

The Unchanging God

How often do we forget to pause in life and express our thankfulness to our Creator, that His Word and His Nature is unchanging and He can always be relied on?

We live in a world of chance and change.

There is little, if anything, that we can rely on not to change in this busy little world of nature and mankind.

Everything that has life in it is growing or developing.

This makes it difficult for us to envisage a God who is immutable, that is a being that never differs from Himself.

For human beings change is a normal part of life, and of necessity in many ways.

This change is found in three directions as far as man's moral status is concerned:

- a) from better to worse
- b) from worse to better
- c) even when moral stability is attained he must change within himself to attain maturity

God's perfections forever rule out any possibility of such changes.

God cannot change for the better since He is perfectly holy, He has never been less holy than He is now and can never be holier than He has always been.

Neither can God change for the worse.

God's attributes, which we are studying in this series, are not isolated traits of His character but facets of His singular being.

These attributes are not things-in-themselves, they are rather thoughts by which we think of God, aspects of a perfect whole, names given to whatever we know to be true of the Godhead.

We see, for instance, that if God is self-existent, He must be self-sufficient; if He has power, being infinite, He must have all power.

If He possesses knowledge, His infinitude assures us that He possesses all knowledge.

Similarly, God's immutability presupposes His faithfulness.

If God is unchanging, it follows that He could **not** be unfaithful, for this would require Him to change.

Any failure within the divine [holy] character of God would argue imperfection and since God is perfect [holy] this could **not** occur.

All the acts of God are consistent with all His attributes.

No attribute contradicts any other, but all harmonise and blend into each other to express the one Godhead.

All that God does agrees with all that God is, being and doing are one in Him.

Since God is self-existent, He is not composed, there are in Him no parts to be altered.

Since God is self-sufficient, nothing can enter His being from without; only a being composed of parts, as humans are, can change.

For change is basically a shift in the relationship of the parts of a whole or the admission of some foreign element into the original composition.

As humans it is impossible for us to escape change.

Both we ourselves and the world we live in are in constant flux.

Each of us appear on the world scene for a brief moment to laugh and weep, to work and play, and then leave to make room for those who follow us in the unending cycle of humanity.

Certain poets have found morbid pleasure in this impermanence of mankind.

Omar wrote, *“Don’t slap that clay around so roughly”*.

He exhorts the potter, *“It may be your great great grandfather’s dust you make so free with”*.

This may be sad sorrow expressed in gentle humour, but such a fascination in the enemy that is destroying all mankind, death, is a product of a sick mind.

The sacred writers of God’s Word face the same mutability of man with wholesome expressions of hope, for it is in the immutable God that we can find at last eternal permanence.

For human beings, the whole possibility of redemption lies in our ability to change, to move from one person to another is the essence of repentance.

The liar becomes truthful, the thief honest, the lewd pure, the proud humble.

The whole moral texture of life is altered: our thoughts, desires, affections are transformed.

We can no longer be what we were.

Romans 6:3-6 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life**. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that **our old self was crucified** with him so that **the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.**”*

So radical is this change that Paul uses the term *“old self”* and *“new life”*.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

God is seeking to create a completely new man with a transformed mind.

The *“old self”* even at his best, possesses only the physical life of *“Adam”*, while the *“new life”* has within him the life of God.

Hebrews 10:9 [NIV] *“Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first to establish the second.”*

This change is shown most clearly in the book of Hebrews.

In working out His redemptive plan, the unchanging God makes full use of the built-in ability of man to change.

In a process of successive changes to arrive at what may be made permanent at last.

The Old Covenant God made with man was something provisional to be abolished to make way for the New and Everlasting Covenant through Jesus Christ as the Mediator and His blood the ratifying blood sacrifice.

In this world our fellow humans forget us or change their attitude towards us as their private interests dictate, or revise their opinion of us for the slightest cause.

The fact that God does not change is a very comforting thought and a source of great strength when faced with the problems others so often bring on us.

God's attitude towards us now is the same as it was in eternity past and will be in eternity to come.

What brings peace to the Christian is that when we approach God's throne we don't have to wonder if we will find Him in a receptive mood.

God is always receptive to our misery or need, as well as to our love of Him and faith in Him.

God doesn't keep office hours or set aside times when He will see no-one.

God never changes mood or cools off His affection for us, His creation, or loses enthusiasm for the future He plans for us, His children.

Matthew 11:28-30 [NIV] *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

God will **not** compromise with His Word or not fulfil His Promises.

God cannot be persuaded to alter His Word or coaxed into answering a selfish prayer.

In all our efforts to find God, to please Him, and commune with Him, we should remember that all the change must be on our part.

Malachi 3:6 [Amplified Bible] *"For I am the Lord, I do not change."*

We are the ones who must meet His clearly stated terms and bring our lives in accord with His revealed will.

There are three specific things about God that do not change on which we can build a stable and peace-filled life.

God's Love for us never changes

Jeremiah 31:3 [NIV] *"The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."*

Psalms 119:159 [Good News Bible] *"Your love never changes, so save me!"*

We need to remind ourselves constantly of this fact when we are faced with the fluctuating love of even our closest friends.

1 John 4:8 [NIV] *“Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love.**”*

God is love and God always acts like Himself; God never acts out of character.

We need also to remember that nothing can cut us off from that love.

Romans 8:38-39 [NIV] *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

We never need to doubt God’s Love, whatever we do, whatever happens, God’s Love for us will always be the same; an unconditional love.

We always get into trouble when we doubt God’s Love.

When tragedy hits us, when things don’t go our way, when our prayers don’t seem to be answered, remember God’s Love for us has **not** changed one little bit.

Romans 5:6,8 [NIV] *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” ... “But **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”*

We love God because He first expressed His Love for us in Jesus Christ as God’s love gift to us, while we were still sinners and hostile to God.

1 John 4:19 [NIV] *“We love because he first loved us.”*

God’s Word never changes

Isaiah 40:8 [NIV] *“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but **the word of our God stands forever.**”*

The laws, the principles and the commands in God’s Word are timeless.

The Bible is always relevant, it is always “up to date”.

Anything that man may write eventually becomes obsolete.

Today, by the time a science book is printed, new discoveries make it out of date.

Matthew 24:35 [NIV] *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but **my words will never pass away.**”*

Psalms 119:152 [NIV] *“Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever.”*

As man’s ideas don’t last we need to build our lives on something more solid.

Matthew 7:24-27 [NIV] *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

Science exists because God’s Laws are constant.

Alan Shepard, the first astronaut in space, was asked by a reporter just before he was launched into space – “*What is the thing you are depending on most in this space venture?*”

His reply was – “*I am depending on the fact that God’s Laws do not change.*”

Can you imagine what life would be like if the rotation of the earth was inconsistent or if gravity did not always work?

We can study science because things are predictable.

You know if you mix this chemical with this other chemical you don’t want to get the result in your eye, but keep well clear.

Just as there are physical laws that do not change, there are moral laws established by God that do not change.

There are absolutes.

There are things that will always be right and others that are always wrong; it is not just a matter of opinion.

Satan’s temptation in his desire to destroy us morally is to try to persuade us to doubt God’s Word.

Genesis 3:1 [NIV] “*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden?***”

Satan’s approach now has changed slightly because we can all read God’s Word, the statement he uses today is “*Well, that is your interpretation!*”

How many have heard that line of persuasion by those who (like Satan) do not want to obey God’s Word?

Let me ask you a question.

When you drive up to a stop sign, how do you interpret that sign?

What does STOP mean?

How many ways can you interpret it?

If the Bible tells us ‘*don’t have sex outside marriage*’, we only have sex within the marriage covenant.

There is no interpretation needed with such statements: it is black and white.

God’s Word will always be the right thing to do.

It may seem hard, it may seem unreasonable, it may be unpopular but it is always the right thing to do.

Doesn’t that simplify life?

We don’t have to question “*Who shall I believe?*”

How many of you believe all we read in the papers?

How many of you believe all we see on TV?

How many of you believe all we read in the Bible?

Why then do we spend more time watching TV and reading the newspapers than we do God's Word?

Stability comes from basing our lives on God's unchanging Word, by memorising His Word so that it is always there in our mind when we have decisions to make.

When Christ was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, he did not pull out his copy of the Old Testament and say, "*Well, somewhere in here it says something like you should not tempt the Lord your God.*"

The scripture just popped right out of his head; He had memorised it. (He did have one advantage over us: he was the one who wrote it ! !)

God's Purpose for our lives never changes

Isaiah 14:24 [NIV] "*The LORD Almighty has sworn, Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.*"

God is at work in human history.

History is really "*His-story*", God's story for mankind.

People may say "*What is the world coming to?*"

The answer is "*It is coming to the climax that God planned from the very beginning.*"

I don't know what the future holds but I know who holds the future in His Hands, God does.

Psalms 33:11 [NIV] "*But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*"

What is God's Purpose for us individually?

John 10:10 [NIV] "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*"

Ephesians 1:11-12 [NIV] "*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, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*"

God's Personal Plan for our salvation has not changed!

Since God knows everything [omniscient] and has all power [omnipotent] His Plans do **not** have to change.

Our plans change often because we do not have all knowledge and are subject to powers greater than our own.

1 Samuel 15:29 [Good News Bible] "*God does not lie or change His mind. He is not a man, He does not change His mind.*"

Where scripture says that God changed His Mind it was always the people who changed, not God; He had just given them a choice.

God never changes His Will but He does will a change in His Children.

God does not have a “Plan B” for our lives.

Romans 10:9 [NIV] *“That **if you** confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, **you will** be saved.”*

God knew in advance that we all would make mistakes, wrong choices, that we would sin and have many disappointments, but He allowed for them all in His Personal Plan for us.

Romans 8:28 [NIV] *“And we know that **in all things** God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*

Not all things in our lives are good but God weaves them into His Plan to bring them to a good conclusion.

Whatever may happen in our lives we are still on “Plan A” that God has for us.

There is no such statement as “Second best” in God’s Plan for us.

The words “Second best” are not found in scripture.

What then specifically is God’s unchanging Plan for our lives?

Romans 8:29 [NIV] *“For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the likeness of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”*

To become like His Son, Jesus Christ.

This is the only way we can fulfil God’s Plan for our lives.

John 14:6 [NIV] *“**Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**”*

Christ did not say He was “a way”, or “the best way”, He said He was “the only way”.

God’s invitation to us has never changed.

He wants us to come to Him by establishing a relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:28-29 [NIV] *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

Revelation 3:20-22 [NIV] *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*

The basis of this desired relationship with God is the three things we have just mentioned.

God’s Love for us will never change

God’s Word never changes

God’s Plan for us never changes

With these as the rock on which we build our lives we will always be stable and have peace of mind as we trust in God.

Psalm 125:1 [Living Bible] *“Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstance.”*