

***I am* the LORD , I do not change**

You may have heard that the Ohrn's are moving to a new house. When Krysti Demuth heard she said we were the last people she would think would move. The saying goes the only constant is change. This often seems true. Janet and I work in youth ministry and that certainly is true being surrounded by those members of our church who are changing and growing year by year. This year we had 9 seniors. Some are going to off to college, others starting work and one is looking toward the mission field. Change is always with us.

Our culture believes that change should be constant, and that anything that is from a time past is inherently wrong or problematic. The cultural shifts of the last 5 years has been dramatic and unnerving. 8 years ago it was political suicide to support same sex marriage, and today opposite is becoming true.

Now some change is good. I began following Christ when I was about 23 years old. I have grown and changed in many ways since then. Of course the key thing is that if we are far from perfect, we always should be changing.

My text today is Mal 3:6 For *I am* the LORD , I do not change;

When I hear this, three questions come to my mind.

1. Why is it that the Lord doesn't change?
2. What does it imply for life that God doesn't change?
3. If God doesn't change – do I need to change?

Why doesn't God Change?

So let's think about this – audience participation time – why do you think it is that God doesn't change?

In what way would God change if he could change?

- Could he gain knowledge? God holds all the riches of wisdom and knowledge (Rom 11:33)
- Or goodness? When Moses asked to see God's glory he said I will allow all of my goodness to pass before you. (Ex 33:19)
- Become more loving? God is love. (1 John 4:8)
- Or more Holy? There are angels before God who never stop saying "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God almighty." (Rev 4:8)

The issue, of course is that God is perfect in every way. Some might argue that the God of the Old Testament is different than Jesus that he changed. But that's just a caricature

of things...it isn't really that way at all. God was Holy, Just, Forgiving and Compassionate in the Old Testament, and He is all those in the New as well.

The fact that God doesn't change is defined as faithfulness. God's faithfulness to his word and his covenants is why he offers sinners forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

We aren't forgiven because we're "really sorry" or we catch God in a good mood. We're forgiven because he is faithful and just. He set up a covenant, a promise, and said by blood I will offer forgiveness. And because Jesus offered himself as the perfect payment for us when we submit ourselves to follow Jesus and be in Christ we are given the righteousness of God that belongs to Christ.

Ps 89:2 I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

So God cannot change or he would cease to be a faithful God.

So it makes sense that God doesn't change – So what?

In itself, this is a good solid theological point. Theology is the study of God. I often tell the youth that we study theology so we can know who God is and get to know him more, and also know ourselves as well.

So what does it mean to us that God doesn't change?

1. The truth doesn't change
2. The need for a creator doesn't change
3. The family doesn't change
4. That which satisfies doesn't change

1. It means the truth doesn't change.

It should go without saying, but the truth can't change. Circumstances can change, but the truth is the truth. Our perception of reality might change over time, but the truth stays the same.

Num 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

If something ceases to be true then it never was true to begin with. So if God doesn't change, the truth doesn't change. He can't lie, or change his mind, or not follow through.

Ps 33:4-9

⁴ For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.

⁵ The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

God doesn't change, his truth, which comes from his word doesn't change either.

2. The need for a creator doesn't change.

Ps 33

⁶ By the word of the LORD were the heavens made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea into jars;^a
he puts the deep into storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD ;
let all the people of the world revere him.

⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

Some forget that all of this amazing world was formed by a loving creator. Regardless what some current theory or thinking says, we need to remember that God brought this all to be. There is no other logical explanation for our existence. The fact that we exist points to a beginning and a creator. There is no getting around the need for a creator with evolution as the explanation – you are still left with the question how did it all start?

The creation also points to the eternity of God – we think things should change every generation because of technology or knowledge or what ever.

Ps 102:25-27

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

26 They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.

Like clothing you will change them
and they will be discarded.

27 But you remain the same,
and your years will never end.

All of history passes before our great God like the blink of an eye, people can pretend they are modern and enlightened and have put God behind them, but God will just change the whole universe like a garment to be discarded.

God makes the rules, I don't get to choose how this ends.

Also, because God created it means we have a reason to exist. We are image bearers of Christ, we're "made on purpose for a purpose."

3. The family doesn't change

Matt 19:4-6

⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'^a ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?^b ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Jesus couldn't have been more clear on this. Part of me wants to rise up with indignation that says "see this people – now quit trying to re-write the rules of common sense." But the compassionate part, the part that Jesus put in there says rise up and help people see the truth. There is no need to be confused about marriage or your gender identity. You may be a girl who seems more masculine or a sensitive and tender boy, but God didn't put you into the wrong body. That just doesn't happen. We're all different and that's OK. So how do we deal with those who are hurting and confused and who struggle with their identity or their sexuality? We've got to love them and point them to a creator who loves them and wants to be our father. We're all broken and in need of a savior.

Also remember the context of this verse. It isn't about gay marriage but divorce. And I know that there are people here who have been divorce and that it is a painful and complicated topic. Please don't think I'm trying to bring guilt upon you. But let me also clearly state to those of you who are married and those who may be one day to take this serious! God made marriage. He made it for His purposes, not our own. Commit to marriage. Defend your marriage with purity and by making an effort to please your spouse and pursue them with effort and tenacity. It is about so much more than just you.

Marriage mentoring – coming soon.

4. That which satisfies your soul doesn't change

Do you know that God is the author of everything good and satisfying?

James 1:17

¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Times change, technology changes, but the things that truly satisfy don't. They are those things that God provides.

Things like:

- Enjoying the wonder of God’s creation.
- Being productive and creative. God put this desire in us.
- Life long loyal friendships. Study David and Jonathan and how their souls were knit together. David even said that Jonathan’s love was better than that of a woman to him.
- Red-hot monogamy
- Being in the presence of God

Ps 63:3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

If God doesn’t change – then I need to be changing.

So it is a good thing that God doesn’t change. It means we have a solid rock upon which to build our lives. One that is sure, good, and satisfying. But if God is perfect and Holy and everything good, then we need to change, we want to change to be growing deeper into him.

Rom 12:1-3

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^a act of worship. ² 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.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

His word is the transforming agent for our minds so we can grow into his likeness. And we don’t do the changing, he works in us. But notice that last part, we have to think of ourselves with sober judgment. We can’t be thinking we are done growing or changing or that we’ve arrived. But as we submit to God’s will he moves in us.

2 Cor 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect^a the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The Spirit of God WANTS to move in us and make us more and more like him. And it brings him glory and fills our lives with His glory.

The love of God compels us to move forward. God is calling us to show his love, his unchanging love to a world. It requires us to be filled with his Spirit and to changing into his likeness more and more.

So what is Jesus like? He is creative. He is love. He is joy. He is Holy. He is pure. He is relentless in his pursuit of us. He gives generously. He is abundant and gracious. We need to be becoming all these things too. Draw close to him

Conclusion

In a time of great change it gives us stability to know that God is constant.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

And this Jesus stands in heaven as our advocate forever.

Heb 6:19-20

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Rev 1:8

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."