

Tetelestai

(John 19:30)

Introduction: The resurrection addresses the myth of “existentialism.”

Before we jump into today’s text, it’s important that I tell you about the current stage of our society: people have become existentialists.

Ask them three crucial questions:

1. What’s the meaning of life? To enjoy.
2. What’s death? The cessation of life.
3. Do you have hope? And to this one, you don’t need any answer — you already know they are hopeless, no matter what they say.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is Heaven’s response to such a hopeless worldview in our society today.

The resurrection truly gives you hope: there is more to life than just here and right now. To the existentialist, existence itself feels like Heaven (that is pitiful!). To the Christian, we know the best awaits us!

The tomb is empty so our future doesn’t have to be.

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Today’s Sermon – Easter Sunday: this is the day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we look at the empty tomb on Sunday, it rings the bell of a word our Lord Jesus said when he was hanging on the cross: *Tetelestai*, which means “it is finished.”

Jesus didn’t say “I am finished”; He said “It is finished.”

Arthur Pink says, “It is finished: all the prophecies are fulfilled. It is finished: all his suffering. It is finished: the atonement for sins. It is finished: the destruction of Satan’s power.”

This Greek word was used for three occasions:

1. **Mission.** It meant “passed,” “accomplished.” Think of when you go for a driving test, and once you accomplish it, the instructor says “Tetelestai” — it is finished.

Jesus came to Earth, lived a perfect life, died a sacrificial death for our sake, and now he says, “It is finished.”

The cross wasn’t a tragedy — it was an appointment.

2. **Obedience.** It meant obedience. Once a task was given by the boss or general, the servant/soldier had to accomplish it — in a timely manner — and report to the leader saying “Tetelestai” — it is finished.

Jesus was obedient in all ways, including death. He died on the cross on Friday, at the time of the Passover lamb sacrifice, and was raised on the third day — timely manner! And he says, “It is finished.”

3. **Payment.** It meant “paid off.” Owing money in the ancient world wasn’t a funny thing — there was the dread of losing your own life in order to pay the debt. However, when any pending debt was paid off, there was a stamp with the inscription “Tetelestai” — paid in full!

Jesus’ death has paid off our debts toward God. As the Apostle Paul shouts confidently in Romans chapter 8, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Conclusion:

There are two things we can’t afford on our own:

A. **We can’t fundraise a meal for every kid in Canada.** Suppose you decide to be generous; you will pay for every kid a \$5 McValue meal — you go to

McDonald's, give your credit card, and they tap it each time there's a kid. The meal is cheap; you can afford it. However, the first kid calls all his friends telling them there is a free meal at McDonald's; they come, and they call all their friends too. And they call their friends too... and next thing you know, you are literally paying for the meal of every kid in Canada.

Now, the fundraiser becomes impossible to pay, right?!

How much more our sins, and the sins of the world. The price is too high; only Christ can pay it.

B. We can't afford a house without a mortgage. We need a lender with deep pockets to partner with us in order to fulfill the dream of home ownership. It takes years until we pay the house in full!

In the same way, Christ did not stop at just paying our debt — he gave us his credit. He gave us a home. A home where gold, the precious currency of earth, is used as pavement for the roads. A home where the dollar means nothing, because it is worthless. A home where the real estate is heavenly!

Question: Back to the mortgage illustration, once the mortgage is paid in full, do you pay an extra month fee – just you know, because you are super generous and you like your lender so much? No you don't!

In the same way, there is nothing you need to pay, add, or deserve to inherit salvation. Jesus Christ has already paid the bill in full.

The cross closed the case; the resurrection opened our future.

You have a home in Heaven, and you are his home on earth.

Praise be to God, for his wonderful gift, Amen!

The Resurrection and the Myth of Existentialism

- **Purpose of Life** = to enjoy
- **What's Death** = cessation of life.
- **Where's hope** = There isn't.

Tetelestai: meaning and usage

Jesus didn't say "I am finished"; He said "It is finished."

Arthur Pink's quote.

3 Usages: Mission, Obedience, and Payment.

1. The Mission.

- a. Illustration: Driving test.
- b. Application: Jesus.

2. Obedience (*in a timely manner*).

- a. Illustration: Work deadline.
- b. Application: Jesus on the *third day*...

3. Payment.

- a. Illustration: Stamp, it's paid in full.
- b. Application: Our spiritual debt is paid off.

Conclusion: 2 things we can't pay for on our own:

- a. A meal for the kids.
- b. A house.