



IT IS  
FINISHED

Seven Sermon Outlines and Discussion Questions  
to Help God's People Prepare for Easter

King James Version

The vision of CTA is  
to see Christians highly effective  
in their ministry so that Christ's Kingdom  
is strengthened and expanded.

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Seven Sermon Outlines and Discussion Questions  
to Help God's People Prepare for Easter

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible

#FINXXSOKJ



## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 1 Week 1—Forgive

1. Think of a time when a friend or family member feigned innocence, a time when someone claimed, "Not me! I didn't do it!"
  - Without naming names, summarize the situation. Then speculate on why the person denied guilt.
  - Did you believe the claim of innocence? Why or why not?
  - Now think about a time when you yourself denied guilt, even though you were guilty. What led you to insist on your innocence? (There's no need to explain the circumstances; just talk about your motives.)
  - In general, what would you suggest as the top three reasons people avoid accepting responsibility for wrongdoing?
2. Many individuals in the Bible denied their guilt, claiming, "Not me!" The sermon called out Adam and Eve, the Chief Priests, Pontius Pilate, and Peter.
  - Can you name other individuals from the Bible who belong on this list, too?
  - With which of these characters do you most identify? Explain.

# Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 1

## Week 1—Forgive

(continued)

3. Christians who observe the season of Lent (the six weeks leading up to Easter Sunday) often see it as a time for self-examination and “truth telling.”
  - Why is it important for Christians *always* to practice intentional honesty as we confess our sins to God?
  
  - Why then might we set aside special times and seasons for honest confession?
  
4. Share your thoughts on the adage “True leadership is taking responsibility for things that aren’t your fault.”
  - Have you ever known a leader who practiced this? Explain briefly.
  
  - What was the result of this leadership style among those who followed a leader like this?
  
  - In what ways does this adage describe our Lord Jesus? In what ways has your Savior’s willingness to assume your guilt changed you?
  
5. Set Jesus’ words of forgiveness in their context by reading the surrounding verses from Luke 23:26–43. How does this context make his words, “forgive them,” even more remarkable?

As you leave today, pray with and for one another. Share personal prayer requests. Ask the Holy Spirit to draw each of you closer to Christ and to one another as you prepare to celebrate the Savior’s resurrection.

## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 2 Week 2—Salvation

1. Do you have a favorite “cop show”? Or a favorite movie in which justice finally triumphs? Tell about it briefly. What makes you love it?
2. Think of a time in your life when you experienced injustice. Without dwelling on the details or the individuals involved, share something about your struggle with the idea that “someone has to pay.” Why do you think this feeling is so strong, so hard to resist?
3. Jesus promised the criminal, “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Read the context of this promise from Luke 23:32–43.
  - Two criminals were crucified with Jesus, one on either side of him. How do the two differ from one another?
  - Reread verse 41. How does this criminal understand justice? How does he see Jesus?
  - How do you think this understanding led him to pray the prayer he prayed?

Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 2  
Week 2—Salvation  
(continued)

4. Consider your own guilt before God. Law enforcement may see your record as unblemished, but before God, every sin counts as a criminal act—a violation of his eternal Law.
  - What makes that thought especially troubling?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Share with your group a time when the full weight of Jesus' sacrifice impacted you. What difference did the realization of his undeserved love for you make?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Think about someone you know who appears to be a lost cause.
  - What makes you see him or her as beyond salvation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - What might you do to extend the love of Jesus to this person?

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## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 3 Week 3—Forsaken

1. Many therapists have noted, "So many people are alone today." For all our connectedness through technology, we see a culture disconnected and so often forsaken.
  - What examples can you give of people or groups that have been forsaken by others in our society?
  - Think of a time when you felt forsaken. What was it like? Where did you find hope?
2. Jesus himself was forsaken at the cross.
  - What do you imagine that forsakenness must have been like for Jesus?
  - What do you imagine the act of forsaking the Son must have been like for the Father?
  - How did our sin make this all necessary?
  - How is the fact that Jesus was forsaken good news for us?

Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 3  
Week 3—Forsaken  
(continued)

3. Read Psalm 22 carefully, perhaps from more than one Bible translation.
  - Where do you see the transition from forsakenness to feast and celebration?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - What important context does this turning point in the psalm provide? In other words, how does it give us further insight into Jesus' words of abandonment, spoken from his cross?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Think of someone you know personally who feels forsaken today. This person could be alone, divorced, depressed, or rejected. Brainstorm three doable ways to share good news with the person.

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## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 4 Week 4—Compassion

### 1. Think about compassion.

- Tell about a time compassion came easily to you.
- In what circumstances do you sometimes find it harder to show compassion?
- What factors in yourself and in others make compassion easier or harder?

### 2. Imagine yourself standing with Mary and John at the foot of Jesus' cross. The Lord is dying, dying in a gruesome way.

- What are some words you would use to describe Mary's feelings? John's?
- What words would you use to describe Jesus' feelings as he watched Mary? his friend John?
- Set the words of Jesus in their context by reading John 19:16–27. How does this context make Jesus' compassion for others all the more remarkable?

Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 4  
Week 4—Compassion  
(continued)

3. Scripture is filled with examples of God confronting sin and showing compassion, all at the same time.
- What examples can you suggest? What can we learn about our Lord through these examples?
  - Are there times when true compassion shows itself in acts of confrontation? In other words, can confrontation be the most compassionate thing we can do for another person? Explain.
  - Give an example from your own life or from the life of someone you know in which true compassion led to confrontation. (If you are sharing an example from someone else's experience, be sure to omit names and other identifying information.)
4. God's compassion is more than a feeling. His compassion leads him to act.
- Name two or three tangible ways God has shown compassion to you.
  - Briefly describe two or three tangible ways you have shown compassion for others.
  - Reconsider your comments in response to question 1, bullet 2. How might reflecting on Jesus' compassion for you affect your compassion toward those you have identified as undeserving?

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## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 5 Week 5—Suffering

1. Share a time when you were dehydrated or at least felt that way. How did it feel to finally take a drink after experiencing incredible thirst?
2. Psalm 69 provides the context for Jesus' words, "I thirst." Read it.
  - What parallels do you see between the descriptions in the psalm and Jesus' experiences on the cross?
  - How does the psalmist's words and descriptions help you understand Jesus' suffering?
  - The psalmist wrote, describing his own pain, fear, and agony. We can read these words with our own suffering in mind too. But Jesus' misery was much, much deeper than anything we can experience. Explain the connections among the psalmist, us, and Jesus.
3. Think about your own needs today. What are you thirsty for? What are you suffering? For what do you long?

## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 5 Week 5—Suffering (continued)

4. What makes it hard for people in general to admit their “thirst,” to share their suffering and their needs? List as many answers as you can.
  - Which roadblock on your list is most likely to deter you from admitting your needs to others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Psalm 69 promises that “the LORD heareth the poor” (v.33). Tell about a time this promise proved true for you.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - How is it good news for sufferers that Jesus himself suffered?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. In times of spiritual thirst, we are often drawn closer to the Lord through the words of the Bible or the encouragement of others. Tell about a “dry time” when God revealed himself in a new or different way.

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## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 6 Week 6—Trust

1. As you can do so comfortably, jot down a few words that describe your relationship with your earthly father. For some, these will be precious words. For others, they may be difficult words.
  - How can bad relationships with sinful human fathers damage our ability to trust our heavenly Father?
  - How might we, as members of the family of God, help someone who struggles with this?
2. Read Psalm 31. Compare this prayer with Jesus' situation described in Luke 23:44–49.
  - How do the words of Psalm 31 expand your understanding of Jesus' death, helping you to see it in a different light?
  - What do these two texts, taken together, reveal about the trustworthy nature of God's hands?
3. Think of a time when you ran out of options, a time when you felt completely helpless.
  - What was that experience like for you?
  - Did you commit yourself into God's hands? If so, what was that like? If not, looking back, how do you imagine the situation might have been different? Explain.

Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 6  
Week 6—Trust  
(continued)

4. Much of the time, we rely on the people and things we can see and touch. Pharmacists. Investment accounts. The brakes on our vehicles. What other similar examples can you name? Work together to create as long a list as you can.

- Is it wrong to rely on these things? Explain.
- When are you tempted to trust resources you can see and touch more than you trust in your heavenly Father's care?
- In a practical sense, how might you fight these temptations? In other words, how might you daily commit your life and everything else you value into your Father's hands?

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## Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 7 Week 7—New

1. Think of all the ways you've seen duct tape used.

- What's the most unusual use for duct tape you have seen.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Share a time when a task or a broken item needed more than duct tape.

2. Consider Jesus' words: "It is finished."

- What did Jesus finish?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Why isn't "self-improvement" enough?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What makes the Gospel message of forgiveness and newness of life much more than mere "self-improvement"?

Questions to Accompany *It Is Finished* Sermon 7  
Week 7—New  
(continued)

3. Jesus became a true human being for us. He did not come to fix us, to make us into better people. He came to make us new—a new kind of people!
  - What do you think this means?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - What's the difference between a patched-up version of ourselves and the “new creatures” Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 5:17? How does this idea excite and encourage you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Jesus rose from the dead. Through faith in him, you have a whole new life—for all eternity. How does the newness Jesus gives also change your life in the present? What kinds of old things can be left behind?

As you leave today, thank Jesus for the new life you have received. Also ask that he provide opportunities to share the message of new life with someone who is open to receiving it.