

## *Christ Never Changes*

### Hebrews 13:8

Needless to say, this week included a life changing event for my children, my wife, and myself.

Elizabeth Grace Barnes was born into our family on November 2, at 8:28 a.m. She is our first child to be born in Canada.

The birth of Elizabeth Grace caused me to think upon the many changes that take place during the course of our lives.

We are people constantly changing. The fact is, we are not the same people that we were yesterday, an hour ago, or even a second ago.

And we live in a changing world. Change is all around us.

The hymn writer of Abide With Me penned the words, “Change and decay all around us I see.” How true that is.

The city of Prince George has changed over the years. It is not the same city ten, twenty, or thirty years ago.

Besides families and places changing, our culture and values are changing. Tattoos and body piercings on men and women are increasingly common.

Practices which fifty or sixty years ago, were unthinkable, are becoming more common.

Divorce used to be rare among Christians, now the rate is about the same as with non Christians.

Living together before marriage is becoming more prevalent.

Gay couples are becoming more numerous and are demanding the rights of one man one woman marriage partners. Unimaginable not too long ago an increasing number of people think that "Gay couples should be granted the same rights as traditional married partners."

Add to all the above changes – changes in our national security due to terrorists’ threats – worldwide economies on the verge of failure – widespread political revolutions around the world – earthquakes – violent weather conditions, etc. etc.

With all these changes around us, it is truly assuring that God’s Word does not change with the changing culture of this world, it is eternally changeless, as God Himself is changeless.

Warren Wiersbe writes, “The world changes - circumstances change, we change - but God's Word never changes.”

We read in Hebrews 13:8 a verse that is often quoted in prayers and sermons, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and for ever.”

I confess that the first ten or so times that I read our text, it seemed to me to be a disjointed, random bunch of words. I could not see any unified theme. But the more I meditated on this verse, I came to see that Hebrews 13:8 is the hinge that opens up important truths in the whole chapter.

First, Paul saw the danger of false teaching and the remedy to it was the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul was concerned that his readers would be “carried away by varied and strange teachings” (He 13:9), including returning to Judaism.

So he calls them to remember the godly teachers who had spoken the word of God to them (He 13:7).

Even though these men had now died, Jesus Christ, whom they preached, is the same yesterday, today, and forever (He 13:8). His grace (He 13:9) and His sacrificial death on the cross (He 13:10, 11, 12) are at the center of sound and biblical doctrine.

Paul says to the Jewish Christians that, “Jesus and His death on the cross have become our altar, which supersedes and replaces the Jewish altar in the temple.

Therefore, we must turn our backs on Judaism and every other religion and hold firmly to Christ and the cross (He 13:13).

If such faith leads to hardship, rejection, persecution, or even death, keep in mind that we are not living for rewards in this life, but for the reward He has promised us in heaven (He 13:14).”

But there is a second important truth that flows from Hebrews 13:8. Knowing the truth that Jesus Christ never changes, that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, is a truth that must change our lives in three specific ways and the Apostle Paul sets them forth here in Hebrews chapter 13 verses, 1-4, 5, 13-14.

My purpose in the message today is to show how there is a link between Hebrews 13:8 and the verses mentioned above, and to see the importance of looking to Christ for stability and security in an ever changing world.

The title of my message is, **Christ Never Changes.** And this is just not taught here in Hebrews 13:8 but in various places in the Word of God.

James 1:17 declares, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*”

Malachi 3:6, “For I am the LORD, *I change not*; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

### **1. Christ never changes in His love for His people.**

We read in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul teaches in Hebrews 13 verses 1-5 (read the verses) that we should love others as Christ loves us.

We read in verse 1, “Let brotherly love continue.”

Why did Paul have to write for brothers in the church to love one another? Because professed Christians were NOT loving one another.

Paul was poorly treated, and slandered by people in the church.

How can we love our brothers and sisters? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The love of Christ is constant and abundant toward us. We can love our brethren because Christ loves us, and the love of Christ is in our hearts.

Verse 2, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

Love strangers or those who are outside the fold. Who are in need of salvation.

Verse 3, “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

Love those who you can't see. We can pray.

Verse 4, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

Love those who you are suppose to love, your wife, your children, your family.

Christ never changes in His love for His people.

## **2. Christ never changes in His commitment to His people.**

We read in verse 5, “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: *for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*”

Again this is a truth that is taught throughout the Bible.

We read in Deut. 31:6, “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

The same thing is said in Joshua 1:5 and 1Chronicles 28:20.

Christ assures his disciples in John 14:18 that, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

And so too Paul exhorts the people of God in verse 5 to content themselves in Christ because He will never leave them.



Contentment is a rare and precious jewel today. It eludes many people. It is a grace that is rarely seen. Contentment comes from God, and it is not something that happens over night. It must be learned through experiences.

Paul writes in Philippians 4:11, “For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

Paul says that he had "learned" contentment.

Probably, by nature, he had a mind as prone to impatience as others, but he had been in circumstances fitted to produce a different state of feeling.

He had had ample experience, (2Co 11:26,) and, in his life of trials, he had acquired invaluable lessons on the subject of contentment.

He had had abundant time for reflection, and he had found that there was grace enough in the gospel to enable him to bear trials with firm resolve.

A Bible commentator observes, “The considerations by which he had been taught contentment he does not state; but they were probably such as the following: that it is wrong to murmur at the allotments of Providence; that a spirit of impatience does no good, remedies no evil, and supplies no want; that God could provide for him in a way which he could not foresee, and that the Saviour was able abundantly to sustain him.”

Therefore, a contented mind is an invaluable blessing, and is one of the fruits of regeneration.

It arises from the belief that God is right in all his ways. Why should we be impatient, restless, discontented? What evil will be remedied by it? what want supplied? what calamity removed?

A simple and needed prayer for today is "Give us minds always contented with our present condition."

The greatest example of Christ never changing in His commitment to His people is found in verse 13 (read it).

Christ voluntarily laid down His life on the Cross for the sins of His people because he was committed to the plan of redemption. He did not turn away from sinners but went all the way to Calvary to shed his precious blood for our sins. What a Saviour!

Therefore, since Christ never changes His commitment to His people we should not be ashamed to be identified and committed to Him.

“Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp.”

As if we were going forth with him when he was led away to be crucified.

He was put to death as a criminal. He was the object of contempt and scorn. The Cross was a scandal. Christ was held up to derision, and was taunted and reviled on his way to the place of death, and even on the cross. To be identified with him there, to follow him, to sympathize with him, to be regarded as his friend, would have subjected one to similar shame and reproach.

The meaning here is, that we should be willing to regard ourselves as identified with the Lord Jesus, and to bear the same shame and reproaches which he did.

When he was led away, amidst scoffing and reviling, to be put to death, would we, if we had been there, been willing to be regarded as his followers, and to have gone out with him as avowed disciples and friends?

A Christian author writes, “How many are there who profess to love Christ when religion subjects them to no reproach, who would have shrunk from following him to Calvary!”

Christ never changes in his commitment to His people therefore we must be committed to Christ no matter what may come our way in life.

### **3. Christ never changes in His promises for His people.**

We read the words of Christ in John 14:1-3, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

And here in Hebrews 13:14 Paul reminds suffering Hebrew Christians that the best for them is yet to come. We, as believers, do not regard the world as our final home, or our fixed abode, and we should be willing to bear reproaches during the little time that we are here on earth for Christ. We are pilgrims and sojourners on the earth. “Take the world but give me Jesus,” is the cry of a believer.

Paul is saying to the Hebrew Christians, “If, we should be driven away from our habitations, and compelled to wander, we should be willing to submit to it, for our permanent home is not here, but in heaven.”

The object of Paul seems to be to comfort the Hebrew Christians on the inevitability that they would be driven by persecution from the city of Jerusalem, and doomed to wander as exiles.

He tells them that their Lord was led from that city to be put to death, and they should be willing to go forth also; that their permanent home was not Jerusalem, but heaven; and they should be willing, in view of heaven, to be exiled from the city where they dwelt, and made wanderers in the earth.

Jesus never changes in His promises for His people.

In closing, the world changes - circumstances change, we change - but Jesus Christ never changes because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is God. Christ never changes in His love toward His people. He never changes in His commitment to His people. He never changes in His promises for His people. May the thought that Christ never changes comfort and strengthen our love for our Redeemer and for one another. Let us pray!