

SUNDAY, APRIL 6, 2003

MESSAGE TITLE: "THE WORD OF VICTORY"

TEXT: JOHN 19:30

"IT IS FINISHED"

"WHEN HE HAD RECEIVED THE DRINK, JESUS SAID, IT IS FINISHED:

WITH THAT HE BOWED HIS HEAD, AND GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT."

LESS THAN A DAY, BEFORE THE CROSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE  
PASSOVER MEAL HAD BEEN UNDERWAY, THE HOME AND OWNER  
AND DISCIPLES HAD BUSIED THEMSELVES FOR THE HIGH  
CELEBRATION. THE OBSERVATION HAD GONE AS USUAL IN MANY  
WAYS: THE RIGHT PEOPLE, THE PRESCRIBED FOOD, THE CAREFUL  
REMEMBERING OF THE DELIVERANCE . . . JUST AS ALWAYS . . . IN

LESS THAN A DAY AGO.

WHO THOUGHT OF THE MEAL NOW? IT ALL SEEMED LONG AGO.

HAD JESUS HUNG THERE ONLY HALF A DAY? . . . TIME CRAWLED AT

THAT PACE. IT SEEMED A LIFETIME SINCE JESUS WAS STRETCHED

OUT UPON THE CROSS AND CRUELLY SECURED. WOULD THE

DREADFUL HOURS EVER END?

FROM THE BEGINNING, JESUS FORGAVE HIS TORMENTORS BUT HURT

DID NOT STOP. HE PROMISED PARADISE TO THE THIEF, YET HIS

AGONIES CONTINUED.

HE PROVIDED FOR MARY AND JOHN, HOWEVER, HIS SORROWS

REMAINED.

HE CRIED OUT TO GOD BUT NO RESCUE CAME! HE SPOKE OF HIS

THIRST . . . HIS TORTURERS PERSISTED.

THOSE GATHERED THERE THAT DAY, WHO MOURNED CHRIST'S PAIN,

FELT THEMSELVES CAUGHT IN THE ENDLESS DRAMA OF DEATH.

WOULD THIS SUFFERING EVER CEASE?

SOME DAY JOHN WOULD WRITE OF ALL OF THIS, NAMING JESUS "THE

WORD" AND SAYING: "THROUGH HIM, ALL THINGS WERE MADE."

(JOHN 1:3) . . . BUT ON THAT DAY, IN HONOR, JOHN WATCHED THE

CREATOR DIE.

THE CREATOR . . . HOW ASTOUNDING

THAT ANYTHING SHOULD EXIST AT ALL! IT WAS INTO THE

EMPTINESS OF NOTHING HE SPOKE.

“LET THERE BE” . . . AND EVERYTHING BEGAN !

UPON ASPECT AND SPACE, THE CREATOR LAVISHED HIS WONDERS.

HE CUPPED OUT THE MASS OF SEED, SCULPTURED THE LAND. HE

DECREED INTO BEING, MEADOW GRASSES, JUNGLES, SPRAWLING

DESERTS, FORESTS OF GREEN NEEDLED PINE. HE STOCKED THE

EARTH WITH THINGS . . . ALIVE . . . FLAMINGOS, FAWNS, SALMAN . . .

ALL HIS OWN DOING.

HE SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD . . . HE DID NOT SAY HE WAS THROUGH.

WITH HIS HAND AND IN HIS IMAGE, GOD FASHIONED THE MAN, THEN

THE WOMAN. HE BREATHED INTO THIS NEW THING, HIS OWN

BREATH, THEREBY GIVING ETERNITY TO AN EARTHLY CREATION.

HE SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD . . . HE DID NOT SAY IT WAS

CONCLUDED.

IT WAS GOOD, VERY GOOD, UNTIL THE SERPENT SOFTLY

APPROACHED THE WOMAN WITH HIS CUNNING . . . WITH HIS LIE:

“YOU WILL NOT SURELY DIE.”

THE WARNING OF GOD . . . “YOU MUST NOT EAT FROM THE TREE” . . .

FADED INTO A MERE WHISPER (A FAINT WHISPER.)

THE FRUIT SO ATTRACTIVE . . . THE ARGUMENTS SO COMPELLING:

“YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD.” . . . THINK OF IT! LIKE GOD!

FULL OF THE SERPENT’S ASSURANCES, THE WOMAN SCARCELY

HEARD: “YOU MUST NOT EAT!” . . . . . THE FRUIT, RIGHT BEFORE HER,

BEAUTIFUL TO SEE . . . SURELY DELICIOUS TO EAT . . . SO NEAR . . .

“YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD.”

THE WOMAN ATE IT . . . THE MAN ATE IT . . . THE RESULTS WERE

INSTANTANEOUS . . . HORRIBLE . . . GUILT . . . SHAME . . . DEATH!

THE SERPENT HAD LIED. THEY WERE NOT LIKE GOD AT ALL. THEY WERE LESS LIKE GOD.

QUICKLY, THEY SOUGHT TO HIDE THE DISOBEDIENCE TO COVER THEIR NAKEDNESS. FIG LEAVES WERE HASTILY SEWN INTO AWKWARD APRONS . . . PERHAPS GOD WOULD NOT NOTICE!

GOD'S VOICE RANG OUT IN SEARCH OF THEM. THE LEAVES - WHILE ADEQUATE BETWEEN THE PAIR - PROVE DEFIANT BEFORE GOD. THEY RUSHED TO HIDE BENEATH AND WITHIN THE THICKNESS OF THE TREES.

THE MAN AND WOMAN WERE HELPLESS TO COVER THEIR SIN,

POWERLESS TO RIGHT THE WRONG.

WHAT TREMENDOUS MARRING OF CREATION! OH THE GRIEFS YET

TO BE!!! . . . . BANISHED FROM EDEN, SEPARATED FROM GOD, AT

ODDS AT WITH OTHER . . . WHO COULD UNDO THE MESS ???

WHO WOULD BRING PEACE BETWEEN THE CREATOR AND HIS

CREATION. WHO COULD RESTORE ONENESS TO THE MAN AND

WOMAN!

WAS THERE ONE WHO COULD - OR WOULD - BE THE SOLUTION? . . .

NOT THE MAN - NOT THE WOMAN - THE CREATOR!

THE SAVIOR'S AGONY ADHERED TO HIM. GREAT SUFFERING  
POUNDED HIM. ALL THE SINS AND SORROWS, SINCE THE DAY IN  
EDEN, WEIGHED UPON HIM WITH UNSPEAKABLE HEAVINESS, BUT  
JESUS BORE THEM.

THE VOICE OF A DYING PERSON GROWN WEAK AND OFTEN HARD TO  
UNDERSTAND, AS THOSE GATHERED AT CALVARY CERTAINLY  
KNEW. BUT DYING PEOPLE DO SPEAK THE FINAL WORDS, DEEMED  
IMPORTANT AS ALL MASSA DROPPED - NO NEED TO IMPRESS ANY  
ONE - TRUTH DICTATES AND THE ESSENCE OF THE PERSON, COMES  
FORTH. SO, THE WATCHERS KEPT THEIR EARS OPEN, JUST IN CASE !

DEATH'S HANDS WERE ON JESUS, READY TO CLAIM HIM.

WOULD JESUS SAY ANYTHING? . . . ONE MORE TIME, WOULD HE  
SPEAK? . . . WHAT WAS LEFT TO SAY?

THEN CAME THE MOMENT - JESUS GASPED - THE MOMENT AWAITED  
BEFORE THE EARTH'S FOUNDATION.

ALL HUSHED BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT. HE LIFTED HIS HEAD  
AND WITH A LOUD SHOUT, MADE IT KNOWN: "IT IS FINISHED!!!"

THE WORK OF CREATION WAS COMPLETED . . . DONE . . . THROUGH.

THE SACRIFICE IS NOW ACCOMPLISHED . . . THE SCRIPTURES ARE  
FULFILLED . . . THE RELATIONSHIP RESTORED . . . REDEMPTION IS  
NOW PAID.

“IT IS FINISHED!” . . . ALL DONE SO WELL . . . SO VERY WELL !

THE DEAD WOOD OF THE CRUCIFIXION TREE RECEIVED ITS PREY  
WITHOUT AN INKLING OF WHO HUNG THERE OR WHY, ALTHOUGH  
SUCH A WORD OF TRIUMPH SHOULD KNOW A BETTER STAGE. THE  
VICTOR PUBLISHED HIS NEWS, UNCONCERNED AND UNCARING OF  
THE POVERTY OF THE PLATFORM FOR WHICH IT WAS PROCLAIMED.

“IT IS FINISHED.” . . . PAIN WILL FALL BEFORE THE MIGHTY  
CONQUEROR. . . . SORROWS WILL WITHER ON HIS PRESENCE.

MOMENTS COME AND WILL COME WHEN THE TRAP OF PAIN SEEMS  
SO PERMANENT. BUT, BECAUSE OF JESUS, THE OBEDIENT SON OF

ALMIGHTY GOD, EVERY SPECK OF EVERY HURT WILL END.

DISEASE WILL COME TO NOTHING. ALL THAT CAUSES GRIEF OR  
TORMENT, OR PAIN, WILL BE BANISHED FOREVER.

THAT LOUD SHOUT FROM THE SUFFERING . . . ONE RESOUNDED  
THROUGHOUT OUR ENTIRE BEINGS . . . HAVEN'T YOU HEARD IT?  
THE PROUD REIGN OF SIN, OF PAIN, OF DEATH, OF SORROW HAD NOW  
BEEN ANSWERED IN FULL.

THERE IS GOOD NEWS FOR YOU THIS MORNING.

JESUS TELLS US THAT HIS WORK IS DONE, FOR HE HAS SAID:

“IT IS FINISHED.”

EACH OF US NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF A PERSONAL  
EXPERIENCE WITH ALMIGHTY GOD, THROUGH THE POWER OF JESUS  
CHRIST THAT COMES TO US IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE THAT EVERYONE MAY SEE YOUR GOOD  
WORKS AND GLORIFY GOD!