

Sermon Notes

The Unchanging Saviour

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever

January 25, 2009

A. Change

1. welcome changes
2. unwelcome changes
3. our needs as human beings ... as Christians
4. Jesus Christ
5. The immutability of God ...
 - a. Forever the Same in His Power
 - b. Forever the Same in His Promises
 - c. Forever the Same in His Personality

B. Past

1. the Son of God
2. the Immanuel: Christ Jesus
 - a. in His ministry

b. in His farewell

c. in His death

d. in His resurrection

C. Present

1. Exalted
 - a. to Stephen
 - b. to Paul
 - c. to you and me

D. Future

1. an unblemished record thus far
2. the final token of His love

E. Conclusion

A. Introduction – Change – it is all around us

1. welcome changes – some changes we are glad to see:
 - a. moving into a new house, for example, is an enjoyable experience, one to which people look forward
 - b. or getting rid of an old, troublesome car;
 - c. we like changing scenery – one enjoyment of travel and something that Maureen and I enjoyed in our recent trip
 - d. some of us would feel intimidated in having to live on the prairie because everything seems to look flat and the same
 - e. most of us like this country because of the changing of the seasons – particularly now from winter as we look forward to spring! – it is a wonderful promise given in Genesis 8:22 – *While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease.*
 - f. and usually the arrival of a new addition to a family – by marriage or by birth – is considered to be a delightful and blessed event; a time of rejoicing
 - g. when I was working in computer systems I always looked forward to when we were installing new computers or new versions of the operating system, because of the challenge of dealing with new ideas and new problems – some of those with whom I worked, though, felt differently! They saw these as being ...
2. unwelcome changes – changes that cause us difficulty
 - a. some people are reacting to the constant system updates and changes being foisted upon their *personal* computers by changing to Linux and open office applications
 - b. changes for the worse we do not enjoy: when sickness comes, or even death – events that throw off the balance of our lives and disturb our equilibrium
 - c. as the recent developments in the financial markets have strikingly shown, we do not enjoy changes that upset our expectations
 - d. neither do we enjoy those changes which threaten our security where we have to move out of our comfort zone
 - e. nor do we enjoy conflicts that come into our workplace, our school, our community, our church, or our home that destroy our peace

3. our needs as human beings – as God has created us
 - a. and as He has recreated us when we come to Him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation
 - b. are both very profound, and often, what seem intrinsically to be opposed one to the other
 - c. our first need is that we have the need to grow
 - (A) in the natural realm as humans, to continue learning, developing – it is when this stops in us who are older that we being to go rapidly downhill
 - (B) in the spiritual realm as believers, as Peter prays, *'but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ...'* (2 Peter 3: 18a)
 - d. and our second need is that of having stability
 - (A) so, as men and women, we seek to form friendships, families and arrangements that will provide us with stability, that will give us a foundation for living
 - (B) and, as Christians, Paul prays that by the working of the Holy Spirit *'that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ...'* (Ephesians 3: 17) – rooted; grounded; these are terms that convey stability
4. Jesus Christ
 - a. is the central figure in all of human existence
 - b. and He is both the objective of change and growth in our lives, that we by *'speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,'* (Ephesians 4: 15)
 - c. but the Bible also recognizes our need of stability and turns our eyes to the stability of God: *'Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.'* (Psalms 90: 2)
 - d. and we also find Jesus Christ to be the source of our stability in our text for this morning: *'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.'* (Hebrews 13: 8)
5. The Immutability of God
 - a. that attribute of God in which He does not change
 - b. because change implies imperfection, that before change God was less perfect, He who is absolutely perfect
 - c. is also an attribute of Jesus Christ
 - d. which is just another proof that Jesus Christ is very God of God, that He is Deity indeed

- e. this is a cornerstone of our faith because it forms the basis whereby we can trust Him completely and for ever
- f. Rev. Alan Carr (Th. D.) is the pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Lenoir, N. C.; on today's text he has presented a sermon, "Jesus Christ: Forever the Same"^{2}. with this outline: that Jesus Christ is ...
 - (A) Forever the Same in His Power
 - (1) His creative power
 - (2) His redemptive power
 - (3) His protective power
 - (B) Forever the Same in His Promises
 - (1) He has promised to save us
 - (2) He has promised to supply us
 - (3) He has promised to satisfy us
 - (4) He has promised to secure us
 - (5) He has promised to sustain us
 - (C) Forever the Same in His Personality
 - (1) He is love
 - (2) He is light
 - (3) He is life
 - (4) He is Lord
 - (D) and I will give you his conclusion later
- g. but, in company with Rev. Charles Vince, a pastor of over a century ago, I want to focus our thoughts on just one of those aspects of 'The Unchanging Saviour'^{3}. – 'Jesus Christ *is the same, yesterday, today, and forever*' in His love

B. Past

1. the Son of God

- a. God the Son loved throughout eternity
- b. 1 John 4:8 & 4:6 tells us that 'God is love'
- c. and in Hebrews 10:7 with Psalm 40:7-8, the curtain that veils heaven from our view is shifted aside as God the Son speaks these words, 'Behold I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God; ...'
- d. so that we are told 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever

believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.' (John 3:16)

- e. and, although the Bible never tells us explicitly, it does so indirectly, that the Second Person of the Trinity, is the Angel, the Messenger, the Sent One – who appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob – who as the Angel or Sent One of the Presence led the children of Israel in redemption from Egypt to the land of Promise – as the Sent One of the Covenant, in Malachi 3:1, is the Lord coming to his temple
- f. yes, 'it was love that sent my Saviour, to this world of sin and woe; it was love that left heaven's portals, and came down to dwell below; ...'^{4}.
- g. but, though all these show the eternal love of the Son of God, it is not that which is primarily in view in this verse; it is the love of Jesus of Nazareth, Christ, Messiah

2. the Immanuel: Christ Jesus

a. in His ministry

- (A) from start to finish, the ministry of Jesus Christ showed and unchanging love in the face of adversity
- (B) as Jesus began His ministry, we find Him reading in the synagogue from the book of Isaiah – words of mercy, not of judgement
- (C) 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favourable year of the lord.' (Luke 4:18-19)
- (D) and, as He suggested that this blessing would extend even to the Gentiles, the people of his home town were filled with rage, and tried to throw him over a cliff
- (E) yet, a week later, there He was, filled with love, in the neighbouring town of Capernaum, teaching, casting out and demon, healing Peter's mother-in-law, and then healing those brought to Him until sunset
- (F) follow Jesus through those 3½ years of ministry: see
 - (1) His healing the sick
 - (2) His restoring sight to the blind
 - (3) His raising the lame to walk
 - (4) His feeding the hungry who crowded to hear him
 - (5) His restoring the dead to the sorrowing friends
- (G) and how did people respond to that love?

- (1) many of His followers turned away because His teaching demanded too much of them
 - (2) the religious rulers rejected Him because He saw through their hypocrisy and challenged their rule
 - (3) but the love of Jesus Christ never wavered, and is so poignantly expressed in the words He spoke as He entered Jerusalem in the last week of His life: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.' (Matthew 23:37)
- (H) throughout His ministry the love of 'Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'
- b. in His farewell – to His disciples
- (A) we plan to spend time in our Adult Bible Class in the weeks preceding Good Friday, looking at John 13 to 17, at that evening before His death, Good Friday Eve
 - (B) Jesus Christ knew what He faced on that evening
 - (C) In John 12:27, Jesus He exclaims, "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour." (John 12:27)
 - (D) did he spend that evening wrapped up in His own thoughts, His own situation, His own suffering?
 - (E) no, we read those lovely words in John 13:1, 'Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.' (John 13:1)
 - (F) then He spent the evening calming their anxieties and encouraging them in their weakness
 - (G) through His farewell to his disciples the love of 'Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'
- c. in His death
- (A) on the cross hear the words of our Lord, Jesus Christ
 - (B) gracious words, loving words
 - (C) to the thief who first railed and then repented: 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.' (Luke 23:43)
 - (D) to Mary and to John: 'When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!"...' (John 19:26-27)
 - (E) to His Father of those crucifying him, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are

doing.' (Luke 23:34)

(F) on the cross the love of 'Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'

d. in His resurrection

(A) recall Thomas being absent that first Sunday evening and how he would not believe – next Sunday does Jesus reprimand him? – Oh, no! Hear the love words – '*Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.*' (John 20:27) and Thomas' answering cry, '*My Lord and my God.*'

(B) or does he berate Peter for his three denials – no, but gives Peter three opportunities to affirm his own love and then receive three commissions to '*feed my sheep*'

(C) for 40 days Jesus spent time with them, with as many as 500 at once, and in resurrection the love of '*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'

C. Present

1. Today Jesus Christ has been exalted and He is '*... sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*' (Hebrews 1:3)

a. is His love not the same?

(A) the same redeeming love?

(B) the same caring love?

b. consider but these

2. that first martyr, of whom we sung a few weeks ago in that hymn, 'The Son of God Goes Forth to War'^{5}.

The martyr first, whose eagle eye

Could pierce beyond the grave,

Who saw his Master in the sky

And called on Him to save

Like Him, with pardon on his tongue

In midst of mortal pain,

He prayed for them that did the wrong:

Who follows in his train?

a. what do we discover as we read this history: Stephen saw His Lord Jesus, in love standing to receive his spirit

3. in love, the Lord Jesus reached down to that fierce enemy
 - a. to Saul – murderer, persecutor of the church of Christ
 - b. and in love transformed that misguided Pharisee
 - c. to become Paul, apostle, by the grace of God changed into a preacher of the grace of God

4. to these names could be added countless millions of others
 - a. those who were once rebels
 - b. but now are redeemed, now are reconciled to God
 - c. because they have heard the loving voice of Jesus calling them to repentance for sin, to take the free gift of salvation
 - d. and for those know him as Saviour
 - e. who can cast you mind back to that day when you first knew His love as He took your guilt upon Himself and made you a child of God, one of God's chosen people
 - f. His love is still the same today
 - (A) not depending on any perfection on your part
 - (B) when you fail Him, there He is still, still loving you
 - (C) when you forget Him, His wooing voice still calls out
 - (D) no matter how dark things may seem, how down you may feel, know this truth: He will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5) – that affirmation in the Greek contains 5 negatives; it is addressed to you in the singular – each of you as individuals – it can be paraphrased as '[You: never, never, never, never, never will I leave or forsake!](#)'
 - g. the love of '[Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.](#)'

D. Future

1. What of the future?
 - a. Jesus Christ has an unblemished track record
 - (A) His love has never changed in the past
 - (B) His love is still the same at present
 - (C) we have the record of the ages and the record of our own experience to bear this out
 - b. why should it change in the future?

c. never, it can never change – He is changeless – the love of 'Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'

2. how do we know? The past tells us. The promises tell us.

a. and the picture of heaven tells us

b. what is the event that we look forward to in heaven

c. it is a feast, isn't it – just an ordinary banquet? Oh, no!

d. it is a wedding feast – the wedding feast of the Lamb when He is united with His bride, the church, the New Jerusalem – what a picture and an expression of love! – and so shall we ever be with the Lord

e. our outlook in eternity is discovering that the love of 'Jesus Christ *is the same yesterday and today and forever.*'

E. Conclusion

1. Dr. Carr concluded his message with these words: 'This world around us, even our very lives are in a constant state of flux. Things are always changing for you and me. I find it very refreshing and comforting to know that the God I serve and the Lord I have received as my Savior will never change. Perhaps there are needs tonight in your life. Perhaps you need to come to Him and share your burdens and find help from an immutable, unchangeable Lord. He loves you and is here tonight to help you if you will come to Him and call on His name. Will you come to the Lord this evening?'^{6}.

2. changing that word evening to morning, I give you the same invitation this morning, that you will yield yourself to the unchanging love relationship that Christ desires with you

a. by seeking forgiveness from sin through His salvation

b. by walking with Him in fellowship each day

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Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “Jesus Christ: Forever the Same” by Rev. Alan Carr – Kerux sermon #9495
3. “The Unchanging Saviour” book and sermon title, by Rev. Charles Vince, of a Congregational Assembly in Birmingham, England, published by Hodder & Stoughton, 1875; and formed an inspiration for the viewpoint of this message
4. “Love Divine”, © 1922 by Gerald E. Bonney
5. “The Son of God Goes Forth to War” by Reginald Heber (1783-1826)
6. Rev. Alan Carr, *op cit*.