

“Once for All . . .”— Hebrews 9:24-26

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Once for All . . .”, is Hebrews 9:24-26 → *Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer Himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

One of the most important parts of the grieving process upon the death of a loved one is closure. Closure can be defined as bringing something to a close or a final finishing point. It is the desire of people to come to some finality in the midst of their physical, emotional or spiritual struggles. In the grieving process it is the desire for the hurt caused by the loss of a loved one to become less intense and eventually go away so that it doesn't keep acting like a dark cloud, affecting everything one does in a negative way.

The search for closure can happen on every level of life. A person who is

struggling with physical afflictions feels enslaved to doctors appointments, one medical test after another and trying medication upon medication with the desire to get on with a “normal” life! People strive to “burn their bridges behind them,” usually referring to their efforts to “get over” past relationships, choices or experiences which have affected them adversely. In an effort to bring closure to wounding and crippling past experiences people are constantly trying to “cut their losses” and move forward. With a host of coping mechanisms, activities and counseling people strive to bring some kind of closure to the emotional, psychological and physical pain which haunts them throughout their lives. Oh, to find some closure in the midst of the sins and sinfulness which kills your peace and joy daily! When will we be done with it once and for all!! At death?

Closure is what our text is all about, accomplished in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ alone. The writer to the Hebrews speaks about the activities of the Old Testament high priests and the sacrifice they offered in the Holy of Holies once a year on behalf of the people. Their entering *into holy places made with hands* pictured Jesus, *Who has entered . . . into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.* (verse 24) Why is Jesus appearing before *God on our behalf*? Because the unholy cannot stand in the presence of the holy and **we are unholy in our sinfulness and sins**. Jesus is the only high priest worthy to stand for you before God, presenting you and

all your sinful self in His presence eternally.

Verse 26 of the text tells us why Jesus can stand in this position for you before your holy God: *He has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages **to put away sin** by the sacrifice of Himself.* Jesus actually came to bring closure to your struggles with sin on every level—sins you’ve committed; sins committed against you along with more sins they bred in your life; and sinfulness with its accompanying sicknesses, pain, struggles and death. Closure was accomplished for you by Jesus when He sacrificed Himself on the cross, taking **all** your sins upon Himself along with their eternal punishment. While on that cross He announced that closure with His words: *It is finished.* (cf. John 19:30)

Closure is mentioned five times throughout chapters 7-10 of the book of Hebrews and every occurrence refers to the fact that Jesus did **only once** what the other priests had to do over and over again. It was not something He had to do. No one forced Him into doing it. Jesus made this perfectly clear when He said in John 10:18 → *No one takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord.* This is actually amazing when you consider that doing so meant to take your sin along with the punishment of your hell upon Himself. The suffering of His body and death was nothing compared to the suffering of His soul in hell for you. No wonder He struggled so intensely the night before He offered Himself on the cross for our sins. (cf. Luke 22:40-46)

The far reaching affects of His sacrifice brings closure **once . . . for all sin!**

The punishment for the sin which you inherited from your parents into whose image you were born—labeled “original sin”—has been met! The punishment for every sin which you commit, past, present and future—labeled “actual sins”—has been met, no matter how severe or minor they may appear in your estimation! This also means that you can stand holy, perfect, blameless—and yes, sinless—in the presence of God because Jesus appears *in the presence of God on your behalf* as both your high priest and the sacrificial victim! Hebrews 10:10 says that by Jesus’ willful choice to do this you *have been sanctified* (that is, made holy) *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.*** He does not have *to suffer repeatedly* for your sins. His **once for all** work is your closure for all sin as you trust in Him!

The far reaching affects of His sacrifice brings closure **once . . . for all time!** We struggle in our sins, many of which continue to afflict us throughout our lifetime. Since we find ourselves committing the same sins over and over again it is hard to fathom a holy God Who is patient with us, even willing to consider us in His presence! If we consider how sinful our own forgiveness is it become even more difficult. Would you forgiven the person who hurt you for the third, fourth . . . or even the second time? Or would you walk away from him “burning your bridges behind you” in un-forgiveness? Do you ever doubt

the sincerity of repentance if the sin happens again and again, whether it be your sincerity or theirs? And how can I be forgiven if I can't forget about it as time passes?

Still, the LORD comes with His promise in Isaiah 43:25 → *I, I am He Who blots out your transgressions **for My own sake**, and I will not remember your sins.* Notice He forgives you “for His own sake.” In other words, He forgives you on His terms, not yours! What are His terms? 1 Peter 3:18 describes it: *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.* His **once for all** work is your closure for all sin throughout your whole lifetime as you trust in Him!

The far reaching affects of His sacrifice brings closure **once . . . for all people!** He acts both as high priest and sacrificial victim **for all** who trust in His Person & Work for the forgiveness of their sins! Romans 3:22-25 tells us that *there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith.*

Every person who trusts in the work of Jesus as their high priest and the perfect sacrifice for their sins stands justified before God. We need not grope

at trying to justify sin or forgiveness in any way. All people may simply look to Jesus and thank Him for His sacrifice! Nationality, vocation, position in society, gender and so forth have no bearing on this work of Jesus. His ***once for all*** work is closure for all sin for all people who trust in Him!

The struggle with the presence of sin, the devil with his temptations and death still linger in our lives everyday. It certainly does not feel like we have closure on these struggles and, in one respect, we don't. Since it is impossible to "get over" anything which has touched our lives we learn to deal with it by faith in Christ. Instead of having some kind of "death wish" in order to find closure in this life we look to the death and resurrection of Jesus as Hebrews 9:28 says: *So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him.*

The Holy Spirit gives you faith to find your "closure" in the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins and His resurrection for your eternal "closure" in heaven! He empowers us to live in a confidence with a peace and joy that desire to serve as frail, forgiven sinners because we have been served in His grace! We rejoice that His sacrifice is once for all people, for all time, for all sins! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.