

Jesus' Sixth Word From the Cross

Written by Bill Perkins

"It is finished."

- John 19:30

Jesus didn't whisper this word.

He declared it.

A single breath
carrying the weight
of His mission.

In the ancient world,
a man's charges were written on a scroll
and nailed above his cell.

It stayed there
until the sentence was served
and the debt was paid.

Only then was the scroll taken down,
and the Greek word "tetelestai"
was written across it-
the same word we translate as
"It is finished."

Paul gives us the clearest explanation
of what Jesus accomplished
in that moment.

"He canceled the record of debt,
with its charges against us,
and took it away
by nailing it to the cross."
- Colossians 2:14

Paul doesn't soften the language.
He reaches for the strongest verbs he can.
Canceled.

Taken away.
Nailed to the cross.

When Jesus cried,
"It is finished"-Tetelestai-
He wasn't announcing the end of His life.
He was declaring the debt paid.
The record removed.
The charges gone.

And for all who look
to the One lifted up
and believe in Him,
the record of their sins-
every one,
known and unknown,
the sins they committed
and the good they failed to do-
has been dealt with.

Paid for.
Removed.
Never to be brought up again.

He faced the full weight of our guilt.
He paid what we owed.

Tetelestai.
It is finished.

You may not know this about Jesus:
the debt was canceled before we knew we owed it.

What record of debt
do you still carry
as if it hasn't been canceled?

Tetelestai tells me
I don't have to pay
for what Christ already paid.

I don't have to hold on
to what He has taken away.

The charges against me-
every one-
were nailed to His cross,
not mine.

I can live free
because the debt is gone.

Father,
thank You for sending Your Son
to bear my guilt,
to carry my record,
to pay what I owed.

Thank You that in Him
my debt is canceled,
my charges removed,
my sins taken away.

Teach me to live
as someone forgiven,
someone free,
someone covered
by the finished work of Jesus.

In His name,
Amen.