

God's Immutability

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- [0 : 0 0] Welcome, all. If you haven't got one, let me tell you that there's a handout. Deb, are you here?
- Yes. Deb's here. I'm legally blind, and I can see some things, but not a lot. Like, could everybody raise their hands? Yeah, I only see about half of them.
- So anyway, please bear with me. I know you see half of them if you don't have any. Because I thought I asked everybody to raise their hands, and I only saw the left side of the room raise their hands.
- So I don't know for sure. You're absolutely right. But such is life. I will never tell. Okay, okay. Now, as we go through the class today, we will read some, not all, of the scriptures that are on the handout.
- And I'm going to ask those of you who are able and willing to do so. So when I ask for a scripture to be read, please don't wait for somebody else if you're able and willing.
- [1 : 1 2] You know, just dive right in there and say I will or something. And I'll appreciate that very much. Well, let's pray.
- Heavenly Father, as we gather together in the name of your Son, Jesus, we ask you to fill us with your Spirit and speak to us.
- May we get to know you better and love you better, trust you more, and live as your faithful children.
- Make us, conform us more into the image of your Son, we ask. Amen. Several weeks ago, Tyler asked me to teach this class on God's immutability, one in a series of classes on the attributes of God, a subsection of what we might call systematic theology.
- And a little bit later, I told a friend that I was going to teach on the immutability of God. And he responded with something like, oh, that is, can you get God to shut up?
- [2 : 5 2] And he made that attempt at humor, you know, thinking of mute, you know, and those of us who have phones or, you know, participate in Zoom meetings.
- And somebody maybe not familiar with systematic theology, you know, when you speak of immutability, no, I can't mute that person. And I wish I could. But what that indicates to me is that the meanings of words change over a period of time.
- If you ask somebody in the United States 150 years ago, you know, what immutability means, they would say, well, it means that whatever you're describing does not change.
- But today, that's less clear to a lot of people who we live with.
- So much so that the author of the systematic theology that I recently got, because I can't read much anymore, I got an audible book.
- [4 : 0 1] And the author of that book changed the topic in his systematic theology from immutability to unchangeability, which I think is not a bad thing to do.
- And I'm even taking it one step further, changing the title of the class from unchangeability or immutability to the question, does God change?

Well, however you'd like to think about it, as we go through this study together, you might be expecting that I will give you a concise and clear conclusion about the subject.

Clean and clear. And when I got assigned the subject, I thought I'd be able to do that. Hey, does God change? No. You know, how much more simple can it be?

But as I studied it and looked at what the Bible said, though I think I learned some important and good things, the goal that I had of tying up, you know, all the loose ends didn't happen.

[5 : 22] So, today's lesson might be described better as an exercise in systematic theology that we'll do together rather than just the presentation of my clear and complete study.

Well, as we talk about change, just to give it some thought context, as we think about our world, there are some things that don't seem to change much, like the sun or the stars or a mountain.

And then there are things that seem to change quite a bit, like weather or the news. People, for the most part, are somewhere in between those.

You know, if we look at our bodies over a period of days or even a few years, maybe somebody wouldn't detect any change. Or in our personality over a period of time, they might not detect any change.

But somebody's opinion about something or how they react to a certain impulse, input, might change.

[6 : 42] And because the Bible describes God as a person, that might help us a little bit think about, when we speak about the question, does God change?

You know, as a person, you know, does he change in some ways? Does he not change in any way? I suggest that that would be a helpful idea to keep in mind.

Well, with that in mind, let's read the first two scriptures that you'll find on your handout. And would somebody be ready to read the Numbers passage, 23:19?

And again, the proper response is yes, if you're able and willing. Good. And would somebody else be willing to read that second passage, several verses, Isaiah 38, 1 through 5?

All right. Ralph, please read. Verse 19. God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should change his mind.

[7 : 57] Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Very good. Thank you.

I've read the Numbers. Very good. Yes. Feel free to use whatever version you have available to you. But thank you.

And the other, please read the Isaiah passage. Sure. So this is Isaiah 38, 1 through 5. In those days, Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death.

And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Nema, came to him and said to him, Thus says the Lord, Set your hearts in order, for you shall die, and you shall not recover. Then Hezekiah sent his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, and said, Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness, and made a whole heart, and have done your good in your sight.

And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah. Go and tell Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David, your father. I have heard your prayer.

[9 : 03] I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add 15 years to your life. Thank you. Now, as some people would look at these two passages, they would see a tension or a paradox.

Others may not. But let me tell you what I see. In the Numbers passage, it is said of God, Does he speak and not act?

And I think that means, Does he say he's going to do something, and then not do it? But in the Isaiah passage, God makes clear to Hezekiah that he's going to die soon.

He's not going to recover from the illness. He speaks. But then, his action is something else. He does not, in a sense, do what he said he was going to do.

So, this is an example of the challenge of doing systematic theology. Systematic theology can be thought of studying what all of the Bible teaches about a particular topic.

[10 : 24] In this case, the unchangeability of God, or does God change? And so, sometimes, you have passages in Scripture which seem to be in tension with one another.

For those and other reasons, systematic theology is a really good idea because if you don't look at all of the, what the Bible says about a topic, you'll have unorganized theology instead of an organized or systematic theology.

So, doing systematic theology is a good thing, but unless you are a genius and have lots of time to study the Bible, you're going to be at a great disadvantage if you don't stand on the shoulders of the giants who have gone before you with regard to the study of the Bible and systematic theology.

And so, I certainly recommend when you're studying a topic like this to see what others have said.

And again, the book that I have listened to on this topic and was a foundation for my study is Systematic Theology by Wayne Gruden.

[11 : 51] And here is his summary statement about the unchangeability of God. And as I read it, I'd like you to think about this question.

Do I think this is right? You know, based on my knowledge of the Bible such as it is, does this sound like a good summary of what all of the Bible teaches about God and change?

God is unchanging in his being, his perfections, purposes, and promises. Yet, God does act and feel, feel emotions.

I should probably have somebody else reading this. Tyler, would you be willing to pick up on this? Yet, God does act and feel emotions and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

Thank you. All right. So, how does that sound to you? Do you find yourself in strong agreement with it?

[12 : 55] You know, maybe agreement or, nah, I think there are some significant errors. strong agreement based on your present thought.

Strong. Strong. I have no idea how many hands are up now. Were there a few? Are there any for, you know, not sure? I'll ask Deb to tell me.

One. Okay. And how many, no, I think there are some real problems with this. And I'd almost raise my hand on this at this point because when I first read it, I thought, yes, this is good, but as I started reading through scriptures that Gruden presented and others, I thought, ah, boy.

And maybe the biggest problem I have is the word promise because, again, the meanings of word changes in a culture.

And, but, in any case, whatever your initial impression, why don't we take this as somebody who's studied a lot and who has studied other people who've studied a lot and go through the parts and see what we think the Bible teaches about this.

[14 : 19] So, let's start with God does not change in his being. So, would somebody please read Psalm 102, 25 through 27?

I will. Yes, thanks. No one else's? Okay. Feel free. Somebody else is going to surely want to beat you next time, but you have it.

In the beginning, you laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens out of the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment, like clothing.

You will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same and your years will never end. The children of your servants will live in your presence.

Their descendants will be established before you. Thank you. So, to me, that sounds like a clear statement. God remains the same.

[15 : 30] And I read that and, but I was expecting, well, actually, a number of other passages from the Psalms or other parts in the Bible because this idea that God doesn't change was so, you know, firmly set in my mind.

I thought there would be a lot of texts that would explicitly say this. But what Gruden presents and what I could find only include the passages from Hebrews about which Jesus is described and this passage from Psalm 102 is quoted and it refers to Jesus.

Now, we who believe that Jesus is God would certainly say yes, with regard to God's divine nature, you know, this is reaffirmation that God doesn't change and I would agree with that.

And then the second passage in Hebrews says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So, I think, ah, boy, I expected more proof texts, that is, texts that give evidence, you know, that God doesn't change for this.

But, the fact that I accepted it so easily makes me think, yeah, all that I've read in the Bible, even if it doesn't, you know, there aren't many passages that seem to be proof texts in my mind, still it resonates with me.

[17 : 01] Like, there's an implication of this, you know, over and over again throughout Scripture. So, I say, okay, yeah, I'm willing to accept that. Any thoughts or questions before we move on?

Well, let's look at perfections then. And, I didn't like this word, I thought characteristics or character of God might communicate to us more clearly.

but, would somebody please read the Malachi passage, Malachi 3, 6 and 7. Yeah, thanks.

Thanks. So, what perfection of God is stated here that doesn't change?

What characteristic? Faithfulness. Faithfulness. And, that may be a really good answer.

[18 : 20] But, can Josh or somebody else kind of spell that out? How does this mean that God is faithful? Or, you know, what, how is that at least implied?

Because faithfulness, I don't think, does it appear in the passage? No. I did get the same idea.

Yeah, good. Yeah, this idea, they're not consumed because he has not changed, and so his promises have, he's still going to act according to the promises that he made to them.

So, his, as we say, faithfulness is why he's not consuming his people, even though they've disobeyed him. But there is a, but there also is a condition like, return to me and I'll return to you.

So, it's not exactly paradox. paradox. So, and here's my systematic, I think you guys were all trying to do systematic theology here.

[19 : 26] You know, you're trying to take this passage and put it together with all that the rest of the Bible says about this issue, you know, coming to a clear statement of the teaching.

And this was mine. God remains the same in that when people repent, you know, he responds to them.

So, you know, by implication you could say God is a forgiving God and he doesn't change with regard to that. But there's some theology there, which is fine.

We're doing systematic theology. We're trying to say, ah, okay, not just what this passage necessarily states, but what it clearly implies, what it means for us.

So, and we have some other passages there. I included the Lamentations one, which again is not a statement, but would somebody please read Lamentations 3:22, which is the basis in part for the hymn, Great is Thy Faithfulness.

[20 : 35] Yes. Yeah. So, it doesn't say it never changes, but at least it never disappears.

It never ceases to be. So, close. Well, the next perfection, or rather aspect of God, which is said not to change are his purposes.

And for this, I think there was lots of scriptural evidence, very clear, very direct. I don't list all of them here, but would somebody please read Psalm 38?

Yeah. 11. that one. Yeah, that one. Thank you. Thanks. Thanks. All right.

And would somebody read the several verses listed there for Ephesians? Ephesians 1, verse 4, for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and religious in his sight.

[22 : 07] And then verse 11 is in him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

And then did you want also? Yeah. Three, nine, two, three, nine, to a letter. In the middle of a sentence it says, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yeah. So, I think this teaching is very well supported in scripture. And maybe part of the reason for that is it has great practical importance for us.

You know, what if God's purpose changed? You know, yes, at one time, my purpose was that everyone in Christ would be glorified.

[23 : 24] But the plan has changed. And no, you know, you experience the Holy Spirit in this life, but then you die and that's the end of you. That's my new purpose. So, it's good to know.

I'm so glad to have this knowledge of God that his purposes don't change, including his purpose for those of us who are in Christ.

Now, promise. I'd like both of these passages read, the Numbers passage and the 1st Samuel passage.

So, somebody please read Numbers. In fact, I think we've read it before, but bears repeating. God is not man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change his mind.

Has he said it and will he not do it, or has he spoken and will he not fulfill it? Thank you. And, my memory is that at least in one translation the word promise is used.

[24 : 43] But, even if it isn't used, it's implied there. And now, will somebody please read 1st Samuel 2:30. Got it.

Therefore, the Lord, the God of Israel declares, I promised that your house, the house of your father should go in and out before me forever. But now, the Lord declares, far be it from me.

For those who honor me, I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Now, at least on first reading to me, it sounds like God made a promise, and he's saying, no, not anymore.

And, there are various ways we could understand that. one is what is meant by promise. You know, that we might see different levels of a promise, like an oath, you know, is one level of a promise, or just saying something might be seen as a promise.

And, that certainly applies to people. Does it apply to God? You know, are there different kinds of promises? And, I'm not, I certainly don't understand a lot of that long passage, Hebrews 6 through 7.

[26 : 08] But, as I read it, I get the idea, you know, that it's applying, it's stating that there are promises, and then there are promises.

And, it applies that, for me, in unexpected way. So, you know, if I were editing Gruden here, you know, I'd cross out promises because, you know, I'm just not sure that leaving that statement as it is is the most helpful summary for me of what the Bible teaches.

Maybe I'm wrong. Very likely, but, you know, that's where I am in my current study. Well, here we are, and we have, well, just before we leave the areas in which Gruden says God is unchanging, let's talk about application.

What difference does it make to us, here and now, that God doesn't change in the way the Bible says he does not change.

I think what's interesting to us is that we're able to orient ourselves to God. It's not like we think that who God is today, and we orient ourselves in our purposes and priorities to him, but that, oh, man, tomorrow is different.

[27 : 40] We have to do this process. Because he's unchanging, we are able to orient our being, not perfection, imperfections, purposes and promises around his character and nature rather than around our own.

We can, and boy, we should. Because it's the right thing to do, because we have promises in the Bible that God will bless those who do just what was said.

Yeah. Matt, drawing on something you said earlier about we don't have to kind of wonder whether God's going to come through because of his fixed purposes. Yeah.

I think that practically that remains a lot of fear, and it really engenders faith, trust, trust, really.

do you know anybody who, you know, seems to have the habit of saying they'll do something and then doesn't do it? God is not like that.

[28 : 56] And that is a good thing. Joy, peace, as we meditate on that. all right, well, we will move on, and the next part of Gruden's summary is that, hmm, that's not what I want.

Okay, here it is. God, hmm, I'm not reading this. Okay, can somebody read the yet? That's good, right there.

Now, you might wonder, you know, what's the big insight here? Why, in this section or description of God's unchangeability, does Gruden feel that it's important to say, God acts, God feels emotion, unchangeable and I think, pretty sure, the reason that he puts that in there is because in the history of theology, including the present, there are people who say things like, you know, if God really doesn't change, then he can't act or feel.

You know, theologically or philosophically speaking, you know, if we say that God is unchanging, kind of like a mountain, you know, it doesn't act, it doesn't feel, it's frozen in time or in space, and if it were to do something, then that would change it.

You know, if it experienced an avalanche, then it will have changed. changed. So, what Gruden, I think, is responding to is something that can be called, hmm, does anybody see?

[30 : 59] Process theology, which says, no, we really can't say that God doesn't change, because then he couldn't act or feel. even some really good evangelicals maybe get a little bit of this, even though, and they may be right.

For example, one of my favorite professors at the seminary I went to many years ago, said that God really never felt grief. And so, when talking about do not grieve the Holy Spirit, that passage, he would say, you know, now God has things planned from the beginning, he knows, you know, the greater good that's coming through suffering, so he really never feels grief.

And so, we could say, the author there, Paul, you know, didn't really mean that God could feel grief, but speaking of God as if he were a person, you know, if we did this to a person, they would feel grief, so you don't want to do it.

And, you know, somehow it's saying, so we shouldn't do this either, even though God really can't be grieved. And it had that sense that, you know, God has the end plan from the beginning, he knows it has a great good, and so he really can't grieve about, you know, the best world, you know, that's come to be.

Well, there may be some logic to that, but... doesn't he express grief over and over again as he interacts with the nation of Israel and the Old Testament? Probably.

[32 : 39] And then, also, with Jesus, you know, that, you know, we can just look at Jesus to see, you know, his emotions and his feelings that are expressed throughout the apostles.

so here was my favorite theology professor at Gordon Conwell Seminary, you know, saying something, and at least from my perspective, he had this clear understanding of God based on an awful lot of scripture, and then he took those parts of scripture that didn't seem to quite fit with that and conformed them to his systematic theology.

You know, I agree with what Debbie just said. Now, it could be that God is beyond our understanding, and that, you know, what the Bible says about him, there may be things, just like in science and in nature, you know, as we study, as I've studied physics, you know, I know there are things about the way the world works that just, don't make sense, that we can't logically put together.

It's beyond us. And so, I think it's good to do systematic theology, but if we sometimes come away and say, you know, this didn't seem to work out as I hoped, you know, that may be all right.

It may be that, well, it is. Somebody could probably quote the end of Romans 11, you know. Quick comment, and you mentioned before that if you don't have a systematic theology, you're incredibly imbalanced.

[34 : 21] Yes! And if you're, your ministry will be incredibly imbalanced because you're going to get to a Hebrew 6 passage and you'll say one thing, but then you'll say the completely opposite thing when you get to another passage and you need to, you need to understand how, you know, I like the thing, the idea of New York City, you have to have a map of the entire city to understand how things connect together, you know.

Yeah! There's no contradictions in the Bible, but when you are contradicting yourself week after week based on the text you're getting to, I think you're becoming incredibly imbalanced. People are, you know, where is this guy going?

Where is he going? I don't know. Yes! So systematic theology I think helps to see the entire Bible and how it all fits together like a big map of Europe and like these are how it's situated, but you know, sometimes the map has to change if you understand the Bible's, you know, the Bible's an error and not our systematic theology and sometimes our systematic theology needs to be changed based on what the scripture is saying and over the world.

Yes! And I remember in one of my philosophy classes, the teacher said, now, you can criticize an author by saying, I don't understand what they're saying here.

And sometimes that's a valid criticism, except if you're stupid and, you know, other people understand it, you know, but you just use the excuse, I don't understand it. So with regard to some of these tensions, you know, there are some things I look at and I say, I just can't make sense of that.

[35 : 55] And for right now, I just have to leave it. And other people look at it and they say, no, I really think I understand how these things fit together. And they may be right. But, you know, if we don't have it all put together, you know, I think it's, at least under some circumstances, good to acknowledge that.

So, that's one of the challenges. Now, where are we here? Okay, the other thing, the other reason why another thing kind of related to process theology is what was somewhat popular in some parts of evangelical theology, like in the 1990s, the openness of God.

And with regard to passages like 1 Samuel 15, 10, that's probably written down there several times, but could somebody please read 1 Samuel 15, 10.

Yes. 15, 10. Give it a shot. The word of the Lord came to Samuel. I regret that I have made Saul king. Good. He has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandment.

Okay. Samuel was angry and he cried to the Lord on him. I'm just impressed that Samuel wasn't ready to give up on Saul yet.

[37 : 29] Recently, you know, I heard somebody say about another Christian, you know, they just aren't doing what they should do. You know, how can I get them to change?

And I think that's what Samuel was praying or concerned about. You know, how can I get Saul to change? How can I get God to change?

I think, but the main point was that first thing. I regret that I made Saul king. This is how the openness of God treatment would come.

Now, God can know everything, king, but he chooses not to know some things about the future. So, God chose to make Saul king, but he did not choose to access his possible information about the future, and didn't know exactly how things were going to turn out.

And so, when Saul disobeyed God, Saul regretted it, or some translations may say, you know, he repented that he made Saul king.

[38 : 48] Words, both of which, usually for us, include some significant change or lack of knowledge.

and so, this is how the openness of God people treated passages like this. They dealt with the tension by saying, well, maybe God chose not to know what Saul was going to do, and then he really, you know, this is a very plain, accurate description of how God felt when Saul disobeyed over and over again.

well, that is maybe a valid attempt to try and do justice to what that passage says, and I think, you know, to the Hebrew that lies behind it, you know, and all those kinds of good study things.

In my mind, it, you know, solves one problem and introduces a thousand others. So, you know, again, systematic theology.

I don't think this is a good way to go. It doesn't really help us in the end. So... The openness of God is not the good way to go.

[40 : 11] Thank you for that clarification. Yes, yes. That's my opinion. And I don't encourage any of you to study that unless you have a special reason for that.

Okay, so, but there are a number of passages in Scripture where, especially if you go to King James, you know, say God repented, or God relented, or God regretted, and those are dealt with further down.

But here we are, near the end of our class. So, how should we sum up here? one, we have the repentance principle, as I describe it, spelled out in Scripture in that Ezekiel passage, and in Jeremiah, where it clearly says, if I say I'm going to punish somebody, and they repent, then I'm not going to punish them.

So, in that sense, God's not going to change, you know, if that happens. But his apparent plans for a person seem to change, at least from a human perspective.

Or, he says, in that same Ezekiel passage, if there's a good man, you know, and I say he's going to live, but he starts sinning, then he's going to die.

[41 : 44] God. So, that, I think, fits in very well with that next part. Tyler, could you read that second part all again is fine.

With the change in response to prayer? No, I'm sorry, in Gruden's summary statement. Yet, because, right near the front. Okay, God is unchanging in his being perfections?

I think I can read this. A little bit later down there, I say, God acts and feels differently in response to different situations.

So, from our perspective, you know, God's plans seem to change, because he says one thing's going to happen, the person changes, situation changes, and then he appears to change his mind.

And, let's see here. And, there's a lot of interesting stories about that.

[43 : 00] Likewise, we have stories where, let's see, I think there's a heading that says something about change in regard to prayer.

And, there's a lot of examples listed. Sometimes, God changes his apparent plans in response to prayer.

Sometimes, he doesn't. And, sometimes, it, to me, is clear why he does that, and other times, it's not so clear.

I want things to be clear. I want, you know, I want the Bible to read like a physics textbook where, you know, each word means the same thing, you know, in every part of the book.

But, God chose, I believe for very good reasons, not to write the Bible like a physics textbook. you know, he, because a lot of people don't like physics, you know.

[44 : 08] But, anyway. I have a quick comment. Yes. I agree, which helps me, is a lot of the times, God says he's going to do something, but there's an implied conditional clause at the end.

Exactly. Yes. I'm going to do this unless you repent. Yes. That's what happened with Jonah and Nineveh. Yes. Sometimes, God said, I'm going to do it, but he will, he will, revert his wrath if people repent.

Sometimes, not actually listed in what God says, but it's implied. And Jonah three is just a wonderful, heartwarming example of that. In my opinion, if you want a special blessing sometime, read Jonah three.

So, are you thinking of that as a small print at the end of a contract? You could think of it that way. But the issue is, in the Bible at least, sometimes the small print doesn't seem to be there.

You have to find it someplace else. But that's okay, I think, once I understand that, you know what, you never get the whole story.

[45 : 25] You know, if somebody were trying to record what happened in the Sunday school class today, you know, they probably would include how many times somebody breathed and how many times, you know, somebody else twitched.

And sometimes those are meaningful, sometimes they're not. You never get the whole story. You can't. Because it would take forever, or almost, you know, to read it.

So everything is abridged. But God has abridged his description of reality in the Bible in a wonderful way so that we are able to read it and understand it and get truth from it and apply it to our lives.

And so here's where I want to end up. under applications at the end.

We've already looked at the Malachi passage, which, you know, I could summarize by saying, because God doesn't change, you and your present condition should change, and in response to that, God will change what he's doing in and around you.

[46 : 43] so that is good news, I would say. There's always a way back to God.

And then you have those seeming examples in the Bible where there aren't. But if we're worried about getting back to God, you know, I think, well, anyway, I'm happy about it.

Finally, Psalm 102. Some years ago, I read Psalm 102, and I thought, wow, this sounds a lot like Hezekiah. I wonder if Hezekiah wrote this psalm.

There's no indication about who wrote Psalm 102. By the way, I encourage you to turn, all of you, to Psalm 102 at this point. But as I was doing this study, I found it very interesting that this psalm, which I think more clearly than any other single passage in the Bible says God does not change, includes a prayer for God to change, and He did it.

Would somebody please read Psalm 102, starting with verse 23. Thanks.

[48 : 14] He has broken my strength in midcourse, yet shortened my days. O my God, I say, take me not away in the midst of my days, you whose years endure throughout all generations.

So that, whether Hezekiah wrote this psalm or not, that was Hezekiah's situation. God was cutting short his life.

And then he asked God to change, you know, what he had declared would happen. And how does he, you know, carry on in his request to God?

Please continue. God, please change from what you said you are going to do.

Because you do not change. You are the same. And so your people can count on you. And so I have a summary statement at the end, which I have since changed.

[49 : 47] And I would probably rewrite it, you know, from scratch. But my temporary fix is this. Because God does not change, we, I can't read it, so I'll just tell you, to stick in the word apparent between his and plans.

could somebody read it with that edit, like it, yeah. Because God does not change, we can count on him to change his appearance plans for us as we change.

And particularly as we draw near to him, we can count on him to change the current situation and the apparent plans for good.

Now, it may not be what we asked for or hoped for, like Paul's thorn in the flesh. Prayed three times that God would take that away.

But God had a really good plan. And Paul changed. He changed from one who was complaining and unhappy, maybe miserable because of his thorn in the flesh, to someone who could rejoice in his weakness because God's strength was revealed in it.

[51 : 23] So, it kind of gets the paradox of prayer, right? It does, it does. I will do this, yet he commands us to pray that God will accomplish his purposes.

So, in a way, like we're praying, but God is already ordained that he is going to triumph over our enemy. And God does to do us both.

And that's, you need to just keep doing, keep those intentions. We're going to pray, but also trust that God's plan is, you know, he's declared the final victory and we're going to rejoice with him on that final day.

But yeah, we're called to pray for this that's come to pass. Come Lord Jesus, the last word of the Bible. we are to pray a couple.

Yes, yes. I don't understand how it works, but I do know this. God is faithful.

[52 : 23] He loves us. He doesn't change on that. And as we draw near to him, he is going to do something good in our lives.

and many times it will look like a big change and other times it won't. But if we're there in the arms of Jesus, that is a good thing.

He is faithful. Yeah. So I'm going to close with prayer and then you will be free to depart or stay.

Oh Lord, I, we don't understand you in your entirety. But we thank you for revealing so much about yourself to us.

And we ask that we'll put that which we know into practice. Today, may we abide in you that we may bear fruit for you.

[53 : 34] May we please you that we may share in your joy. May you use us to be a blessing to others.

For the glory of Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. You're welcome. Is that Chris?

Yes. Hi, Chris. Amen.