



# DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

## Sunday, November 6-12 (B) – Hebrews 9:24-28

**Focus:** *Once For All Sacrifice*

### **word of life**

**“But as it is, he (Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.”** Hebrews 9:26 (NRSV)

Read Hebrews 9:24-28

Our reflection on the image of Jesus as the great high priest who offers the perfect sacrifice for us comes to a soaring climax in the verses appointed for today. The contrast is once again made between the incomplete earthly sanctuary made of earthly hands (Hebrews 9:24) and the greater, perfect sanctuary of heaven in the full presence of God. Likewise, the incomplete sacrifice of an earthly high priest offered by necessity year after year pales to the sacrifice of Jesus of himself. (Hebrews 9:25-26) There is no comparison! The earthly sanctuary is but a dim copy of the heavenly one; and the sacrifice of the human high priest is fleeting and needs to be repeated year after year while the sacrifice of Christ is everlasting and complete.

1. *Can you think of other examples contrasting the earthly and heavenly?*
2. *Describe the perfect sanctuary of heaven in the full presence of God.*

There are several key words and phrases in today’s reading that are found throughout the book of Hebrews. The phrase “on our behalf” (Hebrews 9:24) identifies the purpose of Christ’s sacrifice. It is for us that Jesus suffers and dies. It for us that Jesus is obedient to God’s will. We proclaim this as we receive the bread and wine “given for you, and shed for you.”

3. *How does it make you feel to know that Jesus suffered and died for you?*
4. *How do you try to live and order your life in response to this gift given for you?*

Our highlighted verse for today (see above) includes another key theme: “...he (Christ) has appeared **once for all** ....” The Greek word translated “once for all” refers to the unique and definitive act of Christ’s death. The apostle Paul uses this word in his letter to the Romans: “The death he (Christ) died, he died to sin, **once for all**; but the life he lives, he lives to God.” (Romans 6:10 NRSV) Jesus, as both priest and sacrifice, accomplishes in full what earthly priests can only do in part and temporarily – he reconciles us fully to God. The effects of Christ’s sacrifice – forgiveness of sin, new life, a new relationship with God, salvation – are for all and for all time.

5. *What does the phrase “once for all” mean to you?*

“But as it is, he (Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26 NRSV) Jesus ushers in a new era and new covenant – a covenant which is permanent and not dependent on our imperfect human actions. The phrase “the end of the age” echoes the opening verses of Hebrews: “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days (God) has spoken to us by a Son...” (Hebrews 1:1-2 NRSV)

We will know the fullness of this new covenant when Christ comes again, “not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” (Hebrews 9:28 NRSV)

6. *Describe the new era when Christ will come again.*
7. *How should we live as we wait for the return of Christ?*

## **word among us**

“OK! OK! I’ll do it for you, but only just this one time.”

We can imagine a scenario when these words are heard. Oftentimes, they are spoken in a moment of frustration and resignation. We are asked to do something we don’t want to do. We resist and resist, until finally – begrudgingly – for the sake of the relationship with the other person, we give in.

1. *When have you heard this phrase spoken? Describe the setting and the context.*
2. *After you do something one time how inclined are you to do it again and again?*
3. *What might truly be a “once-for-all” sacrifice?*

We hear similar words in the reading for today from the book of Hebrews. Jesus suffers and dies – for us. Jesus intercedes to God – for us. Jesus appears “in the presence of God on our behalf.” (Hebrews 9:24 NRSV) We affirm this in the words of the Nicene Creed that we say in worship: “For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven ... for our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate ....” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 126) Jesus does it all – for us.

4. *What emotions do you feel when you hear all Christ has done for you?*
5. *Do you try to live your life differently because of all Christ has done? How so?*

Jesus does it all, not begrudgingly, but willingly. And unlike our “one-time” efforts which don’t last, Jesus’ gift of himself lasts forever. It is a “once for all” gift. It is such a precious gift that it gives completion, fulfillment, and total forgiveness. “But as it is, he (Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26 NRSV) Thanks be to God!

6. *What does it mean to you to be given a “once for all” forever gift in Jesus Christ?*
7. *How might you describe this “once for all” gift to someone who has not heard about Jesus Christ?*

## **faith practice in daily life**

### **Hear God’s Word and share in the Lord’s Supper**

It’s a one-time thing – Jesus’ death and resurrection. It’s a one-time thing – our baptism. It’s a one-time thing, not because we don’t need it every week, every day, every hour. No, it’s a one-time thing because of the power of the grace of God revealed in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ.

And so we gather together weekly to remind us of the gift given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sin. We remember daily our baptism – that once for all event that connects us to Christ. And we go forth always with grateful hearts to tell and show others the love of God in Christ our Lord.

8. *If someone wanted to be baptized again, how would you respond?*
9. *How has your understanding about your own baptism grown over the years?*
10. *What might you do to remember your baptism?*

### **Prayer**

We stand in awe, O gracious Christ, of the gift you give of yourself for us. Give us grateful hearts, and empower us to tell others of your gracious gift. Amen

## *last word*

Each day this week,  
remember to give thanks for your baptism.

*Daily Faith Practices*

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