

THE CHANGELESS CHRIST Hebrews 13:8

Hebrews 13:1-19 concludes this letter with practical instructions for Christian living. Hebrews 13:8 sits in the middle of these commands. But it is not an exhortation. It is a declaration: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* This is the golden verse of Hebrews. It is a unique verse to preach in that it can be explained by simply quoting it: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

Verse 7 says: *“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”* This is the church's duty to its spiritual leaders. It also tells us the church needs leaders whose teachings are worth remembering, whose way of life is worth considering, and whose faith is worth imitating. The verse indicates these leaders had move away or moved on to their eternal reward. This is the inevitable reality of human leadership. Leaders come and go. Leaders rise and fall. Leaders live and die. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. The memorial to JOHN WESLEY in Westminster Abbey reads: *“God buries his workmen, but he carries on his work.”*

Verse 9 says: *“Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.”* False teachers strive to lead Christians astray with new and novel ideas. We must contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. How do we resist being led away by diverse and strange teachings? Verse 8 answers: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* Preachers come and go. But the preaching must remain gloriously monotonous! We do not need new truth because we have the same Christ.

Hebrews 13:8 may be the reason for verse 7 or the grounds for verse 9. Or it can be a transitional statement connected to both verses. Ultimately, this verse stands alone and above the surrounding exhortations. It is not about remembering spiritual leadership or resisting false teaching. Beyond Christian leaders or Christian truth, this verse makes an important statement about Christ himself: We face a changing culture by faith in a changeless Christ. No matter the circumstances. No matter when it is. No matter how bad the situation. No matter where you find yourself. No matter what other people do. You can always count on Jesus. *There are three reasons why you can always count on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. THE MATCHLESS NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Hebrews 13:8 states: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* The name – *“Jesus Christ”* – is emphatic. This whole name is only used three times in Hebrews. Hebrews 10:10 is about Christ our Savior: *“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* Hebrews 13:21 is about Christ our Strength. The writer prays God will *“equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in*

his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:8 is about Christ our Sustainer: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” The Lord is able to sustain us because of his Person and his Office.

A. THE PERSON OF JESUS

Jesus is the name that identifies him with humanity. In every sense of the word, Jesus was a man; expect that he knew no sin. But the sinlessness of Jesus affirms he was more than a man. In Matthew 1:21, the angel tells Joseph concerning Mary, *“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* Jesus is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name, Joshua. It means “Yahweh is salvation.” People named their sons Jesus to express their faith in the promise of God to bring salvation to his people. But the angel commanded Joseph to name Mary’s son Jesus because God would fulfill his promise of salvation through him. In Acts 4:12, Peter declares, *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* Jesus is heaven’s wonder. Jesus is hell’s worry. Jesus is humanity way out of sin, guilt, shame, death, and hell. 1 Timothy 2:5-6 says: *“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for us all.”*

B. THE OFFICE OF CHRIST

Jesus is the Lord’s personal name. *Christ* is not his surname or last name. It is his divine office. The New Testament “Christ” is the Old Testament “Messiah.” It means “the Anointed One.” Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Messiah-King, the fulfillment of Old Testament promise, prophecy, and prediction. As the name Jesus affirms he was more than a man, so does the title Christ. The office of Christ is threefold: Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus the Prophet reveals the will of God. Jesus the Priest provides access to God. Jesus the King exercises the rule of God. We need no other prophet to reveal God’s mind. We need no other priest to secure access. We need no other king to advance heaven’s agenda. Jesus is our all-sufficient Prophet, Priest, and King. In John 14:6 Jesus declared: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* Do you want to be saved? Do you want to be sure? Do you want to be satisfied? Trust Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

II. THE EXCLUSIVE CLAIM OF JESUS CHRIST

We live in a constantly, rapidly and drastically changing world. Is anything eternally the same? The Christian answers: *“Jesus Christ.”* Everything else changes. But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. There is no verb in this verse. It may be bad grammar but excellent theology. This is a battle cry rather

than a creed. Christians wage spiritual warfare under this victorious banner: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

Hebrews 13:8 does not teach the ways of Christ are unchanging. His ways are always good and true and wise and faithful and sovereign. They are not immutable. Divine attributes are not in conflict. The changelessness of Christ cannot trump the sovereignty of Christ. For instance, the fact that Jesus healed the sick in the past does not guarantee physical healing today. Christ is able to heal sickness. But he may choose to heal on earth or in heaven. You cannot put Christ in a box. Jesus is free to do as he pleases when he please for whom he pleases without your permission. So what does it mean when to say that Jesus Christ is the same?

A. JESUS IS IMMUTABLE.

People change. Some people seem to change with each new encounter with them. It is almost better to ask them, “Who are you today?” rather than “How are you today?” Thank God we never have to ask Jesus, “Who are you today?” Jesus never changes. Jesus never wavers. Jesus never vacillates. There is no need to fear Christ is different now or will be different in the future than what he has been in the past. Past or present or future makes no difference to the eternal Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ is immutable.

- **His holy character is will not change.**
- **His righteous standards will not change.**
- **His eternal purpose will not change.**
- **His living word will not change.**
- **His saving power will not change.**
- **His steadfast love will not change.**
- **His sovereign authority will not change.**

B. JESUS IS SUFFICIENT.

Hebrews was written to at-risk Jewish Christians. Because of severe persecution, these professing believers were tempted to forsake their faith in Christ and return to the practice of Judaism. The writer pens this letter to assert that Jesus is better than what they had before him and without him. But the message of the superiority of Christ recorded in these thirteen chapters can summarized in one verse: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”*

The fact that Jesus is the same means Jesus is sufficient. J. OSWALD CHAMBERS wrote: “Most men are notable for one conspicuous virtue or grace. Moses for meekness, Job, for patience, John for love. But in Jesus you find everything.” You don’t have to go back to what you were in the past. And you don’t have to look for something new, better, or different in the future. No matter which direction you look, Jesus Christ is the same. He is everything you need. ANDREW MURRAY wrote: “The only reason that you ever have to look back to a yesterday that was better than today, was that you did not know, or that you failed to trust, this Jesus, who was waiting to make each day a new revelation and a larger experience of the grace of

yesterday.” Do you know Jesus? Do you trust him? Then why are you living in worry, doubt, and fear? Jesus is everything you need!

**YESTERDAY, HE HELPED ME;
TODAY, HE DID THE SAME.
HOW LONG WILL THIS CONTINUE?
FOREVER, PRAISE HIS NAME!**

C. JESUS IS DIVINE.

Immutability is an attribute of God the Father. Malachi 3:6 says: *“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.”* 2 Timothy 2:13 says: *“if we are faithless, he remains faithful – for he cannot deny himself.”* James 1:17 says: *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”* God the father does not change like shifting shadows. Nothing that changes can block his goodness. God is immutable. To call Jesus immutable is to call Jesus God. Jesus is the blending of deity and humanity, the meeting place of time and eternity, the intersection between earth and heaven. The leaders of the religious establishment were confused by the intimate terms with which Jesus spoke of Abraham. They asked, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” In John 8:58, Jesus declared, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”* “I Am” is the covenant name, which God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush. The Jews prepared to stone Jesus for blasphemy. What they called blasphemous folly we call biblical Christianity. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

III. THE UNWAVERING FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Persecution tempted the readers of this letter to forsake Christ and return to Judaism. The writer exhorts the troubled church to continue in the faith because of the superiority of Christ. What they have in Jesus is infinitely better than they had in Judaism. But Hebrews 13:8 makes it clear that the bottom-line is trust, not theology. Doctrine is essential to faith. You are what you believe. But faith is more than knowledge and assent. It is trust in a person, not agreement with a creed. Christianity is Christ and Christ is God. Nothing else matters if Jesus is not who he claims to be. Who is Jesus? Verse 8 succinctly answers: *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* The repeated conjunction “and” gives this declaration the force of a soldier charging a mounting. Yesterday! Today! Forever! You can trust the unwavering faithfulness of Christ in every season of life.

A. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY.

The word “*yesterday*” may be the link that connects this verse to the previous verse. Verse 7a exhorts: “*Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God.*” The call to “*remember*” indicates these leaders were no longer on the scene. Verse 7b exhorts: “*Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.*” The reference to “*the outcome of their way of life*” indicates they had transitioned from this life to the next. The church had good leaders. But they were gone, maybe dead and gone. How will the church go forward? Verse 8 asserts that when the church needs new pastors it will not need a new Savior. Micah 5:2 says: “*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*” Jesus is the ancient of days who was the same before there was anything called “*Yesterday.*” John 1:1-2 says: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.*”

B. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME TODAY.

The word “*today*” refers to the present time in general terms. It is real time. It’s now. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today. The historical one is the contemporary one. It is said that GEORGE MULLER kept a motto on his desk bearing the words: “*And today.*” How many of us need that reminder? CHARLES SPURGEON said it well: “*It is folly to think the Lord provides grace for every trouble but the one you are in today.*” The Bible is not a history book about what Jesus did yesterday. It is a God-breathed resume of what Jesus can do today.

VANCE HAVNER wrote: “*Amid the dull monotony of things as they are, when the skies seem leaden and nothing breaks on the uninteresting scene, it is easier to visualize the Christ of the Galilean Past or the Christ of the Glorious Future than to expect great things from the Christ of the Glamourless Now.*” Hebrews 13:8 challenges us to trust that Jesus is the same today. He is Lord now. He is still God no matter your present circumstances. In John 11:21-22, a grief-stricken Martha said, “*Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.*” This is how grown-up faith talks. It laments that Jesus did not move when or where or how you wanted him to yesterday. Yet it boldly declares: “*Even now!*”

C. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME FOREVER.

The terms “*yesterday*” and “*today*” emphasize the continuity of Christ. The word “*forever*” takes the continuity as far into the future as it will go. Jesus is the Lord of time and eternity. He is the God of past, present, and future. Yesterday he was faithful to our fathers. Today is faithful to us. Forever he will be faithful to our children. Revelation 1:8 says: “*I am the Alpha and the Omega,*” says the Lord God, “*Who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty!*” This is why Christians believe in eternal security. If you were ever saved, you are still saved and will always be saved. Why? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Hebrews 7:25 says: *“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”*

**I DON'T KNOW ABOUT TOMORROW, I JUST LIVE FROM DAY TO DAY
I DON'T BORROW FROM ITS SUNSHINE, FOR ITS SKIES MAY TURN TO GRAY
I DON'T WORRY O'ER THE FUTURE, FOR I KNOW WHAT JESUS SAID
AND TODAY I'LL WALK BESIDE HIM, FOR HE KNOWS WHAT IS AHEAD**

**I DON'T KNOW ABOUT TOMORROW, IT MAY BRING ME POVERTY
BUT THE ONE WHO FEEDS THE SPARROW, IS THE ONE WHO STANDS BY ME
AND THE PATH THAT BE MY PORTION, MAY BE THROUGH THE FLAME OR FLOOD
BUT HIS PRESENCE GOES BEFORE ME, AND I'M COVERED WITH HIS BLOOD**

**MANY THINGS ABOUT TOMORROW
I DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND
BUT I KNOW WHO HOLDS TOMORROW
AND I KNOW WHO HOLDS MY HAND**