

## **“Paid in Full”**

*By Nancy Ellen Ranfranz*

It is mid-afternoon and an eerie darkness has fallen over the land putting everyone on edge. Three men are hanging in sheer agony on one of the cruelest instruments of torture ever devised. Above the man in the middle hangs the sign, “King of the Jews.” His name is Jesus – Immanuel.....God with us. The Father’s wrath is hitting him with full force. He has become the curse (Gal. 3:13) and He has become sin (2 Cor. 5:21). Shortly after 3pm, He knows all things have been accomplished and he hoarsely whispers for a drink. He knows He has nothing left to give and with His last ounce of effort, He shouts, “It is finished.”

That’s the part of the story we really never like to look at and remember. It makes us uneasy and uncomfortable. Did He really do that for me? How could anyone purposefully put themselves through such agony and torture? But yet, as we observe Lent, we are invited to remember and to reflect on this very story.

Recently my husband and I sold an investment house. It had been on the market for almost a year. Wow did it feel good to get it finally behind us. The day after the closing, I sat down in my office and paid the debt we had acquired from the house. As I wrote, “paid in full” across those credit card statements, a sense of relief and freedom overtook me. I promptly filed the statements and suspect I will never look at them again. It is finished.

That phrase, “it is finished,” is actually one word in Greek, “tetelestai.” It is the word that has been found on ancient papyri receipts. It literal means, PAID IN FULL. The grammatical tense reveals that it is not just finished in the past but is still finished in the present, and will continue to be finished in the future. All sin, past, present, and future has been forgiven; filed and never to be looked at again. This is good news. A free gift of grace whose only requirement from us is to believe it, receive it, and live it.

But there is even more good news. Luke 9:56 says that Jesus came to “save” us. The Greek word for “save” is “sozo.” “Sozo” means to not only save us from our sin, but to also deliver, heal, prosper, make whole, and protect. Now that’s really good news! Everything has been provided for us to rule and reign on this earth in complete victory (Rom 5:17).

“Tetelestai” was our Savior’s final cry of victory. As He yielded up His spirit, no unfinished business was left behind. He knew He had successfully completed the work He came to do. Jesus stamped PAID IN FULL across the story of our lives just like my credit card statements. Now that’s freedom and gives us cause to celebrate.