



Finally ...

By Shari Miller

Leader's Notes and Bible Passages Available Online

(Please do NOT use the "if time permits" sections when your study session time is limited. These sections could possibly be done by the participant in private.)

On a separate sheet of paper, take two minutes and write down as many phrases as you can think of that begin or end with the word "final" or some variation of it. Share with a partner or in your small group. (Examples: "final test" or "sports finals.") **Answers will vary, but encourage everyone to share. Make it clear that everything confided within the group stays within the group throughout the study. Some more examples might include: final word, final point, final resting place, final battle, final exam, final days, final chapter, final race, final minute, and many more.**

Now quickly think of synonyms for the word "finally" and share with your group. Perhaps your synonym list included "lastly," "at the end," or "forever." Other synonyms for this word could also be "definitely," "irrevocably," "absolutely," or even "once and for all." We use the word "finally" or its variations often in our day-to-day language. How does God use this concept of "finally" in His Word? This Bible study will look at four such ways in the light of our salvation in Jesus Christ and our lives as His children.

Opening Prayer: Dear Father, You are our Creator, O Lord! We are privileged to come to You in prayer as Your dear children in the name of our Savior Jesus. We confess that our sins have separated us from You and could have for all time. But, we thank You that You saw our need for salvation and had the plan to finally free us from that sin by sending Your own Son to be our Savior from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Because He rose from the dead and lives eternally, we know that we, too, can finally look forward to eternal life in the glories of heaven. We thank You for sending us Your Holy Spirit who gives us faith and the power to share that faith, so that we can finally be Your witnesses to the world. Please bless our study of Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Finally ... Dead

This is a sobering thought, isn't it? The spiral fall of sin leads finally to death for all men. Sin is defined in *Luther's Small Catechism* as "every thought, desire, word, and deed which is contrary to God's law."
(Question #78, CPH)

See the following passages to identify the origin of sin and the results of that sin:

Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7 Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and they knew they were guilty. God said they would surely die and they did – physically and spiritually.

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." ³ ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Psalm 51:3-5 Since Adam, all are conceived in sin – original sin.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Romans 3:23 Our sin separates us from God.

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:12-14 Death comes through sin and death spreads to all because all have sinned.

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

Ephesians 2:1-3 We were once dead in sin and followed the devil, the world, and our own sinful desires.

¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

1 John 1:8 I am a sinner!

⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 The punishment of eternal destruction is for all unbelievers.

⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Jude 6-7 The punishment of eternal chains and eternal fire for those who do not believe.

⁶ And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

What do the following passages say about sin?

Genesis 3:1-5 The devil is a tempter and the “Father of Lies.” He twists the truth and is a deceiver.

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Matthew 15:19 Our sinful flesh (original sin) prompts our sinful thoughts and actions (actual sin).

¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

Galatians 5:19-21 The “works of the flesh” (actual sins) are listed.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

James 1:14-15 Temptation and desire give birth to sin that brings forth death.

¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Finally ... Free

Our loving God did not leave us to this final death and eternal fire, but saved us through the perfect life, suffering, and death of Jesus, our Savior. Read the rest of our Lord’s salvation plan in **Genesis 3:15** and

Ephesians 2:4-10. God’s plan of salvation began already in Genesis and is fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Genesis 3:15

[The LORD God said to the serpent,] ¹⁵ “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Ephesians 2:4-9

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might

show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

What does Jesus say in the following passages?

John 8:31-32 Jesus Christ, the Truth, will set all believers free from the punishment for sin.

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

John 19:30 “It is finished” or the plan of salvation was fulfilled.

³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or in the small group what Jesus’ words, “the truth will set you free” and “it is finished” mean to you. Be specific. **Answers will vary.** Encourage sharing within the group.

Read **Leviticus 16:34**. How long did God tell His Old Testament people that atonement needed to be made for their sins? **Atonement for sin was commanded forever (once a year).**

³⁴ And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins.” And Aaron did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Now read **Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; and 10:10**. What phrase is used in these references that is a synonym for “finally”? **“once and for all”**

Hebrews 7:27

He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Hebrews 9:12

He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Hebrews 10:10

And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Read **John 13:1**. Why does this passage take on greater significance when we realize that Jesus performed this act of service knowing that His suffering and death was soon to come? **He loved them to the end!**

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Finally ... Live

Paul equates his life in Christ to that of a race. See **Philippians 3:14**.

¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

As Christ's followers and led by the Spirit, we are like athletes, living our lives to the glory of Christ Jesus. How does the Holy Spirit work in us to enable us to live God-pleasing lives? See **Psalm 119:111**, **1 Peter 3:18-22**, and **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.

Psalm 119:111 God's Word

¹¹¹ Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.

1 Peter 3:18-22 Baptism

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 The Lord's Supper

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

What does the Holy Spirit enable us to do in **Acts 1:7-9**?

To be witnesses to the Good News about salvation in Jesus

⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Faith Talk: Discuss with a partner or in the small group the implications for us as Christians of the following statement: "She lives like today is her last (final) day!"

Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.

If time permits: Read the following "finally" Scripture passages and identify what Paul encourages the New Testament Christians – and us! – to do in our lives with fellow Christians and in the unbelieving world.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Rejoice, restore, comfort, agree, be peaceable

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Ephesians 6:10 Be strong and stand firm in the Lord.

[The Whole Armor of God] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Philippians 3:1a Rejoice in the Lord

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4:8 Think about those things worthy of praise

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

1 Thessalonians 4:1 Live lives that glorify God

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 Pray for fellow believers and the spread of the Gospel

Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.

1 Peter 3:8 Be unified, sympathetic, loving, tender, and humble

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

Finally ... Home!

Share the words of Jesus with each other as you read together **John 11:25-26a**: "*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.*"

Because our Savior lives, if we believe in Him, we, too, will finally live forever with Him in our heavenly home. Read His promise to all Christians in **John 14:1-6**.

¹Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Read **1 Peter 1:3-5**. What is the believer's hope? **A living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ – the hope of eternal life!**

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Faith Talk: Share with a partner or in the small group how the hope of heaven – the grand finale! – affects your

daily life. **Answers will vary. Encourage sharing within the group.**

Describe the picture of our heavenly home found in **Revelation 21:1-7** and **22:1-5**. What will “not” be in heaven? **Sea; tears; mourning; crying; pain; night; light (for the Lamb is the light)** What will be in heaven? **God; saints; New Jerusalem; river of the water of life; the throne of God and the Lamb; tree of life**

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Revelation 22:1-5

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

As believers in our awesome God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – we can look forward to our home in heaven for all eternity ... Finally!

Faith Walk:

1. Thank God daily for sending His Son Jesus to be our Savior from sin, death, and the devil.
2. Daily rejoice in the Savior’s grace and the gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments.
3. By the power of the Spirit, share with at least one person the Good News of salvation in Jesus.
4. Praise and thank God for the hope of eternal life.
5. Pray for the needs of fellow believers.

Closing Litany (Revelation 5:11-13, Revelation 21:6, and Psalm 45:6a):

Leader: “Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads and thousands and thousands saying with a loud voice,”

All: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

Leader: “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,”

All: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

Leader: “And he said to me, It is done!”

All: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Amen!”

Sing together *Thine the Amen, Thine the Praise* (LSB #680).

For All the Saints (LSB #677; LW #191; or TLH #463)