

6.11.23 Sermon

Satisfied? | John 19:18-42

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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SPEAKERS

Kevin Brisbin

Good morning. Yes, good morning. My name is Kevin. Can you not hear me? Someone is doing this? Talk louder. Okay. I'm getting hand signals from people in the back. It's helpful. There I am. Thanks. Better we good?

Well, yeah, good morning. My name is Kevin and I am also your friend. I also really, really love you. And this is a place where you will find many people who if you stick around, you will find out. They really do love you. They don't just say that. It's not a platitude. It's not just the bumper sticker. It's an invitation and a challenge that we all take seriously to actually live out lives that back up that message.

You wouldn't have to believe me, because I'm telling you that, but you would just know that because you will see a showing up in your life. And I pray that whether this is that place for you or not, that you would find that place for yourself. And if it's not here, then I pray you would find it wherever it is that you find God in that way. But if it is, I'm grateful to be able to be here among all of you who I do so dearly love.

It's a great privilege to be an elder here at the church. And I do serve as one of the elders here at Cornerstone. And while I don't have any degrees other than

my high school degree, I'm grateful to still have a seat at this elder table, and also to be invited to be one of the preachers on our preaching team.

As I said earlier, I love the many ways this church really backs up what we profess to believe with action. I am not deemed less than because I am neither a reverend nor a doctor. Just being Kevin is fully enough. And just being you is fully enough.

If you've been here long enough, you've probably heard many of us share. I know I've heard you share this multiple times Pastor Tracy. So we don't ascribe to an expert model here. Where there's one expert at the top, or even a select few elders, you know, at the top, and then you know everyone else in the church beneath them, almost like lemmings that come to be told one interpretation of what to think and believe and do and have that one interpretation be shared as gospel like this, this is it. The singular, know, the gospel, the good news that is, is that God is with every one of us. They created each one of us to have direct relationship with them, just as it was in the beginning in the garden.

Somewhere in my youth, I remember hearing the statement that unlike Catholics who have to commune with God through a priest, we Protestants get to commune with God directly. I don't know if any of you have heard that or if that was ever shared in any of your circles.

But as I've reflected on that statement in the past few years, I came to realize that for myself. What I found to be true for myself is that Protestants just substituted the Bible for priests.

Sure, we didn't have to communicate to God through a priest. We could read the Bible for ourselves. We didn't have to have them; we were allowed to have Bibles and read them for ourselves and interpret them. But can we see that this just functionally replaces the priests with the Bible? I had God in a Bible-shaped box. God could not do or say or be anything outside of the Bible. The Bible was the border and the boundary of my God at that time.

He was a God that we believed could and should be studied and known completely because he was stationary in a book on that page, with ink that had long dried.

And did I find him there?

Of course, I did.

But did I find him outside of there too?

Also, yes.

But it was almost as if I or we were taught to deny that God for the true God who would always and only ever be contained and, dare I say, constrained to the pages of that sacred book. And listen, I am not here saying that priests or the Bible are bad or wrong at all. In fact, I believe that both can and are very, very good.

But I believe that both exist inside the larger context of God, and not the other way around.

A priest, however beautiful and pure a servant cannot be the border of God, and who they are. And the Bible, as a beautiful gift as it is, and it is, still exists as a facet of God, but not the entire picture. There is and can never be a substitute for God Himself. God is boundless, limitless, not constrained by time or space, like both a human priest and a printing of transcribed words, however inspired they may be. The life of those scriptures isn't the embodiment of the Spirit of God that breathes through those words and pages. And that same spirit can and does breathe through many, many people, texts, and experiences.

They're not limited to the Bible or the priesthood. And those other people, texts, and experiences are no less rich because of the context or context through which the Spirit has moved. The power is in the source, the Spirit of God themselves.

And this is the beauty, the power, and the freedom and the expansiveness of the centered set. I've loved observing this week after week after week as we've been journeying through John and been encouraging one another to view the passages with centered set eyes. I mean, that's what we say we're doing it.

We're not just going through the book of John; we're going through the book of John, specifically looking to see it through centered set eyes.

So, for all of us to be looking, seeking, and searching, leaning and learning as God speaks to each one of us, you do not have to agree with me today or ever. My goal is not even for you to believe me or to agree with me. My aim is for each and every one of us to enter and engage in this experience with God.

Spend this time with them, to see them and hear them. Because the reality is, every one of us is having our own unique experience here today. You are the only one sitting in your seat and bringing your batch of life experiences to this morning.

Sure, I bring the words that I've prepared for this moment, but you each hear them and interpret them through 1000 uniquely you lenses, through your past experience of God, the church, the Big C Church, the little c church, through people who say things like Big C and little c church, through your past experiences with the Bible, Christians, the world, your workweek, your morning today, how you slept last night, how hungry you are right now, how your kids behaved or didn't behave during the worship, that text you just got, that work email you checked, and on and on and on. That's the reality. That's always true. But we choose here not to deny that truth, but rather to acknowledge it and even highlight it so that we can engage with it intentionally and invite all of ourselves into the discourse. So, let's do that. Let's get comfortable. Please feel free to settle into your seat. And whatever way that means for you, shift positions or cross your legs the other way. Take a breath, and let's begin.

Today, we'll be journeying through John 19:28-42.

Oh, the one on the back is not up. Can that be turned on? Or is it dead? Oh, I read the text from that. Oh, well.

No, I'm good. I have it here too. I just like to look up there because it looks out instead of putting my back but that's alright.

Today, we'll be journeying through John 19:20 to 42. And yes, you've heard that correctly. 15 verses they gave the highest context person and all of Cornerstone and quite possibly Chester County.

15 verses on which to preach. And then just for good measure. And maybe because he's an Enneagram, three achiever, let's make those 15 versus those with the heading the death of Jesus.

That's all this is fine.
I'm fine. Everything is fine.
We'll just journey there together.
Well, the best way out is through.

So, verse 28, later knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that scripture would be fulfilled.

Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

Now, you all know, I am not going to read 15 verses at a single clip.

But even if I was the type of preacher who did read the entire text at the head of the sermon, this verse would still have had me stop and want to reread it.

Later knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

I don't know about y'all. But that sentence just doesn't go where I expect it to go. The Greek is also no better. Knowing everything had now been finished to Leo, that's really going to mess me I keep looking up and seeing a blank wall, to lay, accomplished, completed, finished.

And so that the scripture would be fulfilled, teleo made perfect, finished, fulfilled. So again, in these words, knowing everything had been finished, and so that scripture will be finished. He should have said, it is finished.

But he doesn't say that. Instead, it says, knowing everything had been finished. And so that scripture would be finished. He said, dipsao.

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Next slide. No, there's no dipsao line? Well, I guess it didn't get in.

Oh, he said, dipsao. I thirst. And well, this made me super curious. I mean, on the one level, we've talked many, many times over how Jesus embodies the Scriptures. And not just John one that started this entire journey on January 31, in the year of our Lord 2021.

Which refers to the embodied word in Jesus being the embodied word. But over and over and over again, like last year's Passover that was one year ago in the text and two years ago in real time, where Jesus was feeding the 5000 and simultaneously lived out the OG Passover story and the Exodus from Egypt story and the 23rd Psalm, all while grieving the great personal loss of his dearest cousin, John the Baptist. So countless times we have witnessed him live the Word.

I mean, that was just one example of where he lived out three different scriptures. So, it's no surprise that even during the crucifixion, which is so agonizing, it is where we get the word excruciating. He's still at it, because it is who he is.

And so, our boy John wants to make such a fine point of this that he forgot his trademark parenthetical is and opts for straight up straight talk. He is doing this to fulfill the scriptures because the scriptures are made full in him. And so, we get, "I thirst."

So, to answer the easy question, which scriptures is he fulfilling here? The answer is Psalm 22, which starts with David crying out and this is a direct quote, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me?" which is another passage that Jesus also quotes on the cross in Matthew 27:46.

Only this time, God has never been so close to saving David and Saul. David continues in Psalm 22, verses 15 through 18. "My mouth is dried up like a pot shard. And my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death, dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me. They pierced My hands and My feet. All my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots from my garment." And this is not Jesus. This is David. The Psalm 22. It's a song set to the tune of something a dough.

We can see Jesus embodying this. But this still leaves me with this curious question. Why of all the Scriptures that Jesus could have embodied in this moment like, but why "I thirst"?

And I don't know. I remain curious. I don't have the answer here. Maybe one of you does. Beauty of the Senate set. Maybe he was thirsty. The day was long and dry. Some scholars say he said this in order to be able to say what he said next and be able to do so in a loud declarative voice.

But what do you think? What associations do you think of when you think of Jesus and thirst?

Thirsty for more knowledge. Yeah.

Any other times like Jesus has mentioned thirst yet, Gretchen?

Yeah, "I'm the living water. Whoever drinks from me will never thirst again."

Any others?

Another song, "As the deer pants for water, so my soul longs after you."

Humaneness, the human nature that just as part of itself has longing.

Thirsty for the souls of men, humanity. Yes, humanity. Yes, of course.

Anything else?

Think of like some of the Beatitudes, like "Blessed are those who thirst and hunger after righteousness." Other times he's mentioned this.

And I can also say that for me, it also calls back to my very first sermon that I ever preached, which was on the Samaritan woman at the well.

And what did Jesus say to her when he first encountered her?

"Will you give me a drink?"

More or less?

"I thirst."

That's how that whole exchange started. And of course, she was also marked by thirst for physical water, for agency as a woman in a patriarchal society who had to be married to a man or many times over, thirsty for acceptance of not having to gather water at high noon, like she had been that day. And as we learned, as Jesus spent time with her, she was spiritually thirsty, too. If you remember their dialogue about the location of the true temple worship, one that excluded her as unclean in triplicate. And Jesus tenderly said, "There's coming a day."

It's enough to make you cry, because this two years later is Jesus living that day that He promised her about those two years ago. And it was as close to him on that day as it was to him on this day.

He foretold her back and John for there's coming a day when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on this mountain in order to worship the Father, and you will worship in the spirit and in truth.

Shall we move on to the second verse?

See what I meant? I wasn't kidding about that Chester County title. Verse 29.

A jar of wine vinegar, we have nowhere now we've lost it all.

There's no slide for 29, man alive.

It's been a week. It's been a week. I woke up this morning to create these slides. I normally do this on like Wednesday or Thursday night, but I set an alarm to do it this morning because that has been the week I've had. So, I'll just read it to you. It's also in the Bible. You know, if you have one of those.

No tea, no shade. I'm just saying.

Verse 29, a jar of wine vinegar was there. So, they soaked a sponge and it put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus's lips.

And why the botany lesson John, you ask? I'm glad you asked. Well, because the hyssop plant is what they use to apply the blood of the lamb on the lintels of their door and on the ridge at the original Passover. And that wine vinegar was foretold in Psalm 69.

The symbolism here is at a fever pitch. And if I leaned in, being who I am, I would fall out and never come out.

I mean, they are standing on the very mountain where Abraham and had Isaac carry the wood for his own sacrifice on his back with the promise that God would provide a substitutionary lamb. And then one was discovered with a thicket of thorns around its head.

It's enough to blow all of our minds many, many, many times over. Suffice it to say, every word of these verses could preach entire sermons.

Verse 30 continues when he had received the drink. Jesus said, "It is finished" (tetelestai).

Oh, Ah, here it is. After everything was accomplished and to fulfill that accomplished scripture, he thirsts receives drink and then says, "10 or less Stein."

And with that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

A few points. I think it's important for us to note that Jesus gave, parented me, he gave this, no one took it from him. He asked his father if there was another way, the night before in the garden, but having no other solution being made known or provided, Jesus set his face like flint and rejected the very same offer when it was reciprocated and offered back to him mere hours later by Pilate.

Jesus gave no people or people group killed him.

Jesus gave up his spirit, his pneuma.

Anything is possible.

He gave up his pneuma. The word pneuma, it literally translates breath. So just breath.

Like a lot, like our word pneumonia, like a breathing condition with that same silent P neuma. Breath.

In philosophy, though pneuma meant vital spirit, soul, the creative force of a person, I liked that one.

And then in religious context, the same word Pneuma is often translated spirit, as in like a capital S spirit, like the spirit, the third person of the Triune God, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. It's translated spirit ghost in different places in the New Testament. And like most things, there are a few interpretations of this phrase of him giving up his pneuma. One, that he bowed his head and breathed his last and therefore he gave up his last breath, his pneuma. Another, that he bowed his head and gave up his pneuma, spirit or soul, and died.

And still another, that he bowed his head and gave us the spirit pneuma or Holy Ghost.

Like that, this moment was the moment when there was a cataclysmic shift in the spiritual realm. One that would tear the curtain, both figuratively and literally, of separation between that which was sacred and that which was secular, meaning all that was secluded, excluded, reuniting everything, just as the veil in the temple was torn, releasing the sacred back into everything, reintegration of returning of all the parts to the whole, everything everywhere, all at once, everything and everyone belonging.

That is the gospel, the gospel, the greatest good news, the loveliest love that ever lived, lived on through dying, and then lived again through resurrection.

There is no separation or nothing that can separate us from God and that love. It happened to less die.

Teresita. It is accomplished, completed, finished.

It is one of my all-time favorite words in all of Scripture. And I learned it from Pastor Bob.

It was actually from his final sermon here, preached from a stool in this very spot. It was a magnum opus of a message. It is indelibly inscribed in my spirit and on my heart. I revisited it and listened to it a couple of weeks ago, as I remembered that he referenced this very chapter, John 19, in that sermon all those years ago, and well, I couldn't resist revisiting the memory and the message.

He shared how to get a list. I had four applications, each of them that were used practically in everyday life at this time. And all I can say is hold on to your seats.

First in the marketplace.

So, when you purchased anything in the marketplace, you often did so on credit. And you would accumulate a tab. Even think about like Westerns when they'd go into the market to buy fabric for a dress or anything. I mean, even in that time, people still, you know, they had funds at certain times of the year they didn't hit others. Same true in this culture and at this time.

So, when you would return, maybe it's a harvest, you have the harvest, you sell everything. You're able to come in, you return, and you pay off your tab, and the merchant would then physically write on your tab, "Teresita," paid in full, Piaf paid in full.

The second was in the pronouncement of a servant. When a master would give his servant a task, the servant would go and complete the task and then return to the master and state, "Teresita," guaranteeing, with his word as his bond, "I have completed the task."

The third for prisoners in Rome.

Now, when you were convicted by a judge at this time, you were sentenced with a certificate, like a physical piece of paper, and it showed your indictment and your sentencing. And then that would be attached to the door of your prison cell.

And then once your sentence was completed, the judge would then return to your cell and write over your sentencing to signify that the sentence has been satisfied.

This was also important practically because it provided a pathway back to the community for individuals who had been imprisoned for whatever they had done. They would take this piece of paper with their crime and their punishment, and then the word "tetelestai" (meaning "it is finished") would be written over it. And that would be the evidence that enabled them to rejoin the community as a full participant. Their sentence was satisfied.

The fourth way in which this was commonly used at that time was for warriors in battle. It was also a victory cry over the enemy. "Teresita" would be exclaimed, meaning "the enemy is vanquished, the battle is over, hail the victorious free."

And I love all of them for multiple reasons. One, for how Jesus lived each of these, paying the wages of sin and death, completing the mission with which he had been tasked by his father. Having been convicted by Pilate, even with a paper sign posted on the cross above his death sentence, "tetelestai," and he is the conqueror of sin and separation, "tetelestai."

And I also love this because of how it can apply to each of us.

I was walking with my dear friend Kristine earlier this week after work one day, and I was recounting these four meanings of "tetelestai." And she stopped and said how particularly poignant she felt that they were for her as a member of the LGBTQIA community and as a Christian.

Do you want to just share briefly? You do not have to. Just that snippet you gave me, like why you felt?

I just hate to share someone else's story. You want me to come home? Yeah, sure.

Good thing you wore a dress and nice shoe and a cardigan. I didn't tell me this beforehand.

Oh, I didn't. That's okay. That's probably your rule. I broke, but no, it's better because I probably would have stayed home. Sorry.

Keeping it real.

So yeah, we were walking, and when she was telling me a little bit about the verses and the title "tetelestai," it was so profound to me because throughout the entire journey, from the start to the finish, the message that came to me was very different than before. It came to me as someone who identifies as queer and looking at this through a centered set. And so, what an LGBTQ person sometimes needs is to be reminded that they are loved by God fully. And because, frankly, we have been spoken over very poorly. Even before I was a Christian, sorry, even before I came out, the things that were said over me were very hurtful and harmful. So, the one for prisoners in Rome, the prisoners in Rome.

And what I said to my dear friend was that this could really be for every single one of us here. Because every single one of us, whether we're queer or not, we have something inside of us that we think God doesn't love us for, or that we cannot stand, we hide, maybe we're ashamed of. And so, in the prisoners of Rome, what was so profound to me was this idea of to the left side is finished.

The idea that for my LGBT brothers and sisters in the room, whatever has been spoken over you in the past by Christians, Jesus says, "Now that was not what I was speaking over you, and it is finished." Meaning how amazing it is for us that we can walk forth in our identity knowing that that junk that Christians have said is not only not true but is paid for. That I was so struck by this idea of having something that was stamped with Catalyst. I like evidence to go back into the community like, "No, yes, I have this to say, as a believer, as a Christian, as an LGBT person. Jesus says that what you say is not correct. And I have that stamp that I can then use inside of me because mostly, it's inside of us, right? It's our ability to go out into the community fully without shame or fear."

And so, I have that, and how profound it is to go, "I am not only receiving that, but I'm taking that. I'm valuing that, and I'm taking a stand and saying, 'This is what Jesus has for us. This is the stamp of total lifestyle that's finished for us to and that we can then go forth.'" And the part I don't know if you said yet, but the part we were talking about how as prisoners, they would go forth because sometimes I felt like a prisoner. I feel like a prisoner because of the words that other people speak over me. And it's hard that I have to fight. I have to fight that fight, those words. And what I just loved was Kevin shared that as a prisoner, you got this thing. And so, you could go and say, "Hey, look, tetelestai, it is finished. You can't hold this over me anymore. I'm not a prisoner. I'm not the things. I'm fully loved and embraced, and I'm free to be me."

It's so much more powerful to hear it from a person directly than if I were to recount it. So, thank you.

And that got me wondering that conversation earlier this week. And you do not have to raise your hands for this. But it just made me wonder how many sitting here in our church have been excluded by a church? How many have been limited in what they could do or how they could serve in a church? How many have been asked to leave, whether in word or behavior, by a church? How many have been told that their love was wrong or that their love was sin?

It makes me question how many times we have outright excluded the queer community or secluded or sequestered them. You can come, but only this far, only do this much, only serve in this way, placing them in prison cells with sentences inscribed by judges of man nailed to the door. Sinner. Unforgivable sin. Love the sinner. Hate the sin. The sting. When what Jesus said was, "A new commandment I give to you: love one another." And if you need any clarity on what that looks like, he continued, "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. That is how they will know you are my followers if you love one another." And does this love know any restraint? Does it have any restrictions? And that's just the LGBTQIA community, which isn't to exclude the church's exclusions and seclusions of BIPOC communities, or women in ministry, or children as the church of tomorrow rather than just as much a part of the church of today.

For too long, the church has stood for what it is stood against. But what I hear week after week after week in John is the invitation to include, to include the very ones that weren't chosen as disciples by the Pharisees, those who offered doves because they couldn't afford lambs at the first Passover in the temple. He turned those tables over. The excluded people groups like the Samaritans, the women, all the women in his life, the diseased, the demoniac, over and over and over and over again, we see Jesus moving toward marginalized people. And if we profess to follow Jesus, then we must embody that same spirit of inclusion. We must challenge the exclusions and limitations imposed by the church. It is not enough to merely tolerate or accept others; we must actively love and embrace them as Jesus did.

This love knows no boundaries, no prejudice, and no discrimination. It extends to all marginalized communities, whether it be the LGBTQIA community, BIPOC communities, women in ministry, or children who are often overlooked. We cannot continue to confine and restrict their participation in the church based on outdated beliefs and prejudices.

The true essence of Christianity lies in unconditional love and acceptance. It is about breaking down walls and building bridges. It is about recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of their background or identity.

So, let us strive to be a church that embodies the teachings of Jesus. Let us be a place of refuge, affirmation, and belonging for all who seek God's love. May we dismantle the barriers of exclusion and embrace a new paradigm of inclusion, where everyone can fully participate and contribute their gifts and talents.

For in the end, it is by our love that we will be known as followers of Christ. And it is through our love that we can truly transform lives and build a more compassionate and inclusive world.

We will find him out in the margins, working beyond the borders of the church and Christian unity itself. Will we follow him there? He didn't come to start a religion; he came to start a revolution of love that would love the world back to life. And to inspire all of us to love more and, dare I say, love fearlessly, because

fear is what leads to exclusion. The belief that either there isn't enough or that love has limits, and that we will be judged guilty by association. But when faced with fear, I challenge us to find the face of Jesus because you will find no fear there. For there is no fear in love, for perfect love drives out fear.

And that first doesn't stop there that most of us think of it. For there is no fear and love, for perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. And feel free to read that entire passage in First John 4:16 through 21. It is a fertile soil from which fearless love can begin to grow.

Now my scriptures go on, but that is the crux of the message, pun intended, but to carry my verses through. And so, they don't have to add three more weeks to the sermon series on John, which is already setting a record. I'll carry them through verse 31. Now it was the day of preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath. They asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers, therefore, came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus's side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water, blood and water.

I love this imagery because from the one we receive the sacrament of communion, which just happens to be right here, that was not planned. But here it is, the cup of the new covenant of his blood of redemption and atonement. And from the other, we have the sacrament of baptism, the invitation to death and resurrection life, both pouring out of him as he's pouring out His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and reintegrating all things.

Verse 35, the man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you may also believe. These things happened so that the scripture will be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones will be broken." Those scriptures are Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, which we're not speaking of the Messiah, but we're speaking of the Paschal lamb. But John is

here, making it very clear that he sees Jesus as the Paschal lamb. Those verses in Exodus and Numbers are instructions on how to treat the Passover lamb. Verse 37 continues, and as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." That is from Zechariah 12:10. And in fact, that whole verse is, "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one who grieves for a firstborn son."

And I love that whole context because it not only prophesizes that they will look on the one that they have pierced, but again, it ties this to a moment of an outpouring of the Spirit. And the Hebrew word there in Zechariah 12:10, since this is the Old Testament, is Ruach, which again, literally translates breath. But in spiritual contexts, is translated spirit with a capital S, as in the Spirit.

So again, the pouring out of the spirit of communion, the spirit of reintegration, the spirit of wholeness. Verse 38. Later, Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders, John, throwing some shade.

With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away and he was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who had earlier can't do it that side I blocked them like the man who had earlier visited Jesus at night. Again, John just out here serving that tea. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 75 pounds. Now this is notable because it harkens back to a week earlier.

If this was at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and Mary, if you remember, lavishly poured out the oil and washed his feet with her hair.

It was a gift that was so extravagant. Judas the treasurer publicly chastised her, and then Jesus rebuked him. Only this weighed 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes signifies that the gift of Nicodemus was 100 times costlier than that gift, which was already deemed a lavish gift 100 times.

These are wealthy, powerful men. And it's worth noting that by asking for Jesus's body, the body of a convicted criminal in the eyes of the state and the church, a body by which you would have normally been placed in a mass grave following a crucifixion was an act that would connect them with this man convicted of treason.

And to make public that you are going to place him in a private never before used new tomb, which would clearly be associated with someone of status and privilege, further associates them with this man with Jesus. And in many ways, this is nothing short of courageous. Regardless of John shade, we don't see John or any other disciple on the scene at this moment taking these risks and honoring this great teacher in their eyes. Verse 40, taking Jesus's body and the two of them wrapped it with the spices in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden and, in the garden, a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid, because it was the Jewish day of preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

And with that, the stage is set.

Jesus has been declared dead by both the Roman soldiers who felt no need to break his legs, and then confirmed by reliable witnesses Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who would only have wrapped him in cloth and used all of those expensive spices and aloes, if they were certain he was actually dead.

Jesus was placed in a single occupancy never before used new tomb. This is to remove any doubt of whose body it was that was in there. So, he's definitely dead. And he's definitely Jesus, private, gated community, I mean to definitely no way out. Except tetelestai.

The judge taking one look at the indictment and sentence of the door of the new tomb, himself wrote back to Jesus tetelestai, paid in full, the task is accomplished. The sentence is satisfied. And the victory is one.

The numerous spirits have been given up in the veil is down.

Love has one in forever will let us now live with that same love just as Christ loves us. Let us love one another fearlessly and without restraint. And may that

love draw us closer and closer to wholeness, to reorient all of ourselves towards that center, wholeness within ourselves and wholeness within our community? Isn't that what we really all thirst for?

Isn't that what we've really all been thirsting for all along.

Maybe continue to be ambassadors of that great love, and bring that love to every prison door and remain vigilant until every prison door receives that word. Tell us die. The sentence is satisfied. You are free and free to be full participants in the community.

And I pray that that would forever remind us of the powers of oppression that are at work to keep the enslaved enslaved.

I pray that this will serve as a constant reminder of the oppressive forces that strive to maintain the enslaved in their bondage. Our task is far from complete; it must span every passing year. May we emulate those who have borne and continue to bear the message of love until the very end. Amen.