

“Now and Forever!”—Hebrews 13:8

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Now and Forever!”, is Hebrews 13:8 → *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Changes. I’ve been told that during our lifetime we have experienced change much more rapidly and extensively than any other period of human history. With technological advancements connecting people in ways only dreamed of in the cartoons and sci-fi movies some fifty plus years ago, one feels the pressure to “keep up” or get left behind in the wake of frustration and fear. One can now feel like an “alien” on planet earth if he or she is not utilizing all the latest in the techy lifestyle—which, by the way, seems to be changing at an accelerated rate everyday!

Yet, human beings are still human beings. They seek ritual and consistency in a very inconsistent world around them but on their own terms and conditions. While many people do not even recognize the tragedy of morality being buried in the wake of all this change they will actually be angry when their TV channels get changed . . . or the products they use regularly change

. . . or their routine routes are cluttered with road construction . . . and, yes, when prices change by going up and up and up! Some changes are view as good, others not so good. While we desire something in our lives to stay the same we've become so inundated with change that we will change something just for change sake. What an inconsistent people we are!

Our text reassures us that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*. In what way is *Jesus . . . the same yesterday and today and forever?* It seems in our culture that the teachings of Jesus are filled with diversity in the myriad of interpretations of Scripture! It seems that many Christians do not even understand Who Jesus is in the same way! In what way is *Jesus . . . the same yesterday and today and forever?*

Amidst all the changes in human history and in your life there are two constants: your sin and Jesus. At the introduction of sin into the hearts of humans the LORD gave this promise to us as He spoke to the devil in Genesis 3:15 → *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel*. In light of the permanence of sin this side of heaven faith in Jesus, the promised *Offspring* from *the woman*, was the sure and certain hope for experiencing restoration and consistency in relationship with God again.

Change is necessary because of a relationship with Jesus Christ *yesterday*

*and today and forever.* When Abram was chosen by Yahweh to be the father of the nation through which Jesus would come, he and Sarai experienced huge changes in their lives:

- They changed residency to live as strangers in a strange land. (cf. Genesis 12:1) Every time they moved it would remind them about God's faithfulness and the promised Savior;
- They were given new names so that every time they heard their name spoken or signed it they would be reminded about God's faithfulness and the promised Savior (cf. Genesis 17:5,15).

Most importantly Abraham and Sarah changed from worshiping false gods to worshiping **only** Yahweh, the Creator and Sustainer of all life! They, their family and the nation of the Israelites which came from their family were to reflect this change to all the nations around them by living, worshiping and functioning differently than they, based upon God's faithfulness and the promised Savior! They were to be holy because Yahweh is holy. (cf. Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Numbers 15:40)

Changes were important in relationship with the LORD when Jesus revealed Himself during His public ministry on earth! The twelve disciples' lives changed as Jesus changed them from simple fishermen to "fishers of men." (cf. Luke 5:10-11) They and others found themselves traveling from village to

village sharing with the people how God's faithfulness was realized in the Person & Work of Jesus! (cf. Matthew 10:1-6; Mark 3:13-15; Luke 9:1-2; 10:1-9) People experienced changes as *Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.* (cf. Matthew 9:35) The most important change is when Jesus dealt with the other constant in their lives by dying on the cross as the final perfect sacrifice for their sins. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday* as those people experienced by faith the fulfillment of God's faithfulness and promises in Jesus!

*Jesus Christ is the same . . . today* as well! You are experiencing the constant of sin in your life. The acts of sin so openly prevalent in our culture today were listed by the apostle Paul some nineteen hundred plus year ago in Galatians 5:19-21 → *The works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* However, while these sins may be easy to see in the world, it is important to recognize that the devil uses the changes which you don't like in your life to get a foothold so that your sinful heart expresses itself in your sins of thoughts, words and deeds.

Praise God that *Jesus Christ is the same . . . today!* His sacrifice stands for you today!! Hebrews 9:26 reassures you that Christ *has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* Jesus appeared **once for all** people, **for all** sin, **for all** time! Because His sacrifice for sin stands today you can come to Him, confessing your sins in repentance and receive the complete and total forgiveness of your sins through His absolution! You do not have to despair as you live in a world filled with the presence of sin in all it's ugly forms because you trust in He Who has defeated the power of sin **once** and **for all!**

Jesus Christ came to deal with the constant of sin in your life so that you can live a stable life by faith in Him, trusting in His perfect life and death for the forgiveness of your sins! This produces more changes. It changes the way you think—now with the desire to be in accord with God's thoughts as revealed in His Word. It changes the way you talk—now with words of hope and grace pointing to Christ. It changes the way you act—now with compassion, kindness, humility and forgiveness. It also changes your view of life from simply an existence on this earth to a relationship forever with God.

Hebrews 9:28 says: *Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him. We are now eagerly waiting for Him to come back*

to restore all things, defeating that final enemy, death, (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26) and change absolutely everything, restoring all things according to the perfection with which it was made in the beginning! This is a change we look forward to experiencing because *Jesus Christ is the same . . . forever!*

Whether in the Garden of Eden with the first promise of the Savior to crush satan's power . . . or the promises given to Abraham and his descendants for generations to follow . . . or the presence of Jesus during His earthly public ministry, fulfilling the promises for our salvation . . . or the fulfillment of those promises within which we bask today . . . the Holy Spirit produces faith in the hearts of believers to trust in *Jesus Christ Who is the same yesterday and today and forever*. Thus, His forgiveness of your sins and new life in His Holy Spirit is also *the same yesterday and today and forever!* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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