



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

November 11, 2012  
Endtime 2 - Last Judgment  
Sermon Text: [Hebrews 9:24-28](#)  
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Malachi 4:1-3](#)  
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 90](#)  
Second Lesson: [Hebrews 9:24-28](#)  
Gospel Lesson: [John 5:19-30](#)

### Once And For All

That's how Jesus removed sin  
That's how he will return again

Grace, mercy and peace are yours from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, dear fellow redeemed:

I don't know about you, but my dad had a number of phrases that when he used them, you knew he meant business and you better get moving and get going with what he told you to do. One of them that he would use fairly often was "Don't make me repeat myself." When that phrase came out, you knew it was time to get off your backside and go and do what it was you were supposed to be doing.

Did you ever notice how God isn't that way? God is not afraid to repeat himself. God knows how thickheaded we are and how hard it is for things to get into our heads at times, so God is more than willing to repeat himself over and over and over. In fact, sometimes he does it in short order.

If you take a look at [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), it's a passage that is familiar. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."* Are you familiar with that? Look at what he is saying that he repeats over and over. It's by grace you are saved. Grace means undeserved. You didn't deserve it. You didn't do anything for it. In case you missed that, he says it's not from yourselves. You didn't do it. Then in case you missed that, he says it's a gift of God. It comes from God, not from you. Not by works he adds in there. Then in case we missed all that, he says so you can't boast. It's not about you. So God certainly is not afraid to repeat himself.

The Psalm we sang this morning... "The length of our days is 80 years or 90 if we have the strength." Did you notice the next phrase after that? It's kind of a depressing phrase. "Yet they are just filled with trouble and sorrow." Have you ever noticed when you are reading Scripture how often God repeats that phrase or that thought? It's through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom of God. Now we see through glass darkly. Now we will suffer many things. That's something he kind of gets at near the

end of this text that I just read to you. But there's no doubt in the world that God is more than happy, more than patient with us and is willing to repeat himself over and over and over.

Think about it... this morning when you woke up and you said "Lord, forgive me," it's however many days in a row that God has had mercy on you because you've been covered in the blood of Christ and your sins have been forgiven. Tomorrow he'll do the same thing. So you can't say God doesn't like repeating himself. Yet, from what I read to you from [Hebrews 9](#), here's one case where God doesn't need to repeat himself. "Once and for all..." Jesus entered the Holy Place once and for all to make full atonement for sin. Once and for all he is going to come back and judge the world. He's not going to make numerous intermediary return trips. He's coming back once, and it's to judge all. So once and for all is what we see God doing in this lesson from Hebrews.

It speaks to the power of God. The fact that he repeats himself speaks to his patience and his love. The fact that he was able to provide a sacrifice that paid for all sins of all time speaks to his power, his immensity and how much he is beyond us.

The writer of the Hebrews is writing to Jews that have been dispersed, Jews that are going through difficulty and that are tempted to go back to the old ways and set aside Jesus and go back to the old comfortable things of Moses, of the Law, and of the sacrificial system. It was just comfortable. It's what they knew. Of course, we wouldn't know anything about not liking anything knew and wanting to go back to the old comfortable, would we?

The whole letter to the Hebrews is basically telling them over and over Jesus is superior. He's superior to Moses. He's superior to the angels. He's superior to the high priest. This is the section we are in, how Jesus is superior to the high priest. It said the high priest had to go in all the time to the Holy Place, which was a copy of the heavenly realms, to depict and stand for the heavenly realms. He could only go in there once a year. He had to go in with blood that was not his own and sprinkle it on stuff to show that blood takes away sin. It had to be done over and over and over again because it just couldn't pay for all sins. If it could, it wouldn't have had to be repeated.

Jesus says our Great High Priest is superior because Jesus removes sin once and for all. He didn't enter a copy of the Holy Place. He entered the Holy Place itself. He returned to heaven after he had made atonement for our sins through his own blood, not someone else's blood. He gave his life to pay for our sins as the punishment (the wages of sin is death) our sins deserve. He lived perfectly because God demands perfection of you and me, and we can't do it. He did all of this and removed all sin of all time.

The power of our Savior is what gives us confidence as we live in a world that is awaiting his return. The world we live in isn't always pretty. It isn't always nice. It isn't always the way we would like it. It is, as Moses said, our own trouble. As we go through life and we face some of this sorrow and this trouble, we don't have to face it

alone. We face it with the One next to us who entered heaven once and for all as the payment for all sins of all time. That's the confidence you and I have. The One who is for us is greater than anyone that opposes us.

People may doubt his return and say "It's always the same. He's not returning." God tells us there will be those that scoff, but he tells his people that have the spirit and listens to what he says because they are filled with the spirit to know that his judgment will be come and we need to be ready for it at any time, because it could happen at any time. The question then becomes, what makes us ready again, and how can we be certain we are ready? This is where you and I need to repeat what our God says to us over and over and over. We need to keep repeating some of these things because we know we are thickheaded and don't always get it.

An example I guess... anything in the Gospel reading trouble you? Or anything I read from the Gospel in John there trouble you? If you go to that last paragraph where Jesus says "Do not be amazed at this. I tell you the day is coming when those who are in the grave will come out. Those who have done good will rise to live. Those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." Does that trouble you at all... those who have done good will rise to live? You've been taught all the time that we are saved by grace alone, by faith, not by works. Now Jesus says those who have done good will live. Which is it? Who wants to come up and explain it to everyone else? Anyone?

It's also in the Athanasian Creed, that same phrase. How are you going to explain that to someone when you say we're saved by faith and they say "No. Your Creed right here says those who have done good will rise to live." How are you going to explain it to them? Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that you have. How are you going to explain it? The only way you're going to be ready is if you've had things repeated to you over and over and over and you can make them your own and have them live in your heart.

What's good in God's eyes? There are two parts to the definition of what's good in God's eyes. (1) It's according to his will. So I can't say "I want to spread the Gospel more and more. I'm going to go rob a bank so I have more money to spread the Gospel." He said "Don't steal. It's against my will. Don't do that." (2) It's also out of love for God. You can't do anything good unless you love God. In fact, in Hebrews it says without faith, it is impossible to please God. So it's not just doing the right things, it's doing them for the right reason. So those who have done good will live. The only people that can possibly do things out of love for God (without faith it's impossible to please God) are those that have faith, those that are believers. Next year I suppose on Trinity Sunday and next year on the Last Judgment Sunday, or the next time this comes up, I'm going to have to repeat it again because you are going to forget by then, aren't you?

We need to repeat things to ourselves over and over, and one of the truths that we constantly have to repeat when we face the trouble and the sorrow and the difficulty that are in this world is the fact that Christ has overcome this world. It's the fact that

Christ has taken away our sins. It's the fact that God's love for us is never in doubt. Things might happen that Satan will use to make us question whether God loves us. That's fine. Those questions will come. But doggone it all, we have to answer them by running to the cross of Jesus Christ and see that he loved us enough to die for us. He loved us enough so that we could face the Last Judgment with confidence. The Last Judgment is coming and the only thing that makes us ready is a living faith in Jesus as our Savior. The only thing that keeps faith living that Jesus is our Savior is Word and Sacrament. You can't pray your way to a stronger faith. You can't pray your way to keep yourself in faith. It only comes through Word and Sacrament. So sometimes you and I need to repeat to ourselves over and over that Jesus did this once for all.

Then we are ready if he returns. Think about it... there's no way you and I should be ready for his return. He said the wages of sin is death. He said he's going to come to judge the world. You and I, in our heart of hearts, we know we're sinners. I don't care what excuses we can make to each other. We know what we are. We are filthy rotten wretches who don't deserve God's love. Yet our God says to us things that are just amazing in Scripture.

Think about it this way... as a kid, did you ever, ever once do this. Mom said "I'm making these cookies for this or that. Don't eat any." Or "I'm making this pie. Don't eat any." Or "I'm making this cake. Don't touch the frosting." Did you ever go and do that and look around? And when you did it, did you do it really quick because mom might come around the corner and then you'd be in trouble? You shoved that whole cookie in your mouth and were hardly able to chew it because you didn't want to get caught. You didn't want mom to catch you with your hand in the cookie jar, literally.

Think about this... when our Savior tells us to be ready for Judgment, one of the phrases he uses from the Gospel is that he tells us about the signs of the ends of the age. They're not pretty. There are things getting worse and worse. Love of most growing cold. There are things that are just depressing. He tells us those are signs of the ends of the age. He also says, "When you see these things coming, lift up your heads because your redemption is near." (See [Luke 21:25-28](#).) Lift up your heads. When you hear the sound of the archangels and the trumpet of God, lift up your head. That's an amazing phrase. Lift up your head. If mom would have rounded that corner when your finger was right in that frosting, were you going to lift up your head and smile and look at her in the face? I don't think so. But when God comes to judge us, even though we are sinners, we can lift up our face and look at him. We can rejoice that now our full salvation has come. Yes, we are saved. Our sins have been forgiven. But we still live in a world that's full of trouble and sorrow.

When Christ comes again, he takes us out of the world of trouble and sorrow. He takes us to the world that has no trouble and sorrow. That's what it means at the end of this when it says he's come to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. Yes, we already have salvation, but we are talking about our final deliverance from all the effects of sin, where we will go to be with the Lord forever.

To be ready for that once and for all Judgment, we need to cling to Jesus. We need to let the Holy Spirit work in us through Word and Sacrament. It's something that as a believer we want to do. The more we do it, the more we can face not only Jesus when he returns, with an uplifted face, but the more we can face the troubles and the sorrows of this day with this underlying confidence that our Lord loves us and he is with us. If he did this once and for all, he isn't going to desert us when we go through trouble and sorrow on this side of heaven. He's made sure that this side of heaven is not the end for us. Amen.