

North Summit Church
Hebrews 9:23-28 - Eagerly Awaiting
January 25, 2026

Announcements:

- **Missionary Highlight**

Introduction:

We're continuing our journey through Hebrews: Encountering the Supremacy of Christ.

READ: Hebrews 9:23-28

The author has been making an extensive case about Christ's superior priesthood and his once-for-all sacrifice. Last week we saw that the blood of Christ purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Today we come to the conclusion of chapter 9, and the author is driving toward a simple but profound truth: Christ came once to bear our sin. When he comes again, it won't be about bearing our sin, it will be about making things right. His first appearing was about a sacrifice for sin, at his return it will be the consummation of all things, evil will be completely and decisively destroyed, and all things will be made new.

The phrase that immediately jumped out to me this week is verse 28: "those who are eagerly waiting for him."

[STORY] One of my favorite memories from my childhood was anticipating my parenting getting home from work.

There's a difference between waiting for a doctor's appointment where you're getting test results back and waiting for someone you love to come home. Both involve anticipation, but the emotions are completely different. One is often characterized by dread and anxiety. The other is filled with eager expectation. Same act of waiting - completely different posture. The difference comes from the certainty of a positive outcome as opposed to the uncertainty of what will transpire.

- That's the posture. That's what it looks like when you truly understand what Christ has done and what he's coming back to do.

This passage gives us three truths that teach why we can live hope-filled lives, because of the finished work of Christ.

I. Christ Appeared Once to Deal With Sin (vv. 23-26)

Hebrews 9:24-26

"For 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."

Notice three things here:

- First, Christ entered the real thing. Not a copy. Not a shadow. Heaven itself. The true Holy of Holies. And he did it "to appear in the presence of God on our behalf."
 - Right now, at this moment, Christ is standing before the Father representing you. Your great high priest is in the throne room of heaven speaking for you.
- Second, he didn't have to keep going back. The high priest went in year after year with blood not his own. It was never enough. The sacrifice had to be repeated. The guilt remained.
 - But Christ entered "once for all."
 - The Greek here is emphasizing—unrepeatable, final, done.
- Third, look at what he accomplished: "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."
 - Not cover sin. Not manage sin. Put away sin.
 - This was the climactic moment of all human history. "At the end of the ages" - everything had been pointing to this. And when Christ died, the sin question was settled.
- This is what we've been building toward for weeks. Christ's sacrifice is unrepeatable because it's utterly complete. There's nothing left undone. No loose ends. No unfinished business with your sin.
- When Jesus said "It is finished," he meant it.

II. Christ Will Appear Again - Not to Deal With Sin (vv. 27-28a)

Now the author shifts from Christ's first coming to his second:

Hebrews 9:27-28a

"And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin..."

Let me walk through the authors logic:

- **Verse 27 gives us the universal human pattern: Death once, then judgment.**
 - This is the sober reality every human being faces. You get one life. You die once. Then comes judgment. No second chances. No do-overs. Death is final, judgment is certain.
- **Verse 28 shows how Christ broke that pattern - but notice HOW he broke it:**
 - "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many..."
 - He entered the pattern. He died like we die - once. But he died *for us*. He bore *our* sins. He took the judgment we deserved.
- But here's where it gets beautiful:
 - "...will appear a second time, not to deal with sin..."
- When Christ returns, he's not coming to offer another sacrifice. He's not coming to deal with the sin problem again. That's already done.
- This is huge. His second coming is not a second chance to get the sin question right. Sin was dealt with at the cross. Finished. Complete.
- So if he's not coming back to deal with sin, what is he coming back for?

III. He's Coming to Save Those Eagerly Waiting (v. 28b)

Hebrews 9:28

"...but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

Here's where the author lands. Christ will appear a second time "to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

- That word "save" here doesn't mean initial salvation - it means the completion, the consummation, the bringing to final glory of what began when we first trusted Christ.

Paul describes it in

Philippians 3:20-21:

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body."

- Christ is coming back to finish what he started. To fully and finally save his people. To bring us into the glory he purchased for us.
- And notice who this is for: "those who are eagerly waiting for him."
 - Not anxiously dreading.
 - Not fearfully uncertain.
 - Not apathetically indifferent.
 - Eagerly waiting.
- The Greek word means intense longing, craning your neck to look for something, standing on tiptoes in anticipation.

This is the posture of someone who knows two things:

1. **The sin question is settled.** Christ dealt with that at the cross. I don't have to wonder if the sacrifice was enough. I don't have to be anxious about whether my sins are forgiven. That's done.
2. **He's coming back for his own.** Not to make a way for us to be reconciled to God, but to complete the restoration process that was inaugurated on the Cross. To separate the sheep and the goats. To make us complete in Christ. And to do away with the corruption once and for all that entered our world through the Fall in the Garden.

When you know those two things, you wait differently.

Application:

- We live in the already but not yet, between Christ first coming and His second coming.

Paul captures this perfectly in his letter to Titus. Listen to how he describes the Christian life:

Titus 2:11-14

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

The structure - it's the same pattern we see in Hebrews 9:

- **The grace of God has appeared** (past) - Christ came once to deal with sin
- **Training us to live godly lives in the present age** (present) - how we live now
- **Waiting for our blessed hope** (future) - eagerly awaiting his return

This is the Christian life: living between two appearances.

- Christ appeared once. He will appear again. And in the meantime, we're being trained by grace to live differently.

So what does this actually look like? Let me give you three shifts this should create:

1. Grace Trains Us to Renounce What Doesn't Matter

"Training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions..."

- Notice - grace doesn't just forgive us, it **trains** us. The word means to discipline, to educate, to shape.
- When you understand that Christ dealt with sin once for all, and he's coming back to complete your salvation, **it changes what you're willing to tolerate in your life.**
- If Christ appeared once for all to put away sin, and he's not coming back to deal with sin again, **then your guilt has already been addressed.**
- When you sin - and you will - when you fail - and you will - **your first move shouldn't be to beat yourself up or hide from God.**
- Your first move should be to run to the cross and say: "Jesus, you dealt with this. I need you. Clean me up again."

- But here's the thing - when you truly grasp what Christ has done, **you start wanting to be rid of the things that dishonor him**. Not out of fear, but out of love.
 - **That secret sin you've been harboring** - grace trains you to renounce it. **That grudge you've been nursing** - grace trains you to let it go. **That compromise you've been making** - grace trains you to walk away from it.
- **This is what the author said last week:** Christ's blood purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
 - A guilty conscience will paralyze you. It'll make you hide from God. It'll make you spiral into shame.
- But Christ didn't die to manage your guilt. He died to remove it. **And when you're free from guilt, you're free to actually change.**
- **Stop trying to add to what Christ has already finished. Instead, let his grace train you to live differently.**

2. Grace Trains Us to Live With Eternity in View

"...and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope..."

- Here's what Paul is saying: **The blessed hope changes how you live in the present age.**
- When you're eagerly waiting for Christ to return, it brings everything into proper perspective. What matters eternally starts to shape your decisions. What doesn't matter fades into the background.

The world lives in perpetual anxiety about the future:

- What if the economy crashes?
- What if I lose my job?
- What if my health fails?
- What if the political situation gets worse?

Listen to what this passage says...**We're waiting for the blessed hope - the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

- If you're in Christ, **the future isn't a question mark. It's a promise.**

- Christ is coming back. And when he does, he's coming to complete what he started. To bring you into the glory he purchased through His shed blood. For those who are covered by the blood of Christ this is the best day ever. For those who are apart from Christ this is the worst day ever. Because when Christ returns there's no opportunity for a do over.
 - When Christ returns he is coming in judgement, to claim his own, and purify all unrighteousness.
 - The only thing that can save us from Christ's purifying work, and His wrath that is coming against all unrighteousness, is to be covered by the sanctifying work through the blood of Christ.
- **That should fundamentally change how you face tomorrow:**
- **You can face uncertainty** because you know how your story ends. **You can endure suffering** because, for those who are in Christ, deliverance is coming. **You can sacrifice** because you know the reward is coming. **You can live generously** because you know the inheritance is already yours.

- **Think about your career.** When you're living for the blessed hope, your identity isn't wrapped up in your title or your salary. You can serve others without constantly needing to advance yourself. You can take kingdom risks because your security isn't in your job.
- **Think about your money.** When you're living for the blessed hope, you hold wealth loosely. You can be generous because you're investing in what lasts. You're not anxious about having enough because you trust God's provision.
- **Think about your relationships.** When you're living for the blessed hope, you forgive quickly because life is short and eternity is long. You pursue reconciliation because petty offenses lose their power. You invest in people over things because people are eternal.

Our blessed hope in Christ reorders how we see everything.

3. Grace Trains Us to Be Zealous for What Matters

"...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works."

- Notice where Paul lands: **zealous for good works.**
- Not anxiously trying to earn salvation. Not performing to prove we're good enough. **Zealous - passionate, eager, enthusiastic - for good works.**
- This is what spiritual maturity looks like. **You move from consuming to contributing.** From "what's in this for me?" to "how can I serve others?"
- When you understand that Christ appeared once to deal with sin, and he's coming back to complete your salvation, **you're freed up to actually live for him.**
 - **Not out of guilt.** Not out of fear. **Out of gratitude and love.**

What does this look like practically?

- **You share the gospel of Christ** because people need to know about the blessed hope before Christ returns.
- **You serve others** because you're part of Christ's people, his own possession.
- **You invest in what matters eternally** - people, kingdom work, making disciples.
- **You live with urgency** because Christ is coming back and time is short.

Conclusion

The author of Hebrews has been making one sustained argument: **Christ is superior. His priesthood is superior. His covenant is superior. His sacrifice is superior.**

And now he tells us: **His sacrifice was once for all. When he comes again, it won't be to deal with sin. That's done.**

We live between two appearings:

- The grace of God **has appeared** - Christ came to deal with sin
- We're **waiting for our blessed hope** - Christ is coming back to complete our salvation

And in the meantime, that hope should be training us - shaping us, disciplining us, transforming us - to live differently.

- **To renounce what doesn't matter. To live with eternity in view. To be zealous for what does matter.**

- If you're struggling with guilt this morning, hear this: **Christ dealt with your sin once for all.**
- Stop trying to re-pay a debt that's already been canceled. Let grace train you, not guilt crush you.
- If you're anxious about the future...
 - **You're waiting for a blessed hope, not an uncertain outcome.** Christ is coming back, and it's not to condemn you. It's to complete your salvation.
- If you're drifting in spiritual apathy...
 - **Christ is returning.** Your time to get ready isn't infinite. Live like it. Let the blessed hope ignite passion in you for what matters.

The sin question is settled. The blessed hope is promised.

So wait expectantly!

Let the cry of our heart be: Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

Benediction Prayer

Father, thank You that Christ appeared once for all to put away sin. We don't carry that burden anymore. It's finished.

Thank You that we're not waiting for an uncertain future, but for our blessed hope - the appearing of Your glory in Christ Jesus. Help us to live this week as people who are eagerly waiting - not anxiously uncertain, but confidently expectant.

Train us by Your grace to renounce what doesn't matter and to be zealous for what does. Free us from guilt that paralyzes. Free us from anxiety that steals our peace. Free us from apathy that wastes our lives on temporary things.

Make us people who are getting ready - not out of fear, but out of love - for the day when we see You face to face and You complete what You started in us.

Come, Lord Jesus. We are waiting for You. Amen.

Small Group Discussion Questions

1. The Once-For-All Sacrifice and Guilt

The sermon emphasized that Christ appeared "once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin." His sacrifice was unrepeatable because it's utterly complete—there's nothing left undone, no unfinished business with our sin. When Jesus said "It is finished," he meant it.

When I sin or fail, what is my first instinct—to run to Christ knowing he already dealt with my sin, or to hide from God trying to clean myself up first? What would it look like for me to actually believe that Christ put away my sin once for all, and let that change how I respond to failure this week?

2. Eager Waiting vs. Anxious Dread

Christ is coming back a second time "not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." The sermon contrasted two postures toward Christ's return: eager anticipation (like a child waiting for a loved parent to come home) versus anxious dread (like waiting for test results). Mature believers eagerly wait because they're confident the sin question is already settled.

When I honestly think about Christ returning, what is my gut-level response—eager anticipation, anxious fear, or apathetic indifference? What does my response reveal about whether I'm truly resting in the sufficiency of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice?

3. Living for the Blessed Hope

Paul says we're "waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." The sermon challenged us to ask: are we living for the blessed hope or for the things of this present age? When Christ returns, career achievements, bank accounts, and possessions won't matter—but people, kingdom work, and how we loved will.

Looking honestly at where I invest my time, energy, and money—what does it reveal about whether I'm living for the present age or for the blessed hope? What specific area of my life (career, finances, relationships, time) needs to be reordered around Christ's return?

4. Grace Training Us to Live Differently

Titus 2:11-12 says grace doesn't just forgive us—it trains us "to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." The sermon emphasized that when we're free from guilt, we're free to actually change—not out of fear or obligation, but out of love and gratitude.

What specific "ungodliness or worldly passion" is God's grace training me to renounce right now? Am I resisting that training, or am I letting the blessed hope and the freedom from guilt actually change the way I live? What would it look like to cooperate with grace's training this week?