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Our Unchanging God

Introduction

1. For many who read the Bible, there is a sense of remoteness.
2. When they open its pages, they read of a world . . .
 - a. thousands of years old,
 - b. that was primitive and at times barbaric,
 - c. that was primarily agricultural in nature and travel took days or months instead of hours.
3. They read of men like Abraham, Moses, David and others like them and of how God related to each.
4. They encounter prophets denouncing sin and threatening God's judgment upon those who persist in it.
5. They see a man from the village of Nazareth, performing miracles, confronting Jewish leaders, dying for sinners, rising from the dead and ascending again to heaven.
6. Then there are the letters from men chosen to be apostles who challenge individuals to live different lives.
7. They look at all of this and say, "these things belong to *that* world, but not to *our* world of today" — they argue, "we don't live in the same world."
8. They ask "how can the record of God's dealings with the people of that world help those of us who live in such a technological age.
9. What is the link between the two worlds?
10. The answer, "God Himself." He is the link.
11. The same God who was active in their lives is the God with whom we have to do — *exactly* the same God — He does not change in one particular.
12. We call this unchanging nature of God His *immutability*, and it is that

immutability that makes all the difference.

13. This morning, we looked at the need to take time in our lives for rest with God and to be holy, or set apart for His purposes.
14. Tonight, I would like for us to look at this unchangeable nature of God in order to see just how important it is in our lives.

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A. OUR GOD IS EVERLASTING

1. What does it mean to say that someone is everlasting?
2. If you were to look that word up in Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, here are some of the adjectives that are synonymous with it — ceaseless, dateless, deathless, endless, eternal, immortal, permanent, perpetual, undying, unending.
3. All of these describe the God you and I serve.
4. The psalmist in Psalm 93:2, said of God, "You are from everlasting."
5. The prophet Jeremiah called Him "the everlasting King" (Jeremiah 10:10).
6. In Romans 1:23, the apostle Paul called Him "the incorruptible God."
7. He later told Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:16 that God "alone possesses immortality."
8. It was Moses, who in Psalm 90:2, wrote "Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."
9. In Psalm 102:26-27, the psalmist wrote that even earth and the heavens "will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end." (Psalm 102:26-27, NASB95)
10. Through His prophet Isaiah, God said, "I am the first, I am also the last" (Isaiah 48:12).

11. Unlike God, created things have a beginning and an ending.
12. Many of us have perhaps had a child who asked us, "Who made God?"
13. The answer is simple — No one. God did not need to be made, because He has always been.
14. God exists forever — He is always the same — Unlike us, He does not grow older.
15. He does not gain new powers nor lose the ones He had.
16. He does not become stronger, or weaker, or wiser as time goes by.
17. As one person put it, "He cannot change for the better, for He is already perfect; and being perfect, He cannot change for the worse."
18. There is a fundamental difference between God, our Creator, and every created being — every created being is changeable in its nature, but God is unchangeable and never ceases to be what He is.
19. According to Hebrews 7:16, His is "an indestructible life."

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B. GOD'S CHARACTER DOES NOT CHANGE

1. There are many things which may change about us as we each age, one of those being the fact that we do age.
2. Things such as stress, shock or a stroke can alter our character.
3. Over our lifetime, our tastes, our outlook, even our temper may radically change.
 - a. A kind, pleasant person may turn bitter and resentful.
 - b. Someone known for his or her good-will may become cynical or callous later in life.
4. Nothing like this happens to God.
5. He never becomes less truthful, less merciful, less just or good than He used to be.
6. The character of God will always remain — yesterday, today and forever —

exactly as it was in Bible times.

7. In Exodus 3:14, as God is speaking to Moses from a burning bush, He gives to Moses the Name by which He is to become known — “I Am Who I Am” or simply “I Am.”
8. Over the years that name has been rendered in our English Bibles as ‘Yahweh,’ ‘Jehovah’ or ‘the LORD’.
9. This is not a description of God, but a simple declaration of His self-existence, of His eternal changelessness.
10. It is a reminder to you and I here tonight and all of mankind that He has life in Himself, that what He is now, He is eternally.

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11. When the Israelites reached Mount Sinai and God gave them the Law, He proclaimed His name to Moses and listed several aspects of His holy character (Exodus 34:6-7).

“The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”
(Exodus 34:5–7, NASB95)

12. His description of Himself to Moses almost 3,500 years is still applicable today.
13. Some 1,500 years after that statement was made, James would write that with God “there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

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C. GOD’S TRUTH DOES NOT CHANGE

1. Not only does God’s character not change, neither does His truth.
2. Perhaps all of us at one time or another has heard someone say something

and then say, "I didn't mean that," or "I didn't mean to say it that way."

3. We may also find that our views change because we no longer believe or hold to the things we once did.
4. How many of us have changed our position on a certain issue because it no longer expresses what we think?
5. Sometimes we have even had to say we were wrong, because the facts refute what we said.
6. The words of God, however, stand forever and ever.
7. Isaiah the prophet once wrote, "All flesh is grass . . . the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:6, 8, NASB95).
8. In Psalm 119:89, the psalmist wrote, "Forever, O Lord, Your word is firmly fixed in the heavens" (ESV).
9. All the promises, demands, statements of purpose, words of warning that God addresses to us as New Testament Christians still stand.
10. They are not relics of a bygone age, but God's revelation to us for as long as the world lasts.
11. It was Jesus Himself who said, "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35).
12. Nothing can annul God's eternal truth.

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D. GOD'S PURPOSES DO NOT CHANGE

1. In Numbers 23, we find the Israelites camped in the plains of Moab.
2. The king of Moab has finally been able to persuade the prophet Balaam to come and curse the Israelites, but Balaam tells him that he can speak only what the Lord put in his mouth.
3. In verse 19, God gives Balaam these words to speak to Balak:

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should

repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” (**Numbers 23:19, NASB95**)

4. In 1 Samuel 15:29, after the prophet Samuel has told king Saul that God has torn the kingdom of Israel from him, he adds, “the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”
5. To repent is to change your mind about a course of action or a direction you have taken in life.
6. God never does this — He never needs to.

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7. There are some passages which speak of God as repenting (cf. Genesis 6:6f; 1 Samuel 15:11; 2 Samuel 24:16; Jonah 3:10; Joel 2:13f.)

“And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” (Genesis 6:6, KJV)

“The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” (Genesis 6:6, NASB95)

“It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night.” (1 Samuel 15:11, KJV)

“I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.” (1 Samuel 15:11, NASB95)

“And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said he would do unto them; and he did it not.” (Jonah 3:10, KJV)

“When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then

God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.” (Jonah 3:10, NASB95)

8. In each case, the reference is to a reversal of God’s previous treatment of a particular individual or group as a result of their reaction to that treatment.
9. In none of these situations is there an indication that God did not foresee these things coming or that they took Him by surprise and were not provided for in His eternal plan.
10. God’s plans are made on the basis of His complete knowledge and control of things past, present and future.
11. There are no sudden emergencies or unforeseen developments which take Him by surprise.
12. What God is doing now, He planned before the creation of the world.
13. Everything to which He has committed Himself in His Word will be done.
14. No part of His eternal plan changes.

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E. GOD’S SON DOES NOT CHANGE

1. The words from Psalm 102:27 which were applied to the Father Himself are applied by God to His Son in Hebrews 1:12, “You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end.”
2. Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”
3. It is still true that “He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25, NASB95).
4. Jesus Christ never changes.

Conclusion

1. All of this brings us comfort as we face the complexities and uncertainties we find in today's world.
2. Our God does not change. He Son is still just as able to save us as those in the beginning.
3. The question for each of us is will we follow Him and be true to Him?
4. Will you follow Jesus today?