

# Once For All

Lenten Devotions 2025

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*Note: Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the English Standard Version.*

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## Fifth Week of Lent — Monday, April 7

*And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:11-14)*

### **Inside Out**

As modern-day readers of Hebrews, it is hard for us to grasp the complexity of the Old Testament sacrificial system. There were daily sacrifices, annual sacrifices and sacrifices associated with specific festivals. Different kinds of grains and animals were sacrificed. While some sacrifices were acts of thanksgiving, most were for forgiveness of sins. They brought a temporary sense of being at peace with God. Yet the repeated nature of the sacrifices only served to remind the people of their repeated sins. They had to keep making sacrifices because they kept sinning.

Now that Jesus has died once for all, no more sacrifices are needed. Our Savior's sacrifice removes our sins not temporarily but permanently! Do we continue to sin? Yes, most certainly. But when we trust in Jesus, we are covered with His robe of righteousness ... forever!

The verses following today's reading in Hebrews 10 quote from the prophet Jeremiah and tell us something very important. God's laws [His instructions, His teachings, His will for how we live our lives] are now written, not on stone tablets, but on our hearts and minds. This is the New Covenant. Forgiven children of God are changed from the inside out.

That's what the writer of Hebrews means when he says we are being sanctified. The Holy Spirit is working in us—changing us, molding us—so we become more and more like our Savior, reflecting His heart in what we say and do. This is an ongoing process that takes, well, our whole lives, but what a joyful journey to be on! What a blessing to have God's Spirit changing us from the inside out.

**Holy Spirit, Thank You for being faithful and patient with me. Help me be like clay in the hands of the Master Potter as You change me for Your glory. Amen.**

Tuesday, April 8

*Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:19-25)*

### **Full Assurance**

Since we have confidence, since we have a great High Priest, since the new and living way to God is fully open ... now what? The writer of Hebrews is happy to answer that question. Here's what he says: Let us draw near to God with full assurance of faith. Let us hold fast to our faith and our hope. Let us gather together. Let us encourage one another. And why should we do these things? Because the day of Christ's return is drawing near.

"Really?" we might think. The years, the decades, the centuries continue to click by. Is His return really near? The writer of Hebrews thought so. That's why he began his letter by saying, "In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." When some first-century folks were doubting that the Lord would return soon, the Apostle Peter reminded them, "Beloved, with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:8-9).

God has His own timing and His own purpose. We don't know His timing; that is far beyond us. But we do know His purpose: He wants all to repent and receive eternal life. So, while we wait, we follow the advice in our reading. We draw near to God, holding fast to our faith and hope. We gather together, encouraging each other day by day. And we share the Good News with others so that they, too, may rejoice when the Lord returns to take His children home.

**Dear Jesus, Help me to walk faithfully for however many days You give me in this life. And help me share the hope of heaven with others, especially those closest to me. Amen.**

Wednesday, April 9

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. (Hebrews 11:1-2).*

### **A Way of Seeing**

The phrase “by faith” or “through faith” or “in faith” is used two dozen times in Hebrews 11. That ought to tell us something. Some refer to this chapter as the roll call of the heroes of faith. Seventeen people are mentioned by name and commended for their faith. And other faithful folks are identified in general terms—people of old; the prophets; those who were mistreated, tortured, imprisoned and killed; those of whom the world was not worthy. Why did they endure all this? It was because of what they understood and believed by faith.

The Revised English Bible translates Hebrews 11:1 this way, “Faith gives substance to our hopes and convinces us of realities we do not see.” Faith, then, is a way of seeing. It enables us to grasp eternal realities with such fervent conviction that we stake our very lives upon them.

Yet faith is a mystery that eludes easy definition. We know it is a work of God’s Spirit, and we also know it involves our wills. Scripture reveals Christ to us and then invites us to call on His name (see Romans 10:13). Jesus became human, shining true Light into the world, so that all who receive Him become God’s children (see John 1:12).

We might say that faith is the opening of our eyes so that we exclaim, like the man to whom Jesus restored sight, “I was blind, but now I see!” (see John 9). May we follow the example of this man who declared, “Lord, I believe,” and worshiped Jesus.

**Lord Jesus, How grateful I am that You revealed Yourself as my Savior and gave me the gift of faith. Open my eyes to see You always and to worship You alone. Amen.**

Thursday, April 10

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:13-16)*

### **Welcome from Afar**

If faith is a way of seeing, it must be far-sighted. Not in the sense of being unable to see what is close at hand but having a unique ability to look far into the future and know that what one waits for will surely come.

The bride and groom awaiting their wedding day are confident that they will be married. While they make their plans and preparations, they can already picture their life together. They welcome their marriage “from afar,” even as they mark off the weeks on the calendar until the big day arrives.

How do we welcome God’s promises from afar? By living in full confidence that they will come true. That’s what Abraham and Sarah did. By faith, they obeyed and followed God’s call to a new land. By faith that seemed laughable at the time, they had a child in old age. By faith that persevered, they carried on even though they dwelt in tents, wandered as nomads, and never saw the innumerable descendants that were promised to them. How could they do it? Hebrews 11:11b tells us: they “considered him faithful who had promised.”

We welcome God’s promises from afar because He is faithful. And because He is faithful, we live today in faith and obedience, following where He leads and trusting His Word. While some of God’s promises will only be fulfilled in eternity, many are ours to enjoy right now:

“I will guide you along the best pathway for your life” (Psalm 32:8a NLT).

“Even to your old age ... I will carry you” (Isaiah 46:4).

“I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5b).

**Lord God, Your promises are true because You are faithful. Help me trust You to fulfill them all in Your time and in Your way. Amen.**

Friday, April 11

*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 but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 10:27-28)*

### **Eagerly Waiting**

*And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (Hebrews 11:32-38)*

### **So Many Faithful**

There isn't always a happy ending. In Hebrews 11 we read about great victories of faith—conquered kingdoms, narrow escapes, even resurrections. But today we also read about vastly different outcomes—torture, imprisonment, martyrdom. Different endings, indeed, yet so many faithful people!

After Christ's resurrection, when He appeared to His disciples on the lakeshore and cooked them breakfast, an interesting conversation ensued. Jesus challenged Peter to "feed My sheep" and then predicted a martyr's death for Peter. Peter then wondered what the future held for his fellow disciple John. Jesus refused to satisfy Peter's curiosity and instead replied, "What is that to you? You follow me!" (John 21:22b). These words sound harsh, but I'm sure our Lord spoke to them in love. Jesus wanted Peter to follow Him faithfully and not be distracted by God's plans for someone else's life.

There are many ways to live a faithful life. Some believers may be called to do great things for God's kingdom, while others live as Christ's disciples in very ordinary lives. For some, following Jesus seems to be a path overflowing with blessings; for others it leads to suffering, grief and loss. Our Savior is with us no matter what this life holds. Let us heed His words— "You follow Me!" —and walk on in faith.

**Holy One, You are worthy of my full devotion. Guide my path and empower me to walk faithfully until You call me home. Amen.**