cause people to believe such nonsense, because it's the absolute opposite of what he intended.

That's not the only justifiable reason for God being angry either, because he also went to enormous trouble to have a book written about a Saviour coming to save the whole world, who then comes exactly as predicted and does precisely what the Bible said he would do, completing our salvation perfectly.

And what do his children do?

They don't believe that, either! They insist, instead, on creating their own saviours bearing bucketloads of rules for salvation that must be obeyed, or else. So, instead of making people free as God intended (**Galatians 5:1**), they lock people in a lifetime of fear, guilt and anxiety, none of which God intended.

Wouldn't you be angry, then, if you were God?

But, fortunately, there's always the cross and the realization that must dawn on people eventually what Jesus meant when he said, "[It is finished](#)," because it's in those words that we see the kind of God we're really dealing with. He's not the demanding, fear-mongering God of religion, he's the God who completed our salvation without any of us even knowing about it, purely as his gift to us.

Can we accept his gift as a gift, then, and do we believe him?

It's an important question - because for those who can simply accept and believe, there's nothing to fear from God anymore (**Romans 5:9**). Unfortunately, that doesn't agree with what most people believe about God, including many Christians, but that's the boldness of the cross for you. When Christ said, "[It is finished](#)," he meant exactly that - it is finished - and all God asks of us is to believe it.