They said it would be, The war to end all wars. So, when the armistice was signed at the 11th hr on the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, there were those who believed they were seeing the last generation of military veterans. There would be no more war veterans after this, they thought, because there would be no more wars.

It pains us to think how naïve they were. The sons of these same troops would march off to fight over some of the same ground their fathers had once fought for. Sons of World War 2 veterans would fly off to battle in some rice paddies in Southeast Asia. Sons and daughters of those veterans would head off to combat in two wars in the Middle East. And it is not over yet.

Veterans Day makes us recall that thousands upon thousands of young Americans have gone to distant and dangerous places to keep death and danger from our shores. Veterans serve as a reminder of the failure of mankind to end war.

Jesus said that war is inevitable and wars will increase in number as we march closer to Judgment Day. This morning in our lesson from Hebrews 9, the author reminds us that some things are certain. In v 27 he writes: It is appointed for people to die. It was not always that way. In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve in his image. This means they were holy, perfect, without sin and had a will that understood God’s will and were happy to carry it out. Mankind was destined to live forever in complete happiness, never get sick or depressed, never to grow old and die.

Sin ruined the image of God. Today human beings are no longer born in God's image. They are conceived and born in the image of Adam - that image is sin. With sin comes death. The Apostle Paul writes: Death comes to all people because all have sin. This means that death is certain for me and you. This is not why you came to church this morning, to hear that you are going to die. In fact, you do not like to talk about it. In fact, funerals make you uneasy because you know that someday you will be the one lying in that casket. But the fact is, 10 out of 10 people die.

Man is destined to die because death is deserved. Paul says in Romans 3: All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All have fallen short of God’s image. For example, let’s say that you wanted to attend the Vikings/Packers game later this month in Cities. You walk up to the ticket booth, the nice lady behind the glass says: That’ll be $200 for your ticket. You pull out $198 cash and say: Here you go! The nice lady smiles and says: That is not enough. You are not getting your ticket.

God says that you and I must have the full amount of perfection to get into heaven. It is quite simple really. God demands that we live perfectly and completely according to his commandments, which can be summarized in two ways: love and trust God with your whole heart and soul, and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. If you do that, then you can have your ticket to heaven.

But God says we have all fallen short of his image. That does not mean, me, does it? God tells us to trust him in all things. This was brought to my attention this week after the election. I read my friends’ posts on Facebook, read the editorials and spoke with some of our members and some of them seem to have this Woe is me! mentality because their candidate was not elected. Doesn’t our God tell us to trust him, no matter what? Is he not our King who

I believe the answer is yes.
promises that all things are possible with him and that he will make all things work out for our
good? When we are afraid of the economy, healthcare, and our own individual future, doesn’t
that mean that we do not believe that God is in control? Then we have fallen short of God’s
 Glory when we fail to trust him.

God also demands that we love our neighbor as much as ourselves. But we are not
good when it comes to approaching individuals when have we have an issue - small or big.
Instead we gossip about it, complain, and bicker to everyone else except the one with whom
we have the issue. Or we talk to each other about Jesus, forgiveness but then do not forgive
each other and hold grudges. Is this the patience, forgiveness, humility and love for our
neighbor that God expects and demands? No, we have all fallen short and deserve death.

Man is destined to die. It is certain. In fact, the writer adds: It is appointed for people
to die only once. This means there is no reincarnation. You will not come back as someone
or something else in a life to come. Which leads us to the second certainty: It is appointed
for people to die only once and after this comes the judgment.

This answers the question: What happens to the human body upon death? There’s
a separation of the soul from the body. The body is cremated or laid to rest in the coffin and
decomposes, ash to ash, dust to dust. The soul meanwhile does not hang around to haunt a
house or wander the earth. The soul is immediately escorted by the angels to stand before
the Judge.

With what will we stand before the Judge? What do we have to offer him for falling
short of his demands? This is certain: we will die and will face judgment.

In 2008, some US soldiers at a combat outpost in Afghanistan were overrun by Taliban
fighters. They were outgunned and outmanned. Their 1st Lieutenant soldier recognized that
his men were going to die. So he went to set up a machine gun. But before he could fire a
round he was killed. He could not rescue his men as much as he wanted to and as hard as he
tried - he could not save any of them. In those loud and terrifying minutes he had chosen to
leave a place of relative safety, braving intense fire, and had run to point of greatest danger to
help his men.

Why do people do such things? A soldier does it out of a loyalty so consuming that it
entirely crowds out consideration of self. Jesus also left the safety of heaven to come down to
earth and entered the place where the fighting was the fiercest. And Jesus laid down his life.
Jesus did such a thing out of his great love for you and me. He knew that certain death and
judgment were waiting for us. While that 1st Lieutenant’s efforts were selfless and sacrificing,
he did not save his men. Only Jesus can save us from death and judgment and he has.

The writer to the Hebrews said: Christ was offered only once to take away the sins
of many. In the Old Testament the Lord directed his people Israel to observe the festival of
the Day of Atonement. On that day the high priest slaughtered an animal, for his own sins and
the sins of the people. He collected that blood in a bowl. Then the high priest walked into the
temple and into the Holy Place. Then he stood before the curtain that separated the Holy
Place from the Most Holy Place, the innermost room of the temple. As the high priest walked
through that curtain he had to sprinkle the blood from that bowl ahead of him. In the Most
Holy Place sat the ark of the covenant. This was the very presence of God Almighty. And God
said that no sinner could stand before a holy God without sacrifice for sins.

None of those thousands of sacrifices ever forgave the sins of the people of Israel or
the high priest. God was teaching the people that without the shedding of blood, there is
no forgiveness. Someone must take the place of others to spare you from death. We cannot
stand before God empty handed. This Day of Atonement was a picture of what the promised
Messiah would do.
The author describes that action in vv 24-26. The high priest had to enter most holy place. Jesus, by his sacrifice on the cross, was the great high priest. He entered the Most Holy Place too, but he did not walk into a man-made temple. He walked into heaven itself, into the very presence of God the Father, and offered to him his blood. Not only was he the high priest, he was also the sacrifice. He stood before the Father’s throne and said: **Because I love them, I have sacrificed myself for them. I offer you my precious blood. It is without sin, it is innocent, it is holy and pure, it is enough for them.** This is certain - Jesus sacrificed himself for you. And this is also certain - the Father accepted Jesus’ payment on your behalf.

When Jesus died, the Father sat in his courtroom and slammed down the gavel and said: **I declare you not guilty of your sins because of my Son’s sacrifice for you.** Through faith in Christ Jesus, the Father has justified you. You now stand before the Judge acquitted. Even if someone were to say, **But what about that time you did not trust God, like last week with the election?** God says: **Not guilty.** Or **But what about that time you did not love your neighbor as much as you love yourself?** God says: **Not guilty.** The blood of Christ is the payment for sins. Jesus took your guilt on himself. He sacrificed himself for you so that you are free to go!

What joy in a courtroom for the accused to be declared **innocent!** As the prophet Malachi describes: **Like newborn calves released from the stall, you will jump for joy!** All this evidence was stacked against us, but Christ took it on himself. This is certain: Christ has sacrificed himself for you. Which brings us to the final thing that is certain.

World War I - known at the time as **The Great War** - was regarded as the end of the war to end all wars. Jesus said that war is inevitable - until he comes again. There is the key, until he comes again. Verse 28: **Christ will appear a second time - without sin - to bring salvation to those who are eagerly waiting for him.** This is certain: Christ will bring salvation for you and me. When Jesus comes again to judge the world, he will declare total armistice. He will end all war. There will be no more war veterans. He will bring perfect peace for his soldiers - you and me. When he comes again, some of us may be in the grave. Christ will bring salvation for us. He will raise us out of our graves and make our bodies new again and reunite them with our soul. Christ will bring salvation for us – he will save us from hell and Satan himself.

We look forward to the day of Christ’s return because there is no uncertainty for us who, by God’s grace, believe that the blood of Christ was offered to the Father in his courtroom for you and me. You and I know that we stand before the Judge’s throne acquitted. And he will usher us into his heavenly kingdom, where we will live in perfect peace with him and all the believers.

From now on until that day, we will not be heard saying: **I hope I am going to heaven.** But rather: **I know where I am going because Christ has gone before me and has made certain the way for me - faith in him alone.**

It is been said that two things in life are certain - death and taxes. They got one of them right. Our Savior tells us that things are certain - death and judgment. But these things are also certain - Jesus’ sacrifice and salvation for me. Let us look forward to his coming with great joy and anticipation! To that end we pray: **Come quickly, Lord! Amen!**

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