

The Unchanging God

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Date: 16 August 2020

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- [0 : 0 0] I got a question for you. Who here likes change? Who here likes change?
- Now, I know there's some of you which are like, yeah, we love change. Some of you, I fear change.
- And some do not love change whatsoever and will try to stop change at every opportunity.
- And it's kind of a funny thing when we think about the idea of change. In some aspects, we really love change. And in some aspects, we don't. We love the old friend that we grew up with that we haven't seen in years.
- And we're able to see them. And we can say with complete joy, it is so wonderful you haven't changed. We are able to have this kinship and love and just this wonderful time together.
- [1 : 1 0] It's a feeling you get. You feel accepted. You don't have to explain yourself. Even though there has been change, you've maybe gained a little weight, added a few more gray hair.
- They still love you. When you visit your home, it feels like your home. Then there's those old friends. When you meet them, you're like, I can't believe you haven't changed.
- I can't believe you haven't matured. You haven't grown up. So sometimes we see that there is good change and there is bad change.
- There's people who redo the look of their home every other week. There's some people their home is like going into a time capsule. Nothing has changed.
- Nothing has moved for the last 20 to 30 years. Sometimes it's really great. Sometimes we really wonder. And sometimes there's that sad part when we meet an old friend and it's like we don't know each other anymore because there's been too much change.
- [2 : 2 0] The truth of the matter is there is always change. We change. People around us change. Even though we desperately try not to change, everything else around us changes, which forces us to change in order to even interact with the change that's going around.
- It was interesting. I had a family friend who had basically his father was complaining about their back. And I just said, have you ever thought about getting a new mattress?
- And I think they've had the same mattress since they were married with his wife. And now they had several kids. And I just simply said to him, you know, it's not wrong to change.
- It's not wrong to change your mattress. In fact, there's this whole new technology of mattresses that you might enjoy. But some people, you know them just as well as I do, we trust them for the advancements of society.
- And there's some people who fear change that if they were in charge of society, there would be no advancement at all. What about God?
- [3 : 3 6] What do you think life would be like if God changed? That God on one day thought one thing and then thought something different on the other.
- Maybe God is moody. Imagine that. If God was moody, what would that be like? He loved us one day. He knew us.

Then the next day kind of acted grumpy towards us. How would it make you feel if God matured?

What would it make you feel like if blessings were curses one day and curses were blessings the next day? It'd be kind of awkward to worship a God like that.

Imagine if God were one day say, Hey, Israel, I know I said you were my people, but I've kind of had a change of mind. I've seen these Babylonian guys.

[4 : 47] Man, they got a big army. They've got this beautiful garden in Babylon. They do city management like no other. I think I'm going to make them my people now.

See you later. Have fun in the desert. What kind of God would that be?

There's two things I'm thankful for. I'm thankful that we can change. And I'm thankful that God doesn't change.

Probably of all of the attributes of God in my personal Christian life, this doctrine has probably held me the closest to God.

Not saying it's any greater than any of the attributes that we've been learning. They're all absolutely wonderful. But there is just something about God being unchanging, which warms my heart.

[5 : 59] It makes me feel secure in my faith. It allows me to know that I can always come to him, no matter what the circumstances.

And I'm always the same to him. Or he's always the same to me. It's interesting. James writes in James 1.17, he says, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.

What he's communicating that every gift that God gives us is really great. And it comes from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

Just think about the change that we see due to shadows, lights that somehow alter. The one thing I can think of the most is the moon.

Sometimes we can get up. Remember that it's like the twilight evening. And the moon is on the curvature. We see it on the horizon. And it's humongous. It's red.

[7 : 08] It's beautiful. And just a couple of hours later, it's but a speck in the sky. It really hasn't changed that much distance from us, but just the way the curvature of the earth, the way light reflects, and all that other kind of science mumbo jumbo.

It makes it appear one thing when the truth is it's far away. It's not like that with God. Notice that James says there is no variation.

That means there is no alteration. There is no deviation. There is no fluctuation. There is mutation. And there is no modification. It is the same.

There is no disparity. And there is no divergence from who he is. In the Psalm 102, I read today, verses 25 to 28, the author writes, Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They will perish, but you will remain. They will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away.

[8 : 29] But you are the same, and your years have no end. Now, if you were with us at the very beginning, the psalm begins with a heart-wrenching verse.

Hear my prayer. Let my cry come to you. Imagine writing that.

There is a sense of sorrow, a depth of pain, of uncertainty, incredible trials.

If you have at the beginning of my, in my Bible, there is a little heading, and it says, A prayer of one afflicted. When he is faints, and pours out his complaint before the Lord.

And he says, Do not hide your face from me, in the day of my distress. The greatest fear, fear that this author has, is that God would somehow change.

[9 : 53] But we know when he comes back to verse 27, he knows and understands. Life is hard, but he understands this truth. Verse 27, But you remain the same in your years.

Have no end. You are always the same. How often have we been hurt because of changed plans, or people changing, people we treated as friends, now treat us as strangers.

Perhaps ideas, events have happened. We, you had a business idea, or a business plan, and because there was a change in the culture, it's not such a big deal anymore.

We've all been hurt by changed minds, changed priorities, or changed plans of man. A.W. Tozer wrote, the following.

He says, However unstable I may be, however fickle my friends may prove, God changes not. If he varied as we do, if he willed one thing today, and another tomorrow, if he were controlled by caprice, who could confide in him?

[11 : 16] But all praise to his glorious name, he is ever the same. His purpose is fixed, his will is stable, his word is sure.

So this morning, I want us to look at the unchanging God. I want to look at it in four different areas, so we can grasp the magnitude of what it means, and how important it is that God doesn't change.

We're going to look at how God has unchanging character. Unchanging character. The second area that I want us to take a look at is that God has his unchanging word.

His unchanging word. We're going to look at how Scripture talks about God's unchanging plan, his unchanging plan, and finally, and finally, God's unchanging plan of salvation, and how wonderful it is.

If you're at home, and you're training to be a theologian, the theological word, this is called the doctrine of immutability. The doctrine of immutability, which essentially is the unchanging teaching, or the teaching of the Bible, that God is free from changes, and he is, in his being, the same at all times, past, present, and future.

[12 : 45] So the first attribute, or the first point under this attribute of God's immutability, or God's unchangingness, is God's unchanging character.

God's unchanging character. God's character never changes. We all know the reality. We change. God does not change.

God does not grow. God does not learn. God does not experience anything new, and God does not develop in some areas.

You see, if he did, if he needed something new to learn, something new to grow in, something new to experience, he would no longer be God.

You and I, we have a choice. We can go from better to worse, worse to better, or we can try to remain the same, but as I stated earlier, we're still changing because everything changes.

[13 : 47] Our bodies are getting older, our minds are getting slower, and we're changing. You see, God's perfect perfection rules out change.

If God is perfectly holy, is there anything that could make God more holy? Or is there anything that could make God less holy? Right?

God cannot deteriorate. The testimony of Psalm 102 is that God never changes. He remains the same forever.

Tozer makes a simple observation, if that if we thought in such a way that God could somehow change, somehow grow, somehow learn, we would be no longer talking about God.

He said we could be talking about someone who's really great and mighty, but that would not be God. God, as we've learned, is self-sufficient.

[14 : 53] That means he does not need anybody or anything. God is self-existent. That means he's always been existing. He wasn't born. He wasn't created.

He's always has been. And we know that God is eternal. There is no end to him. The fact of the matter is, there is nothing about God that needs to be altered about him.

Think about the implications of these things. Malachi 3.6 simply says, for I the Lord do not change.

Think of sometimes the people who wrestle with the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. They act like they're two totally separate, different gods.

Like he's learned something or understood something more. He hasn't. He's the same.

[16 : 00] This helps us in our understanding when people bring us false teaching. This is one of the areas. We know this truth. No, God doesn't change. His mind doesn't change.

Psalms 103 verse 17 says, but the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. You see, the whole idea of God being unchangeable means that every other aspect of his attributes are unchangeable as well.

God's holiness, as we mentioned before, does not change. God's justice does not change.

God's love never, ever changes. What does that mean for us? It means that God that we knew as a child is the same God we know as an adult.

The same God we knew as a youth we now know in our middle ages. And the same God we knew in our 20s is the same God we know and experience in our silver and our golden years.

[17 : 23] the same God we cried out for at the moment of salvation when his love was so pure and so strong and so desired is the exact same love today.

One of my pet peeves, if there ever is one, I'm sure I have a few, is moodiness. Is moodiness. I struggle with people that are moody.

You do not know, thankfully, in the workplace I never had a moody boss but I've had moody co-workers. And I remember I worked, we were a team of about six people and there was one of the co-workers you just did not know what the day was going to bring.

And if that person was miserable it was going to make our day a heck of a lot harder that day to function as a team. It's not like that.

with God. He is the same today, yesterday. It's interesting because Scripture describes God as a rock, a refuge, and a fortress.

[18 : 39] If God changes those would no longer be true. But the words that we find in Scripture are so wonderful when it talks about God's unchanging characteristic.

Deuteronomy 32.4 Let me share this. In fact, it just simply calls God the rock. The rock. His work is perfect for all his ways are justice.

a God of faithfulness and without iniquity just and upright is he. We find in the book of Ruth 2.12 this beautiful picture.

It says, The Lord repay you for what you have done and a full reward be given by the Lord. The God of Israel under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

That God was known to be the one where you could go to in the intimacy of your pain and know you could find refuge. Another word for protection, sanctuary, security, shelter.

[19 : 47] There's probably no stronger verse in regards to God's unchangeableness or why it's so important to us than 2 Samuel 22:2 which includes the words of David.

The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer. My God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my Savior, you, the same, you save me from violence.

I call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised and I am saved from my enemies. Could we say these things about a God who changes?

No. And what's incredible is the same God that David is calling upon, the same God that Moses is calling upon, the same God that Ruth is relying upon, is the same God we can come to freely.

It is the same God we can call upon. There is no inconsistency. There is no mood swings. There is no unchanging in his behavior or his character.

[21 : 17] God is always the same everywhere at all time. This is beautiful. He is God, the same God, all the time.

And if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is the God upon which is your rock, your refuge, and your fortress.

God's character does not change. Praise the Lord. The second area is that we see is God's unchanging word.

God's unchanging word, which means God's word never changes. The reason why we preach God so confidently from this book, this Bible, why we can preach so confidently from this word is because we believe it is God's word.

God, in fact, says it's his word, and we know that God's word never changes. It doesn't matter what culture I'm in, it does not matter which country I'm in, if I happen to know another language, the same word is being preached.

[22 : 38] In fact, this is what sets the Bible apart from every other religious book. It is not a book that is worshipped or held high because it is a holy relic of a book, but we believe that it is the very words of God, that this is God's special revelation to us.

It teaches us how to know and love God and instructs us on how to live a wise and joyful life to bring glory to him. God teaches us that his instructions, his promises never change.

Isaiah 48, the grass withers, the flowers fades, but the word of our Lord will stand forever. Why?

It's because the words are attached to a character that is unchanging. Numbers 23, 19 says, God is not man that he should lie or a son of man that he should change his mind.

He has said and will it not be? Or has he spoken and will he not fulfill it? This is how we know our Lord.

[23 : 55] This is his word to us. Because his character never changes, his word never changes. It cannot be altered.

It cannot be a bridge. It cannot fail to come to pass. think about our word. Even in the most sincerest of times, there's things we say we're going to do, but there's circumstances sometimes beyond our control that somehow stop us from delivering a package or promising to do things with our kids.

Or sometimes intentionally or unintentionally, we twist the truth. White lies. Or we mislead someone by accident thinking we're being truthful, but yet we are wrong.

You see, the laws of the land of the culture change all the time. God. But not God. In fact, if you were to hear Jesus speak in Luke 16, 17 or Matthew 5, 18, he says it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the law to become void.

Now in that situation, Jesus Christ is talking about with the leaders, the Pharisees, the Jewish, the religious rulers. believers. And he's answering a question.

[25 : 36] And it's basically, if the kingdom has come, and if the period of the law and the prophets has passed, would the law of God still be applicable?

Would it cease to function? And Jesus Christ simply responds that God's law does not fail. In fact, not even in the smallest point.

And what Jesus is referencing here, is the simplest stroke. Like, you know, we have a small T, and you can put a cross through it, which makes it look like a T as opposed to an L.

He's communicating that even that crossing of that T, we use it all the time, cross your T's, dot your I's, even the period over the I and the cross and the T will not fade away.

There's nothing in God's word that will fail to come about. Psalm 119, 89, forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

[26 : 46] Your faithfulness endures to all generations. You have established the earth and it stands fast. Psalm 119, 160, says, the sum of your word is truth and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

What is he saying? Right is always right and wrong is always wrong. Sexual ethics do not change because our culture happens to be in an ocean wherever the waves would take it to go.

Basically, now, right and wrong is decided at the voting booth how people feel. There was an interesting article I read this morning and it was talking about just lately we've had many men of the faith pass away from R.C.

Sproul to Ravi Zacharias and some other ones and he lamented and he says, what made these men so great is they believed right was right and wrong was wrong.

And many of the pastors of this day capitulate to the cultural unmoorings of the day. See, when it comes to basing our morality on the culture, it will never be fixed.

[28 : 23] But when it's based on God's word, we know it's good for us. We know it's right for us because God as the creator created us in such a way to function, in such a way that brings blessing to humankind, not destruction.

God does not change in his character. God does not change in his word.

And the third area I want to look at this morning is God's unchanging plans. That God's plans do not change. If we know that God's character never changes, if we know that God's word never changes, what do we think about God's plans?

Will they change? Psalm 33, 10 to 11 answers the question. It says, the Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing. He frustrates the plan of the peoples.

The counsel of the Lord stands forever. The plans of his heart to all generations. Right now when we read the news, there is a great upheaval going on just to the south of the border.

[29 : 47] Both sides of the political spectrum believe if the other side wins, it is going to be the end of the world. It will be unencumbered chaos and major calamity will occur.

And it might. God may allow that. But the fact of the matter is, it's not going to be because man wants it to happen.

It's because God allows it to happen. Proverbs 19.21, many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

If mayhem and calamity happens, there is a purpose behind that. Think about our plans for 2020.

2020. How many of you made great plans, vacation plans, perhaps career plans, perhaps you're going to build an extension on your house, or if you're like me today, this past year was a very important birthday for my wife.

[30 : 50] And you guys don't know this, but I had this big, exciting trip planned, around the world trip, tour on a boat, we were going to hike Mount Kilimanjaro together, we were going to visit Everest Base Camp, we were going to go to Bora Bora, but you know what, COVID ruined everything.

So we simply decided to stay home. Seriously, that's just a joke. The reality is, even the best plans, the most well intentioned plans, even the plans that would have had the most sincerest goodness in those plans, can easily be thwarted by God.

God has other plans. Isaiah 14, 26-27 says, this is the purpose that is purpose concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.

For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? God's hand is stretched out, who will turn it back?

God is going to do what he's going to do. Which one of us has the strength to turn back the hand of God?

[32 : 17] None of us. God's character never changes, his word never changes, and his plans never change, which leads me to this final point.

God unchangeableness in salvation, or God's unchanging plan of salvation. The fact of the matter is, God's plan of salvation did not begin in Genesis.

It did not begin when Adam and Eve fell, and God simply said, uh-oh, I've got to come up with a plan in order to save these people that I made, and I declared that were good.

Scripture teaches that God's plan for salvation was planned in eternity past, before the creation of the world.

He did not simply adjust things on the fly. He didn't see Satan betray him in heaven. Whoa, I missed that one. And now Adam and Eve, what am I doing wrong?

[33 : 31] I've got to fix this. That's not how it works with God. God knew. And if you were paying attention to Dave's sermon series on the Trinity, you would have learned that this plan of salvation that God has for us was created to bring glory to Jesus.

Do you get that? The gospel plan of salvation was meant to bring glory to Jesus. Let's take a look at John 17 24. This is the Garden of Gethsemane.

This is after the Last Supper. He's in the Garden before the cross at crucifixion and he is praying to his Father.

He says, Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you love me before the foundation of the world.

That we have been given to Jesus Christ to redeem which would be glory and the plan happened before the foundation of the world.

[34 : 50] Did Adam and Eve become believers because they accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior? Of course not. But they placed their faith in God who they later knew as we know from Genesis 3 15, he would bring a redeemer.

He would bring one to break the power of sin and death. same with Moses, same with Noah. They believed God as God revealed himself to them and they knew that salvation came through faith in God and that God would make peace between them and God.

How and what the machinations would be they did not know but they put their faith in God. God. As we read the Bible, we read a God who expands more and more of himself.

We understand him as we go from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Before the foundation of the world, God's plan was made. God set his children apart for the work of the Son, that Jesus would save them.

You see, there is nobody in heaven by accident, just like there is nobody in hell by accident. Everything was known before the foundation of the world.

[36 : 24] God does not take back salvation. It's why we boldly preach preachers all over the world. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

That eternal life does not happen at the moment of death. And if you did a good works or did all these things that you think you must do to earn God's righteousness, then go to heaven.

No, no, no. That eternal life happens at that moment of salvation. Begins the moment we believe in Jesus Christ through the gift of faith that he grants us.

Verse 17. For God did not send his son in the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Let me just give you some promises about salvation that we find solely in the book of John.

They might be a little bit clear but we'll put the references up on the screen. John 4, 14 it says, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him, he will never, get that, never be thirsty again.

[37 : 40] The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. John 6, 35, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6, 40, everyone who looks on the sun and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 28, I gave them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

You see, God's plan for salvation and the salvation that he offers when we accept him is absolute. There is no going back. John 11, 26, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

John 14, 16, 7, and I will ask the father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it either sees him or knows him.

[38 : 59] you know him for he dwells with you and will be in you. You see, God promises us and because God is unchanging, we know his promises will happen.

They're given unconditionally and with absolute certainty. This is the God who doesn't change.

praise. There's two major points of praise that we can take away from this sermon.

The first praise is that God doesn't change, amen? God doesn't change. His character never changes.

His word that we read and study never changes. His law, his plans, they never change and his plan of salvation never change.

[40 : 10] They're eternal. They go from beginning to end. We praise God for that. The second element that we can praise is that you and I are possible to change.

It's kind of funny. When we think of that idea and how I opened the introduction, we think of all those ways that people change or we know we can change. But there's some of you at the core of your being and in your brokenness, you recognize that you cannot change.

Perhaps it's spending habits. Perhaps it's how you live your life sexually. Perhaps it's a substance abuse problem.

Perhaps it's an anger issue. You try to change over and over and over, whether it's going to AA or Gamblers Anonymous or a place to help you eat better, healthy, Weight Watchers or whatever one of those systems are because you're struggling at some area and you're desperately wanting to change.

I'm here to tell you that there is a praise that we can praise God for and that is we can change.

[41 : 48] in fact, we are always changing. You see, when we put our hopes in Jesus Christ, when we find redemption in Jesus Christ, this is the beginning of the heart of our ability to change.

In fact, the liar becomes truthful, the thief no longer steals, the broken is made pure and the proud are made humble. before Jesus Christ opened our eyes to the reality of spiritual truths, we were blind.

In fact, we were called the old, the old man, the old flesh. But the prophet Isaiah tells us that God, at the moment of salvation, takes out this heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh.

and this new heart changes us. It changes our thoughts. It changes our desires.

It changes our attitudes. It changes our affections. things. And those things only happen because an unchanging God works a miracle in our hearts to change us.

[43 : 15] maybe you are sitting there watching this and you recognize that you need to change, that you need new thoughts, that you need new desires, that you need new attitudes, attitudes, and you need new affections.

My friends, there are certain behavior modification plans that you can do, which will help for a time. But ultimately what you need is a new heart.

You need the unchanging God to change your heart. This begins with you knowing there's a difference between the old and the new.

Perhaps this is the day where Jesus is telling you right here, right now is a very good place to be. It's to see yourself as a person who is incapable of changing your heart.

But it's recognizing that you desperately need change. Would you call on his name right here, right now?

[44 : 43] Would you cry out as the author of Psalm 102 simply says, hear my cry, O Lord? Even for those Christians who are caught up in bad habits.

Could be pornography, it could be overeating, it could be not being unable to control your money. Cry out to God.

Hear my cry, O Lord. You see, change begins with a prayer that clearly states that you are a broken sinner and you need a Savior.

It follows with the acknowledgement that you cannot change yourself and that it is only Jesus Christ and the power of the Spirit of God that can lead to real and lasting change.

Today is the day that God is offering you a new heart. You can accept him right here, right now.

[45 : 49] You can make that decision that you are going to bow your knee to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God has a plan for you.

God has a plan for you. That plan is for you to give glory and honor God with your whole life.

Cry out for his mercy and love. Repent. call us here at the church. Email me. We will talk.

We will talk about these things. We'll talk about what it means to bring real change in your life. Today we're going to do something a little bit different.

We're going to end this sermon with a song. You know the song well. You know it speaks to this moment. my prayer is that you will grasp this song and this would truly be the cry of your heart.

[47 : 00] In his name. Amen. Amen.