A Finished Job

*John 19:28-30 - After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*

The race called the "marathon" is 26.2 miles long. Every year there are millions of people who run marathon races, which are held all around the world. The very best time posted by any of those runners is two hours, two minutes, and 57 seconds. That record was set in Berlin in 2014.   
  
That's the way it was until Eliud Kipchoge ran the marathon this month.  
  
He broke that world record not by five seconds, although five seconds would have been impressive. He broke that world record not by 15 seconds, although that would have been an amazing accomplishment. He broke that record not by 50 seconds, or a minute, or even two minutes.  
  
Kipchoge broke the old world record by 2.5 minutes.  
  
Looking back on the day, Kipchoge said, "I rank this as the highest-ever performance of my life."  
  
Indeed, it was the greatest performance of his life, or the life of any marathon runner. After seeing such a performance, everyone ought to be very pleased.  
  
Maybe they ought to be, but they're not.  
  
You see, in track-and-field contests there are some times that are almost considered to be unbreakable. Once upon a time the idea of having someone run the four-minute mile was thought to be beyond human ability. Then, in 1954, Roger Bannister managed the impossible.  
  
Next on the list of impossible times was having someone run a two-hour marathon.  
  
Eliud Kipchoge came close. Indeed, if he had run his race only 27 seconds faster, he would have had his name go down in the record books forever. All of this has a fair number of enthusiastic people saying his job isn't finished.  
  
They are glad Kipchoge managed to shave minutes off the marathon time, but they believe his work is not yet completed. All of this has to be very frustrating for him. He already has done the semi-impossible; now some folks want him to finish that which is impossibler.  
  
It occurs to me that almost 2,000 years ago Jesus ran a marathon. His entire life was a race during which He fulfilled the Laws we had broken and resisted the world's temptations. At the end of His life, He was unjustly crucified and murdered.  
  
Just before Jesus died, He recognized that everything He had been asked to do had been completed. There were no loose ends, no jobs left undone, and no sins not paid for. Seeing all had been accomplished, Jesus said, "It is finished." And it was. Now, because of all Jesus has finished, everyone who is brought to faith in Him is forgiven and free.  
  
**THE PRAYER**: Dear Lord, Jesus did the work entrusted to Him thoroughly, completely, and absolutely. He did that which no human being could ever do. Moved by His sacrifice -- in faith -- may we always show both our gratitude and appreciation. In Jesus' Name we ask it. Amen.