

2.1.22 am Jesus is not changing

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Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody and welcome to our service today. Great seeing folk out, a little bit thin on the ground. So welcome to everyone who's watching online as well.
- And it's our privilege today to have Reverend Thomas Davis leading our services and our Minister David MacLeod is leading the services up in Carloway today.
- So the evening service will be usual at 6pm, which Thomas will lead. The Road to Recovery meets on Tuesday at 7pm. So anyone who's struggling with issues of addiction, welcome to come to that meeting.
- The prayer meeting on Wednesday will be led by our own Farrakhan MacLeod. So that will be in the church here and online at the same time via Zoom.
- Services next Sunday at 11pm will be taken by Angus McKellar and by myself at 6pm in the evening, God willing. Community for Refugees, there's a group in the Western Isles being set up to look at welcoming refugee family from Afghanistan to the Western Isles.
- [1 : 1 1] We'll be meeting on the 8th of January at 3pm in Stornoway, also by Zoom. So if you would like to take part in that, please speak to John Ellis.
- I'm not seeing John here this morning. His email address is up there on the screen if you want to find out more on that. I'll just say there will be tea and coffee at the end of the service, but we'll actually serve it within this room here.
- Larger room, more ventilation to help keep us safe. And just remember everyone, keep socially distanced while we meet. So it's my pleasure now to welcome Thomas.
- Thank you. Thank you very much indeed, Duncan, and thank you for your warm welcome. It's so lovely to be with you all. And on behalf of the congregation in Carlyway, I'd like to wish you all a very happy new year.
- We pray that you'd know God's abundant blessing in the year that lies ahead. I'm really grateful to David for exchanging our pulpits. Obviously you got the raw end of the deal, but it's lovely to have the opportunity to be with you as we worship together.
- [2 : 2 0] So we are meeting in the name of our risen saviour, Jesus, and we're here to worship and praise him for everything that he has done for us and for all the blessings that we have through him.
- So we're going to begin by singing from the hymn, In Christ Alone, wonderful words reminding us of just how central and amazing our saviour is.
- So let's stand and sing to God's praise. In Christ Alone, my hope is found.
- He is my light, my strength, my song, my cornerstone, this solid ground. Firm through the fiercest dirt and storm.
- What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease, My comforter, my all in all, Here in the love of Christ I stand.
- [3 : 3 3] In Christ Alone, who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless faith, This gift of life and righteousness, Torn for the ones he came to save.

Till on that cross, as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied, For every sin on him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain, Then bursting forth in glorious day, Up from the grave he rose again, And as he stands in victory, Sin's curse has lost its grip on me, For I am his, and he is mine, Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death, This is the power of Christ in me, From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny, No power of hell, nor scheme of man, Can ever pluck me from his hand, Till he returns or calls me home, Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you so much That we can come at the start of a new week To gather in the name of your son, And in the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, To worship you, To praise you, And to thank you for all that you are, And all that you've done for us.

[6 : 15] We thank you so much That we have this opportunity To come together As brothers and sisters in Jesus, And to do so as part Of a worldwide family of believers, We thank you so much To lift up our voices, To praise and thank you.

We want to begin our week By worshipping you, And we want to commit this whole week And every week of our lives to you. We thank you so much For everything that you've done for us.

We thank you so much That in you and through your son, Our Lord Jesus, We have hope and healing and forgiveness. We thank you so much That we can come to you Knowing that you're present with us By your spirit.

We thank you so much That you know us And care for us. And that you've promised To always be with us. So we bow down And worship you this morning. And we thank you so much For all your goodness to us.

And we pray that as we come to you This morning That you would just help us To still our hearts And focus our minds. We pray that we would hear your voice Speaking to us through your word.

[7 : 19] And we pray that you would Build us up in faith. That those of us Who've been following you for years Would be taught and encouraged And renewed in our commitment to you.

That those of us Who are maybe early on In our journey of faith Would be encouraged And strengthened and equipped To grow and to serve And to live for you In every part of our lives. And if anyone's here Who's maybe not yet sure Where they stand before you Or yet to take that step And trust you.

We pray that today Would be the day That you would just be Drawing us all to you In faith. And that you'd help us all To take that next step That you're calling us to take.

We thank you for everyone Who's here Both here in the building And joining us online. And we pray your blessing Upon each one. And we thank you That you know our circumstances.

And you know what the last year Has been like. And you know what the year ahead Is going to bring. And for that reason We just come to you With all our needs And worries and fears.

[8 : 22] And we come to just Cast our care upon you Acknowledging that You are the one that we need. And we pray for everyone here Whatever their circumstances Whatever their needs may be That you would bless them And speak to them And encourage and help them.

We also come Confessing our sin before you And acknowledging that So often we turn away from you. There's so many things That we've done That we regret.

There's so many things That we should have done That we wish we had. And we come before you In confession. And we also come before you In repentance. Praying that you would be Changing our hearts And changing our desires.

We want to turn away from sin. And we want to follow you With new obedience In the week ahead. And we thank you so much That through your son Our Lord Jesus We can have forgiveness.

We thank you that in Jesus We have an advocate. We have one interceding for us. We thank you that in Jesus We have a great high priest.

[9 : 29] And so we pray that you would Bless us all And draw us all closer to you And closer to one another. We thank you so much That we have this opportunity To be together. And we pray to you for David As he takes the services In Carlway That you would bless And encourage him And that you would speak Through him To be a blessing To all those Who are there To hear your word.

And we pray that you would Bless David and Mary And the family That they'd be encouraged In the year ahead As they serve you. So bless us now we pray And thank you so much That we have this opportunity To be together.

In Jesus name. Amen. Boys and girls It's so nice to see you here today And if any of you Are watching at home It's so nice to have you with us And we hope you've all Had a fantastic Christmas And I hope you're all enjoying Your school holidays Before life returns to normal Later this week It's so nice to have you here.

Now over the past few months I've come through Tarbert Several times. So sometimes I've come To go on the ferry And sometimes I've come through Tarbert Because I've been travelling A little bit further Into Haras And sometimes I've come down To Tarbert Just to meet people here.

And every time I've come To Tarbert Over the past few months I've always been looking At something Very very cool That's happening in Tarbert. Now I love construction I love engineering I used to be an engineer Before I was a minister And I love Big machines.

[11 : 01] Now any machines That are big I'm always very excited By them. And in Tarbert I don't actually know If it's still here But for many many months There was a very cool And very big machine In Tarbert.

Now it was over there Near the pier And it was very Very very tall. Do any of you know What it was? You tell me. A crane.

A crane. Now tell me. Is it still here? No. Oh. It's gone away. It's gone away. That is rubbish. But for solo For months It was here for ages Wasn't it? This big massive crane Helping to do all the work On the new pier Now I love cranes They are so cool Sometimes When you're on the mainland You can see a crane That's all folded up And it's driving along The motorway And it's huge It's got like 12 wheels Or something incredible Like that The one you had here It didn't have wheels It had tracks didn't it?

And that's even cooler How cool is that? They have to split it up That's amazing They have to split it up Construct it together And there you stand You've got this massive crane Cranes are so cool And a crane with tracks Is just the coolest thing It's one of the injustices In the world Do you think our cars Should have tracks?

Wouldn't that be so much better If all our cars had tracks? Yeah That would be so much more fun Wouldn't it? Never mind Never mind See This is what See if children were in charge It would be much better As adults become so boring I want to think for a moment About the crane though Because cranes are cool And I love cranes But I want us to To think about cranes Because Because cranes actually teach us Something really important And really wonderful About Jesus And I want us to think about that For a moment today Because A crane Has got to be Two things There's two things That's really important About a crane First of all A crane Has to be Very Very Strong Doesn't it?

[12 : 59] Because a crane Is going to be lifting things That are really Really heavy So if you were to go outside Just now And go back to your car And if you went And stood beside your car And put your hands underneath it And tried to lift it Would you be able to pick it up?

No No way But a crane could A crane could actually Pick up ten cars No problem at all And sometimes you might see Boats getting lifted Or big steel beams Getting lifted Or whatever it may be These things are so heavy But a crane makes it look so easy Because a crane is Very Very Strong Cranes Have got to be strong But at the same time There's another thing That cranes Have got to be Cranes have got to be Gentle Because when you lift Something very heavy It's actually quite dangerous And you've got to be Very careful That you don't do it Too quickly You've got to be Very careful That the crane Is all nice and straight Because if the crane Is squint And you pick up Something heavy It'll swing And once it starts Swinging It can be very Very dangerous And so When somebody Is driving a crane They've got to be Very very skillful They've got to make sure Everything is just right And they've got to

Pick it up Very Very gently And if you ever Watch a good crane driver You'll see that When they're picking up Something really heavy They'll lift it off the ground Just a couple of inches And it'll just stay Very still And they'll be Very careful So a crane Has got to be strong And a crane Has got to be gentle Strong And gentle And that's the two things That a crane teaches us About Jesus Because Jesus Is so strong He's so powerful So capable We read about him In the Bible And we read about All the amazing miracles He performed How he helped people How he stood up When people were opposing him And how he was so brave And strong To go to the cross To die for our sins Jesus is so strong And now He is The king of everything Nothing can threaten him He is stronger

Than anything else But he is Also Gentle And that's the amazing Thing about Jesus He is so strong But he is also So gentle And that means That he'll look after you That he'll always Care for you He'll never be rough With you He'll never hurt you He will always Always Be gentle Sometimes life Can hurt us Sometimes things can happen That upset us And sometimes You know People can maybe Treat us badly Or people in school Or whatever Sometimes you might Fall out with your friends Or whatever it may be And you might think Oh man that really hurt I always want you to remember That Jesus is gentle That he'll look after you That he'll protect you And that you can talk to him About anything So it's amazing That Jesus is strong enough To protect you And save you forever And he is gentle enough To keep you safe To hold you in his arms And you can always

Go to him for help So next time You have a cool crane In Tarbert Or next time you see A crane anywhere I want you to remember That a crane Has got to be strong And it's got to be gentle And I want you to remember That that is teaching us Exactly what Jesus Is like Amen We're going to sing again Now And we're going to sing The hymn Abide with me And so we'll stand And sing these wonderful words To God's praise Abide with me When the past falls The event The heart is sleeping Lord with me Abide

[17 : 13] When other helpers fail And comforts me And all that helpers To align with me And all that helpers To align with me Switch to its close Eps out life's little day As joys As joys O dim Its glories Pass away Change and decay In all around I see O thou who changest Tess not Abide with me

I need thy presence Every passing hour What but thy grace Can foil the tempter's power Who like thyself My guide And stay Can be Through cloud And sunshine Lo Abide With me I fear I fear No foe With thee At hand To bless Ills Ills Have no weight And tears No bitterness Where is death

Stay Where grave Thy victory I triumph Still If thou Abide With me O thou Thy cross Before My Closing Eyes Shine Through The gloom And Point Me To The skies Heaven's Morning Breaks And Earth's Pain Shadows Flee In Life In Death O Lord Abide With Me Amen We're going to read together from God's word from the letter to the

Hebrews and we're going to read two short passages one at the beginning from Hebrews chapter one and then one in chapter seven so to begin with we'll read Hebrews 1 verses 1 to 4 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the sun is the radiance of God's glory.

By in this section of Hebrews there's a comparison being made between the Old Testament priesthood and Jesus and that's one of the things that the letter does in several ways comparing Jesus to something else to angels to Moses to the priesthood to show that Jesus is superior so we're in the section talking about the priesthood just now and we can pick it up at verse 11 of chapter 7. If perfection could have been attained through the

[22 : 22] Levitical priesthood, that's the Old Testament priesthood, for on the basis of it the law was given to the people, why was there still need for another priest to come? One in the order of Melchizedek not in the order of Aaron. For when there is a change of the priesthood there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belong to a different tribe and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests and what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

For it is declared, you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. For the former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless for the law made nothing perfect and a better hope is introduced by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath. Others became priests without any oath but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever. Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. Now there have been many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need, one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

[24 : 24] For the law appoints us high priests men who are weak but the oath which came after the law appointed the Son who has been made perfect forever. Amen. This is God's word and may he add his blessing to it.

We're going to sing now in Gaelic from Psalm 67 and we'll sing from the beginning. We'll sing two stanzas from Psalm 67 to God's praise.

Psalm 67 Psalm 68 Psalm 68

Psalm 68 Psalm 68 Psalm 68

Well, as we turn to God's word, let's just pray for a moment. Father, as we turn to your word just now and as your word is open before us, we pray that we would be open before you.

[28 : 19] We pray that our ears would be open to hear your word, that our minds would be engaged and ready to think. And we pray that our hearts would receive what you're saying to us, that your word would be written on our hearts, that you would make us more and more the people you want us to be.

We need your help as we pray that our hearts would be open to our hearts, that our hearts would be open to us. Amen. Today I'd like us to turn just a few pages further on in the letter to the Hebrews to chapter 13.

Chapter 13, and I'll just read the first few verses of that chapter. From verse 1 to verse 8. Keep on loving each other as brothers.

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.

[29 : 48] So we say with confidence, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. I'm sure that we are all very conscious that life is full of changes.

We can often think on that coming into a new year. I'm sure many of you were like me. You barely got used to 2021, and now all of a sudden it's 2022. Life seems to change so quickly, and that just keeps happening all the time.

In the summer, children will be moving on to a new year group at school. Some might be leaving school. Some might be finishing their studies. The seasons change. Summer quickly becomes winter again.

Even in terms of society just now, everything's constantly changing with COVID, and with the restrictions that we're facing, it's a constant moving target. Later in life, our jobs change.

[30 : 58] Maybe a whole new job, or maybe even within the job that you have, you might get new responsibilities or challenges. Communities change. People come, and people go.

We change ourselves. We learn new things. We gain new experiences. There's changes in our bodies as we grow older, in our health. There's even changes in our taste.

I remember when I was young, two of the most disgusting things known to man were coffee and olives. Now, if I was to give you my top five favourite foods, coffee and olives would definitely be in them.

So, even our tastes change. So, warning for everyone who's under the age of 20, the stuff that you hate now, you will probably love in a few years' time. Every day, we get older.

Every day, the number of heartbeats that we've got less reduces. And perhaps the hardest change of all is when loved ones we know are no longer with us.

[32 : 02] Change is a massive part of life. It can be wonderful. It can be awful. But it cannot be avoided. And because of that, I want to spend today thinking about one of the most wonderful statements that has ever been made.

The words of Hebrews 13, 8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. And there's two key things I want us to think about.

I want us to think about the fact that Jesus isn't changing. And I want to think about the fact that Jesus changes everything. And we're going to split that across the two services today.

So, tonight, we'll be thinking about how Jesus changes everything. This morning, we're thinking about the fact that Jesus isn't changing. As you may know, the letter to the Hebrews has one big theme, one great message.

And that message is, don't give up. It was written to Hebrew Christians, in other words, to people who were Jews who had come to faith in Jesus. And it looks as though from the content of the letter that trouble had arisen for these new believers.

[33 : 14] And because of that, they were tempted to abandon Christianity and go back to their old Jewish religion. And this letter is written to show them that going back is not the answer.

And in order to show them that, the writer of this letter makes repeated comparisons, as we said, between Jesus and the Old Testament. And the purpose of doing that is to show that Jesus is superior and that Jesus is the fulfillment of everything that is found in the Old Testament scripture.

So, the Old Testament is a shadow. Jesus is the full reality. He is superior to everything that was in the Jewish system.

And so, the letter is telling these struggling believers, don't give up. Or as the letter says itself several times, hold fast your confession.

And just before the letter comes to its conclusion, the writer drops in this amazing statement that Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.

[34 : 23] And that's a crucial reminder that all the teaching that he has given in this letter regarding the superiority of Jesus isn't just true now. It's true forever.

These believers need to hold fast to Jesus because he is superior and he will be forevermore. The Jesus that they are now following isn't changing.

And I want us just to think about that a little bit more and there's so many things that we could say that we could look at and discuss. I just want to talk about three things that the letter as a whole reveals regarding the fact that Jesus isn't changing.

And we'll come back to the passages that we read from earlier in the letter as we do that. First of all then, Jesus isn't changing in terms of who he is.

Jesus isn't changing in terms of who he is. If you flick back to the start to chapter one, we've read these amazing words at the beginning.

[35 : 29] Speaking of the fact that in the past, God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways. But in these last days, he's spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe.

The son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he'd made purifications for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven.

I want to focus especially for a moment on verse two and the start of verse three, where it says that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

These words are a stunning description of who Jesus is. He is the son of God and that means that he shares God's nature and he shares God's character.

In other words, he's exactly like the father. All the glory, beauty, and splendor that belongs to God is seen in Jesus.

[36 : 37] And as these verses describe, that glory radiates from Jesus and is seen in him. This is why we can say that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God.

So there's lots of different ways in which God reveals himself. He reveals himself through the created universe. He reveals himself through his word. But the ultimate revelation of God is in Jesus himself.

In other words, if you want to know what God is like, you look at Jesus. And that is such a crucial point for us all to think about because so many people, whether Christians or not, so many of us are led astray by distorted understandings of what God is actually like.

And that often comes from a failure to recognize that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God. So sometimes you might find yourself thinking, well, you know, I doubt very much that God is interested in me, especially for younger people.

You think to yourself, well, you know, I mean, older people are obviously more important in terms of church and in terms of God. It's easy to think that God's not that interested in listening to us, but yet you look at Jesus and you see that he took even the tiniest children onto his lap.

[37 : 58] That is what God is like. If you have a messy past, do you think that God would want to keep away from you?

Well, you look at Jesus and you see that he spoke tenderly to the woman at the well. He touched the leper. He ate with tax collectors and sinners. That's what God is like.

If you look at people who are influential and respected and yet you know that actually they're cruel and harsh, but it seems like everything goes well for them, well, Jesus called those kind of people out.

Jesus had no time for their hypocrisy. That's what God is like. If you feel that you've failed catastrophically in your life and if you think that God is just giving up on you, well, if you look at Jesus, you see that after Peter denied him, Jesus took him aside, went for a walk, restored him and gave him an amazing mission for the rest of his life.

That is what God is like. And the crucial lesson arising from all of that is this. You will meet lots of people in the Christian church and many will be a great blessing to you.

[39 : 20] But some might not be. And some might even hurt you. That's happened throughout the whole history of the Christian church and it still happens today.

If that happens, if someone does wrong towards you, please do not ever think for a second that that is a reflection of what God is like.

We are only ever like God when our words and our actions are like Jesus. It's in Jesus that we see most clearly what God is actually like.

So that is who Jesus is. He is God the Son as these words emphasize so clearly. He always has been, he always will be. that has never changed and that is never going to change.

But in terms of who Jesus is, there's more that we have to think about because Jesus is also human. That means that he's one of us. So he is the infinite God and he always has been.

[40 : 35] But at a certain point in history, he became a human. And this is where a really interesting question arises regarding Hebrews 13.8 around the word yesterday.

So we've got the phrase Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. What does the word yesterday refer to? Does it mean the day before he wrote the letter?

Does it mean the past stretching all the way back into eternity? Or does it mean the days described in Hebrews chapter 1 when the Son of God became a human and lived on earth?

What do you think? Well, I'm pretty sure and I think we can be pretty confident that it's not referring to the day before the letter was written.

It might well refer to eternity past and I've got to say that that's how I tended to read the verse. I used to think Jesus said yesterday thinking eternity past and forever eternity forward.

[41 : 41] But the more I think about it the more inclined I am to think that it refers to the time when Jesus came and dwelt among us.

And the reason that I'm leaning towards that interpretation is because there was a change then. The Son of God became the child of Mary.

He remained what he was the Son of God but he came he became what he'd never been before. He became a human. And from that moment onwards Jesus isn't changing.

And so the writer can say to these Hebrew Christians yesterday Jesus the Son of God came and walked among us. Today he is exalted but he is still one of us and he's never going to stop being that.

He's the same yesterday today and forever. Isn't that amazing? Jesus came to become one of us and he's never going to stop being one of us.

[42 : 54] And that means that even though he is now exalted at the right hand of God he is never going to leave you behind. And that brings us to the second point that I want us to think about.

Number one Jesus isn't changing in terms of who he is. Number two Jesus isn't changing in terms of what he's achieved. He isn't changing in terms of what he's achieved.

Look again at verse 3 going into verse 4 of chapter 1. It speaks about how after he had made purification for sins He sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven so he became as much superior to the angels as the name that he's inherited is superior to theirs.

It's telling us that Jesus made purifications for sins. He's come he's finished his work he's now exalted at the right hand of God and that's one of the great truths that the rest of the letter goes on to unpack the fact that what Jesus did on the cross is a once and for all sacrifice it never needs repeating it never needs to be added to Jesus has done it all his achievements and his status are now totally unchangeable chapter 9 speaks about that saying that Jesus appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with all into the holy places not by means of blood of bulls and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption think back for a moment to the old testament system that these believers were thinking of returning to think back to the years and years and years that that system was operating there were thousands upon thousands of sacrifices offered for generations thousands and thousands and thousands of sacrifices were offered but for every single one of them they were overshadowed by the question is this enough and they never were there was always a need for more that's why there was thousands and thousands of them every day every year never enough but when

Jesus offered himself as the great high priest and as the ultimate sacrifice for sin it was then he cried it is finished and the moment Jesus cried it is finished meant that never again do we have to ask the question is it enough and that's amazing because so many people in the world are plagued or even crushed by the great question that hangs between God and humanity have I done enough and maybe you're the same maybe you're asking yourself the question have I been good enough or maybe you're asking have I experienced enough because I haven't experienced what someone else has maybe you're thinking have I understood enough because you think I still don't know so much stuff maybe even you're thinking have I believed enough is my faith strong enough plagued by the question is this enough and what we have all got to realize is that question have

[46 : 35] I done enough that question is a total irrelevance a total irrelevance because you doing enough has got absolutely nothing to do with biblical Christianity because at the heart of the gospel is the fact that Jesus has done enough Jesus has done it all and that's never going to change he isn't changing he is crucified he is risen he is exalted what he has achieved is the same yesterday today and forever and no matter how many times you stuff up you can't uncrucify or unresurrect Jesus he has done it and what we have to recognize is the fact that every time we say to ourselves have I done enough have

I experienced enough have I believed enough we are simultaneously suggesting that Jesus hasn't done enough and that there's a gap in what he's achieved and that's heresy that's why if anyone here is not yet a Christian or if anyone here has maybe slipped back in their faith or struggling in their faith God is not calling you to impress him God is calling you to trust him because he has done it all and that's why if we are Christians we do not get up every morning and say please Lord I hope I'm still good enough we get up every morning and we say thank you Jesus and this is where we see something else amazing about Jesus all of this is teaching us that Jesus is untouchable now when I say untouchable I don't mean in the sense that you can't go anywhere near him

I mean untouchable in the sense that nothing can threaten him nothing can manipulate him nothing can change him he is now in a position of total authority he reigns over every square inch of the universe he is superior to the angels to rulers to princes powers to everything nothing can threaten him influence him distract him or change him now what we have to ask ourselves when we think about that is is there anyone or anything else that you can say the same thing of even the universe you look at the universe even the most powerful forces in the universe they're all subject to change in physics there's the concept of entropy which means that the energy available for work is decreasing or as people will often say the universe is running down and I'm not aware of any scientists today who expects the universe to stay the same forever in terms of how it is right now even our planet is the same constantly being changed partly because of humanity's behaviour but partly because of the natural cycles that it goes through and even the people manipulated

Roman emperors suffered mental breakdowns kings and queens have often been puppets in other people's hands and many a president or a leader has fallen under the spell of a beautiful woman or a charming man who wants to be in control no one is untouchable no one is unmanipulatable that's why people change and that can bring so many disappointments in life so we vote for somebody expecting one thing and we get another we start a job and really enjoy it only to discover over time that the people we work with are different and they change and we can even fall in love with someone who later on becomes a very different person change is inescapable it's not always bad people can change in good ways but very often change is for the worst whether that's through corruption that can come with power whether it's through pride that can come with success through bitterness that comes from being hurt all these kind of things can change us and change the people around us and for that reason change threatens us whether it's climate economic political health or other people their susceptibility to being manipulated puts us at risk

Jesus is different he's untouchable unspoilable unmanipulatable he is exalted above all his status has lord and king and saviour is unchangeable Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever that means in other words that no one can mess with him which means that ultimately no one can mess with you if you're united to him by faith so Jesus isn't changing in terms of who he is Jesus isn't changing in terms of what he's achieved thirdly and lastly Jesus isn't changing in terms of what he is doing right now and that takes us to chapter 7 and the passage that we looked at there especially from verse 23 let me just read those words again

[52 : 28] Hebrews 7 from 23 down to 28 now there have been many of those priests so let's talk about the Old Testament priests and there's been many of them since death prevented them from continuing in office but because Jesus lives forever he has a permanent priesthood therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him because he always lives to intercede for them here again as we said the writer is making a comparison between the Old Testament priesthood and Jesus as our great high priest and I want to highlight the amazing words at the end of verse 25 where it says that Jesus always lives to make intercession for us in other words Jesus right now is exalted at the right hand of God but he is not sitting there doing nothing he's not sitting there just admiring all his achievements he's not sitting there with his feet up relaxing he's there as our representative as our high priest he's there as the mediator between us and God and that means that if you are a Christian or if you become a

Christian it means that for every second of every single day Jesus is standing before God and saying that he has dealt with your sins and he's washed you in his blood he has brought you into God's family you are united to him and that's why he can save to the uttermost or he can save completely those who come to God through him Jesus is your great high priest he's representing you he's defending you he is identifying himself with you now this is so important when we think about our testimony as Christians sometimes when we talk about our testimony we feel that we have to go back to a big event in the past when there was a kind of bolt of lightning or a remarkable moment when we knew that we'd come to faith now that can be the experience of some people but for many people that's not their experience it doesn't matter because what actually happened in the past is not the important thing the important thing is that right now

Jesus is your great high priest right now you are united to him right now all your confidence before God is in and through Jesus we don't go to God and say oh by the way God remember this awesome thing happened 40 odd years ago no you go to God and say Jesus is my high priest right now and all my dependence is on him and this is so helpful Jesus is representing you he's defending you he's identifying himself with you so did you do something stupid last year you can inwardly put your hands up because I'm sure every single one of us did Jesus is interceding for you do you have massive regrets about your past Jesus is interceding for you do you worry that you might make a big mistake in the future

Jesus is interceding for you and he is never ever going to change and he is never going to stop doing that because he's the same yesterday and today and forever and this is so crucial in terms of the fact that our lives as Christians are so full of ups and downs so sometimes you know it's easy to think that being a Christian is meant to be like just plain sailing so you know I don't know if you remember doing graphs in school you imagine like a straight line that's just going up progress steady progress steady improvement it's so easy to think that being a Christian like that being a Christian is never like that it's not like that at all being a Christian is full of ups and downs so you imagine the graph that's just wobbling all over the place up down highs lows sometimes going well sometimes going badly full of ups and downs so you think of the line of your life as a

Christian it's just a wiggle up and down and you probably feel like there's more downs than ups half the time that's true that is the way it is for us as Christians it's full of ups and downs highs and lows mountaintops and valleys and because of that we often think that our best days as a Christian are in the past that moment when we were converted or the time when we felt like our prayer life was more like it should be or when we were maybe involved in something particular like a camp or an outreach or maybe when we became a member of the church or whatever it may be we can think oh yeah I was so much better then I've dipped now and I'm struggling and we do struggle like that there's that up and down pathway but because our pathway is an up and down line we think that Jesus' attitude towards us is the same we can so easily think that Jesus' love and commitment towards us follows the same pattern so when we're going up he likes us better when we're going down he gets disappointed and so you imagine you know a nice graph of us up and down

[58 : 33] Jesus' pleasure with you his delight in you his commitment to you follows the same pattern it's so easy to think like that that is totally wrong it's totally inaccurate it because in terms of the graph for us it's a line that goes up and down all the time for Jesus the line is dead straight and it never dips it never changes it never decreases Jesus' commitment to you Jesus' delight in you Jesus' love for you is the same and when you see that word same it's at the highest level and it stays at that level yesterday and today and forever

Jesus isn't changing in terms of who he is in terms of what he's achieved and in terms of what he's doing for you right now and forever amen let's pray Lord Jesus we thank you so much that you are the same yesterday and today and forever may that reality be written on our hearts and may it shape the way that we live our lives every day this year and for the rest of our lives amen our concluding hymn is to God be the glory which in so many ways just captures what we've been trying to say that it's just all about what he's done for us and so all the glory goes to him so let's stand and sing these wonderful words to God be the glory great things he hath done to God be the glory great things he hath done so loved he the world that he gave us his son who yielded his life and atonement for sin and opened the life gate that all may go in praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the people rejoice o come oh come to the father through Jesus the son and give him the glory great things he hath done praise the glory great things he hath done great things he hath taught great things he hath done and great our rejoicing through Jesus the son but purer and higher and greater will be our wonder our rapture when Jesus we see praise the lord praise the lord let the earth hear his voice praise the lord praise the lord let the people rejoice o come to the mother through Jesus the son and give him the glory great things he hath done the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all amen