



# Closing the Gap:

*Where am I?  
Where do I want to be?*



**Many, if not most, people believe they can and must earn God's favor.**



**Disillusionment**

**Despair**



**Grace: "Unearned forgiveness"**

**Grace: "Unearned power"**



**Effort to grow is motivated by love**

**Effort to earn is a kind of bargaining  
that substitutes for love**



**The music plays on, until it doesn't...**



**Trying, yes...**  
**Closing the gap, yes...**  
**Earning...never.**

**John 19:16-23** Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). Here they crucified him, and with him two others — one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom



**John 19:24-29    “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, “They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.” So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips.**



**John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**



**1. Consider the cross...the place of finished perfection.**



## **2. Remember what the cross "means"**



**Everything happens for a reason**

***Believe it when you are suffering***

***Don't say it to others who are  
suffering***



**Rom. 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**



**The cross was an event in human history with a meaning that transcends human history.**



**Why the cross?**

**Love & Justice = Finished**





# **How do we consistently stay out of the "earning" mode?**

- 1. Recognize the signs of earning mode**
- 2. Remember the difference between earning  
and effort**
- 3. Reflect on "It is finished"**



**"I am the vine; you are the branches.  
If a man remains in me and I in him,  
he will bear much fruit; apart from  
me you can do nothing."**

**-Jesus  
(John 15)**