

God is self-existent, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable (immutable)

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[0 : 00] It's wonderful to be here this morning on this beautiful, hot, and humid Sunday. As one of the interns, I'm so grateful for opportunities to serve and to preach.

It really is a privilege to preach here this morning, to preach God's Word. I recently heard John Piper remark that preaching is not just an explanation of biblical texts, but a celebration of biblical realities.

And in this Knowing God series, we're attempting to magnify the biblical realities of God's attributes. Knowing God involves knowing what makes Him who He is.

And this is important because in essence, or the essence of the Christian life, is to live for God's glory by knowing Him, by treasuring Him, and by pointing people to the risen Messiah.

So with that, let's just open in prayer. Our dear, gracious, and heavenly Father, Father, we just thank you, Lord, that in you there is strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

[1 : 20] We pray, Lord, that as we study and see what your Word says about your attributes, that our minds and our hearts would be shaped, our attitudes and actions, that we may be a people who would live for your glory.

Pour out your Spirit among us. We thank you, Lord, for your presence here. We pray and ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. In our world today, God is described in various ways.

In one religion, there are infinite manifestations of gods and goddesses who become incarnate with idols, temples, rivers, and animals, and so forth.

Many have the belief of a superior and transcendent God who is a strict judge and who will be merciful to followers who have done more good deeds than bad deeds.

Another popular view promotes the idea that true divinity exists within us, that we ourselves are gods. New Testament scholar D.A. Carson observes that just because somebody uses the word God and then somebody else uses the word God, it does not follow that they mean the same thing.

[2 : 46] In this Knowing God series, we have been speaking about the triune God of the Bible, the one true God who is creator and sustainer of everything and everyone.

We've been looking at some of God's essential characteristics that make him who he is. Two weeks ago, Reverend George preached on how the one true God exists in a loving unity of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Last week, you remember, Reverend Daniel showed us from Scripture how God is sovereign, how he is all-knowing and all-powerful. And this morning, we're going to look at God's unchanging and eternal characteristics.

Our theme this morning is God is unchanging and eternal. So our faith and hope rests on a solid foundation. God is unchanging and eternal.

So our faith and hope rests on a solid foundation. And we're going to look at two passages in Scripture which features God's unchanging and eternal characteristics.

[4 : 00] The first is found, as we read earlier, in Malachi 3, verse 6, where it describes God is unchanging in his character. We'll just read that again. Malachi 3, verse 6, For I, the Lord, do not change.

Therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. Malachi's ministry took place during a time of spiritual decline among the people of Israel.

The temple had finally been rebuilt thanks to the urging of the prophets Zechariah and Haggai. But the promises of the coming Messiah and God's blessings had yet to come.

And this resulted, as you can imagine, in Israel's spiritual drift to half-hearted worship and unfaithfulness. But in loving response, God calls his people back to renewed covenant commitment and faithfulness.

Now this phrase, I, the Lord, do not change, specifically relates to God's unchanging character. In contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness, Malachi points us to God's faithfulness in his unchanging character.

[5 : 21] So it's on the basis of God's unchangeableness that his people, the children of Jacob, are not consumed. God's unchangeableness, another way to put it, is his immutability, is a theme all throughout Scripture.

In the book of Exodus, God announced himself to Moses as, I am who I am. In other words, I am the one who always is, unchanging in mercy, grace, and faithfulness, unchanging in justice, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, who by no means clear the guilty.

Exodus 34, 6-7. In the book of James, God is celebrated as a faithful giver of good gifts from whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

As God was in the beginning, he is now and ever shall be. God cannot be anything other than who he is. And if you know God being united to Christ by faith, you can rejoice knowing that his unchanging character provides you a sure foundation for your faith.

To name just a few. Number one, God is unchanging in his love. God is love. And from the beginning has existed a Trinitarian love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[6 : 59] Love is central to who he is. And creation is an outpouring of his divine love. And in love, the triune God created you and I in his image to be in relationship with him.

In the fall, our relationship was broken. But through God's gracious work in Christ, He redeemed us to restore us that we may love him supremely and love others.

And because God is unchanging in his love, you have a sure foundation for your faith. God is unchanging in his power.

God is all-powerful and by the power of his word, he created the heavens and the earth. Indeed, the heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands.

The same God who created the universe is the same God who sustains you by the power of his spirit, by grace, whether in good times or bad times.

[8 : 05] He sustains us by his power in sickness and in suffering, whether physical or mental. Can you recall all the times that God has sustained you?

Because God is unchanging in his power. You have a sure foundation for your faith. God is unchanging in his justice.

If there is a God, many people ask, I ask this all the time, and we touched on this last week, if there is a God, how can he allow so much evil, suffering, and injustices in the world?

That's a question with a lot of weight. But hear what the Apostle Peter has to say. He reminds us that with the Lord, one day is a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promises as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing any should perish, but all to come to repentance.

[9 : 19] And though God's justice has yet to fully come, there will come a time when God will judge the world in righteousness. And until then, the Lord extends his mercy to those who are lost and broken.

God is unchanging in his justice, and at the same time, he's unchanging in his mercy. The Lord is good, and his mercy endures forever.

And God's enduring mercy was made visible at the cross. At the cross, Jesus satisfied God's justice by paying the full penalty of our sin, making mercy possible for you and I.

And if you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus, God's mercy and forgiveness of sin is extended to you this morning. Dear friend, whoever you are, trust in Christ, for he is your only hope both in life and death.

And what's so amazing and wonderful is that when you put your faith and trust in Jesus, you have the privilege of being in a personal relationship with God.

[10 : 42] And in this relationship, you discover, you discover that his mercies are new every morning. They never come to an end.

And with confidence, you can come boldly before the throne of grace and receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And because God is unchanging in his justice and mercy, once again, you have a sure and solid foundation for your faith.

God is unchanging in his character. We've only just begun. Secondly, God is eternal. God is eternal. Please turn with me to Psalm 90, verses 1 to 2.

It reads, Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you have formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Notice, in verse 1, the psalmist declares that the Lord is a dwelling place. In other words, he's a home, he's a refuge for his people in all generations.

[11 : 58] God is a home and refuge for his people. Why? Because he's from everlasting to everlasting. He's eternal. God has no beginning or end.

And God's eternity answers that age-old question, if everything has a cause, then what caused God? Well, nothing caused God. God doesn't need a cause.

As one commentator put it, there's nothing that stands over God or outside of him to cause him to come into being. God is totally independent in himself and he causes all things to depend on him for their existence.

Again, Psalm 90, verse 2 reads, Before the mountains were brought forth, wherever you had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Now, I was saying in the 8 a.m. service, you can't truly experience the beauty of Alberta without visiting the Rocky Mountains. Now, I confess that having grown up in Alberta, being so close to the Rockies, pretty much right in our backyard, I took all of God's good creation for granted.

[13 : 12] But now that we've been away for several years, I've really come to miss the Rockies. And those of you who have been there will know what I'm talking about. The beauty is breathtaking as you can see in this picture.

Now, take a few moments and imagine you're in the Rockies. You might be sitting on that log there. You see the soaring peaks, the towering mountains amid the vast blue skies.

Now, just pause for a moment and consider the incomprehensible greatness of the eternal God who created them.

That before the mountains were brought forth, before God ever formed the earth and the world, God was and always existed. And in contrast to God's eternity, human life is so brief.

And I don't think there has been a day that has gone by where we're not reminded of the brevity of life. Psalm 39.4 says, Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days.

[14 : 25] Let me know how fleeting is my life. Psalm 102.11 My days are like an evening shadow. I wither away like grass. James 4.14 reminds us that life is like a vapor, a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

On this side of eternity, our days are number from the moment we take our first breath. But the number of God's years are unsearchable, Job tells us in chapter 36.26.

Humans are finite and limited, living in fleeting time, but God is eternal, not bound by time, though He works within time. In the words of J.I. Packer, what God does in time, He planned from eternity and all that He planned from eternity, He carries out in time.

God is eternal and there is no limits to His greatness. God stands over and above His creation. So, as we have said in the past weeks, it is beyond our ability to fully describe or comprehend God.

We've only scratched the surface. But the good news is that God can be truly known personally.

[16 : 00] Did you know that God is personal? God is personal and it is in the person of Jesus Christ that He is most fully known.

when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son. Jesus, the eternal God, became flesh and dwelt among us.

He lived the life that you and I should have lived. He died the death that we deserved and was raised on the third day so He can rescue us, free us from the grip of sin and give us a new heart and grant us eternal life.

He made a way for us to know God and to enjoy Him forever. No longer under the grip of sin but now gripped by God's eternal love and amazing grace.

That's why we sing with John Newton, I was once lost but now I'm found. Was blind but now I see. Dear friends, to trust in Jesus for eternal life is to trust in the unchanging eternal God who is the same yesterday and today and forever.

[17 : 23] To trust in Jesus is to trust in the one who declared before Abraham was, I am. To trust in Jesus is to trust in the Alpha and the Omega who was and who is and who is to come, the Almighty.

The first and the last. The beginning and the end. Jesus is from everlasting to everlasting. And some of you might be going through a difficult season in your life and if this is you this morning, I want to encourage you to talk to somebody.

Speak with Reverend George or Daniel or one of the church leaders or a trusted Christian or mature friend who can support you and pray for you.

And even if you're not going through hardships now, trust me, be assured they will come. And we may not always know why we go through what we go through.

But my point is this, that no matter what you face, always remember and never forget that Jesus, the eternal God in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, promises to be with you always, even to the end of the age.

[18 : 51] Jesus is eternally trustworthy and when you trust in him you can know peace and rest and comfort no matter what you may be facing. And as you trust in him you can be sure that God will accomplish his purposes in your life.

Your faith and hope does not rest on sinking sand. but it rests on a sure and solid foundation.

So where does this leave us? What is the appropriate response to a God who is unchanging in his character and eternal? Well first, knowing God's character calls us to worship.

worship. Are we half-hearted and lukewarm in our worship to God? Do we live our lives in such a way that magnifies Jesus?

I want to invite you to take some time to contemplate God's unchanging character and internal nature and let us come before the throne of grace and ask God to revive our hearts with a renewed sense of awe and wonder that we may treasure him above all else that the triune God would be the only object of our worship that whatever we do we would do it all to the glory of God.

[20 : 29] And secondly and lastly knowing God's character calls us to recognize our daily need of him. In the words of Alec Moyder do we live our lives in such a way that keeps God for Sunday but looks on Monday to Saturday as ours?

We may not consciously think that way but our words and our actions may reveal otherwise. See the Lord wants us to depend on him for everything and if you haven't started one I want to encourage you to find a good Bible reading plan.

If any of you are interested I have some with me today you can come and see me after the service and as you read through the Bible take special note of God's characteristics and attributes because the more we know God the more we truly understand our need of him every hour the more we know God's attributes the more our faith deepens to whom else shall we go to than to the one who has the words of eternal life to whom else can we daily depend on than a God who is unchanging and is a character and eternal can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share and as we reflect on God's character in this knowing

God series may we respond with the words of that timeless hymn I need thee every hour most gracious Lord no tender voice like thine can peace afford I need thee oh I need thee every hour I need thee oh bless me now my savior I come to thee God is unchanging and eternal so our faith and hope rests on a solid foundation dear gracious and heavenly father um how Lord we we again thank you for who you are and your unchangeableness your your eternity we pray that you would help us to reflect and to meditate on it and that we would be a people who would live to your glory that we would point others to

Jesus father I just pray that you would be with those today who are going through a difficult season may they recall and remember your unchangeableness of who you are and may it comfort and strengthen them father we give you thanks again and we ask all of these things in Jesus name amen