

# Jesus the same yesterday and today and forever

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 January 2000

Preacher: Rev Donald Lamont

[ 0 : 00 ] I must meditate together in a portion we have read from God's word. The epistle to the Hebrews on the 13th chapter. Reading again from the 7th verse.

Hebrews chapter 13 from verse 7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, who say it follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

The apostle commences this chapter by a call to a brotherly love and the exercise of Christian hospitality.

This is an obligation and a privilege in which God's people are required to engage. And this is followed by certain practical and important exhortations relating to the conduct of Christian men and women.

Verse 3 emphasizes the importance of a genuine spirit of sympathy towards those who are afflicted. While verse 4 speaks of the necessity for moral integrity and purity of life and of manners on the part of Christians.

[ 1 : 33 ] Verse 5 proceeds to draw attention to the importance of true Christian contentedness, which can only be ours as our minds are saturated with the teachings of the divine word.

You see, only the word of God will enable us to have a proper perspective of life in all its varied circumstances. The apostle then goes on at verse 7 to remind God's people of their duties in relation to those who are over them in holy things.

And he seems to say two things in particular in his connection. He says, pray for them and attend to what they say.

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow. How frequently, for instance, do we find the apostle Paul pivoting the prayers of God's people?

Here in this chapter itself, towards the end of the chapter we hear him saying, pray for us. In 1 Thessalonians, in chapter 5, he says, brethren, pray for us.

[ 3 : 08 ] In 2 Thessalonians and in chapter 3, he again says, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.

So he recognized that this was an important function of Christian activity. And God's people are also not only to pray, but also to attend to the conversation of those who speak the word of God, considering the end of their conversation.

Now you ask perhaps, does that mean an uncritical acceptance of what they say, of everything they say? Well, of course not. And the apostle clearly safeguards this matter in particularizing what ought to be the end of the conversation of those who proclaim the word of God.

It is, it is, Jesus Christ. The same yesterday, today, and forever. You remember that when Paul, the apostle, first came to Corinth, what his own determination was on that occasion?

Namely, that he would know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. So this must, at all times, form the basis of the true preacher's conversation.

[ 4 : 42 ] And if there is a departure from it, then we think that the hearers are not only relieved from their allegiance to hear, but are under obligation to God to sever that allegiance.

Here then is the foundation of all true Christian commitment and Christian activity. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

The true source of encouragement and strengthening for God's people. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, forever.

And as we consider these words for a short time together, I would like in the first place to emphasize that the past, you see, the spirit is here speaking of the past, the present, and the future,

that first of all, the past is unintelligible, apart from the fact that Jesus Christ was yesterday. Today, we all like to penetrate into the past. Today, people are concerned with their roots, with their origins.

[ 6 : 08 ] We like to know as much as we can. This is natural and it is profitable to a point. We like to know as much as we can about the past. And so there is much probing of the past.

And when we come to think of life and to think of the purpose of life, then if we exclude the divine from the past, then it is quite unintelligible.

It makes no, there is no significance, there is no meaning whatsoever in it. So the past is unintelligible, apart from the fact that Jesus Christ was yesterday.

And we can see this from several directions. Jesus Christ, he was, as we know, before the beginning of things. A beginning before any progress had commenced.

A beginning in which he was the first when there was no second. A beginning when there was no other. To share being with him. I was set up from everlasting.

[ 7 : 18 ] It's how he himself speaks through the preacher in Proverbs chapter 8. I was set up from everlasting. From the beginning, wherever the earth was.

Then I was by him, as one brought up with him. I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth.

And my delights were with the sons of men. In the impenetrable vastnesses and the awful silence of that eternity which preceded the material creation, Jesus was.

He was before all things. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday. He was before the beginning of things. And it's clear also that he was in the beginning of things. As we see them and as we understand and know them. For by him were all things created, which are in heaven and which are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or powers.

[ 8 : 28 ] All things, as the apostle in Colossians chapter 1, were made by him. It was his wisdom that designed, his skill that devised, his hands that reared the system of the universe with all its complications and with all its varied relations.

And what is more, he sustains and he regulates this system. For by him all things consist. All things were made by him, says John in the opening words of his gospel.

And without him was not anything made, but that was made. And the apostle in the opening words of this epistle itself, by whom also, that is by Jesus Christ, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.

Jesus Christ the same. Yesterday, he was in the beginning of things. And what is more, in reference to the past, we are also to notice that he was at the end of that first beginning.

When darkness, when moral and spiritual darkness entered into the realm of light by reason of rebellion of man, he observed the rebellion and the catastrophic fall of the man who had been formed in the divine image.

[ 10 : 00 ] He was there when it happened. He saw the awesome consequences on the eternal damnation which Adam brought on himself and on his posterity in his act.

We read in Genesis that God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and that he called to Adam, Where art thou? The call implies that the fall had already occurred, that Adam was already lost, that God was cognizant of the fact, God saw it, he was there.

Jesus Christ was at the end of that first beginning. But what is more, my friends, and this is where light dawns for the human race, Jesus was at the center of the second beginning.

For there was the second beginning and it is made clear in the promise and the word that God spoke after the fall and the rebellion of man.

And this indeed is suggested in the call which is issued, which issued forth from God. And even more emphatically in the curse which he pronounced on the serpent.

[ 11 : 20 ] and also in the promise which he gave to his fallen creature at that moment when the, this catastrophic blow fell.

Because, says God, thou hast done this, the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field. and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed and God's promise it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The seed of the woman, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, he was at the very center of that second beginning. this was the hope that was held out to the church of God.

The hope that the church of God clung to from that very moment. And so, if we exclude all this from the past, as I said a moment ago, the past is unintelligible.

There is nothing in the past, however much we may interest ourselves in history, in roots, in our own roots, in the roots of others. If we exclude the divine from the past, it is a past that has no significance, no intelligence, no meaningful intelligence for mankind.

[ 12 : 50 ] Jesus Christ, the same yesterday. But not only is this so with regard to the past that it is unintelligible, apart from the fact that Jesus Christ was yesterday.

But with regard to the present, we are to assert that the present is quite meaningless, apart from the fact that Jesus Christ is today. Despite what people may say, despite what the pundits may assert, the fact remains that Jesus Christ is today.

today. And if Jesus Christ is not today, then today is but another day and a day that will pass without any significance or any meaning or any blessing.

But for the Christian, this is what makes today significant, what makes the present significant, that Jesus Christ is. He is the alone disposer of all things in the realm of men and of events.

By him, we know that kings, reign, and princes decree justice. The powers that be, they are ordained by him, and he casts one down and he raises another up.

[ 14 : 15 ] There is no problem with him. He has all things in the hollow of his hand and none can stay his hand or say unto him, what doest thou?

In our weakness and in our ignorance, we may sometimes be tempted to conclude that world order is on the point of disintegrating, that the forces of darkness are so powerful and that there is so much disorder in society that eventually we shall see society itself disintegrating, falling apart.

But that will never happen until the purposes of God in Christ are accomplished. Because he has a disposing of everything and he holds all things in the hollow of his hand.

Jesus Christ is today. He is a reality. He is the alone disposer of all things. and he is also the only Lord over his own church and people and those of his crown rights must not be denied to him and must not be snatched from his grasp.

In the course of history, the attempt has been made again and again to do precisely this. Our fathers in this, our own dear country, as we know, they fought this battle and shed their blood in the course of this battle for the crown rights of the Redeemer.

[ 15 : 50 ] And their blood cries to us today to be vigilant in this matter that we might render to him his proper due and his proper right from those who would snatch those rights away from him for they are still in our midst.

We know, of course, that in different parts of the world this battle is being officially fought. The faith of the people of God is being undermined systematically.

The forces of atheism and of humanism, they are doing everything in their power to bring us, to give us a secularized society, a society in which Jesus Christ is not.

In other words, to take away the crown rights which belong to him. But this will never, but in this they will never be successful because Jesus Christ is a reality in the church and among his people. The same today. And what is more, he is the one mediator between God and men. For there is one God, says Scripture, there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.

[ 17 : 17 ] And there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved. The popular notion today is that there are God's many and Lord's many and the church to her eternal shame is prepared to acknowledge the validity of this claim.

And so, according to the professing church itself, Christianity is only one of the great religions of the world, one of the ways of salvation for men, one of the great teaching ministries that we have amongst men.

But that, my friends, is not the claim which Christianity makes for itself. That is clearly not the claim which God makes for his cause and for his gospel in the word of his truth.

Thou shalt have no other God before me that is the basis of what we believe. That there is one God and one mediator between God and men.

There is no difference between the law and the gospel in this respect. There is only one way by which men can be reconciled to the God from whom they have been alienated by their sin.

[ 18 : 48 ] And this is the reality that we have to proclaim. Jesus Christ the same today. And what is more he is the sole intercessor with God the Father.

And the church that teaches that he shares this particular aspect of his glory with a creature has no right to the honored designation of Christian.

The Christian church strictly speaking is the church that ascribes to Jesus Christ the preeminence in all things.

On a successful termination of his atoning mission in the world we know that the Father exalted him to his own right hand that the Father gave to him a name that is above every name and bestowed on him all authority in heaven and in earth and gave to him that authority that he might dispense his mercy and his grace his gifts before the throne of his father to those who may come to redeem.

This is the reality which we have the fact that Jesus Christ is today and the third thing that we have in these words is that the future is unrelieved despair apart from the fact that Jesus Christ will be tomorrow.

[ 20 : 28 ] Jesus Christ the same yesterday today forever. Let us remind ourselves my friends that he will continue to unfold his purposes.

As we look into the future as we look into the tomorrows that lie before us he will continue to unfold his purposes. There must be no question at all in our minds on that particular score but if we are honest with ourselves there are at times doubts and there are misgivings in our minds on this matter.

We tend to become dismayed when we see everything that is happening. But remember the Christian is the only one who ought to be confident and assured about his own tomorrow and all his tomorrows and all the tomorrows of the world.

Everything is in a safe keeping of the sovereign disposer of men and of events his purposes will ripen fast unfolding every hour.

He will continue to make known his purposes step by step because he is Jesus Christ the same tomorrow.

[ 22 : 00 ] And remember too that he will be the consummator of world history. there will indeed be a big bang to use a common expression in certain directions.

There will indeed be a big bang one day as God word teaches. Remember that the big bang will not be set off by the hand of any man as some so fondly imagine.

There will be no accidents in this direction and neither will the God of heaven delegate this activity to the agency of any creature. The day of the Lord will come.

Of that we have no doubt for one moment. As the apostle Peter says in his second letter in chapter 3 at verse 10, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

But it will be the day of the Lord. And the day that God will act particularly and specifically in order to bring to an end this order as we know it, and to bring in a better, a heavenly order.

[ 23 : 20 ] He will consummate world history in his own time, and according to his own way. Jesus Christ, the same tomorrow, he will be the consummator of world history.

Remember too, that with respect to tomorrow, that he will be the judge of men's destinies, based upon a right and holy scrutiny of their conduct in this world, for he will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, and all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive according as he has done in the body, whether it be good, or whether it be bad.

It is on the basis of character that our destiny will hinge. It is in accordance with the evidence that will be adduced on the day of judgment, that a judge will pronounce us either innocent or guilty, that he will either say, come ye blessed of my father, or depart from me, ye cursed.

Jesus Christ, the same tomorrow, he will be the judge of the destinies of men. And with regard to tomorrow, remember that, too, that he will be the object of the saint's adoration throughout eternity. Every crown will be cast down at his feet. Every eye will be turned in his direction. Every voice will be joined in ever-ending hallelujahs of praise and to him who loved us and washed us from our sins and made us kings and priests unto our God and to his father.

[ 25 : 12 ] It is to him that honor and glory will be given forever and ever. Every knee will be, will reverently bow before his throne and he will be worshipped as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

He will indeed be the one who will be adored and who will be worshipped throughout the eternal ages. And so this is the basis of the message of the gospel, of the grace of God.

This must form the foundation of every true representation of the purpose of God. Jesus Christ the same.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow. If we are to exclude this, then we are excluding what is absolutely basic, what is absolutely fundamental in the message that God delivers to men and women.

It is only as we see life in the past, in the present, and in the future, and relate it to God or to Jesus Christ. It is only then that we can see any meaning, any significance, and derive any blessing from life, and see what the purpose that God has in speaking to men through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 45 ] Christ. Now, what are the particular implications of all this for ourselves, both as preachers and hearers? Well, I think there are two things emphasized in particular in relation to this matter.

First of all, we are to remember those who exercise authority over us in the Lord. I take that to be particularly a prayerful regard, a prayerful remembrance.

Remember them which have the rule over you. We have to take this verse with these words we have been considering, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever, because they have to do particularly with this message.

And so you are to remember them. You are to pay regard to them in their office. There is no greater service that a body of Christian people can render to the one whom God has set over them in holy things than to wrestle on his behalf.

When Israel of old was engaged with their enemies, you remember, in a crucial battle, Moses, Aaron, and her engaged in their own battle with God on the behalf of those who were fighting in the battle on the plain below.

[ 28 : 18 ] And as Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed, and as he dropped his arms, Amalek prevailed. If any man, I want you to suggest that if any man in the gospel ministry, conscious of his own many defects and weaknesses and failings, if he were asked, how can your people best serve you, then he would unhesitatingly reply, brethren, pray for us, remember us, raise holy hands to God at all times, so that the word of God may have free course and the name of Christ glorified amongst the body of God's people, lay siege to the throne of God in this connection and plead with him to action the ministry of the word, that it may be a powerful ministry and that it may effect great things to the glory and the honor of the Redeemer himself.

Brethren, pray for us, remember them that have the rule over you. This is the first thing, we have to remember them who exercise this authority over us in holy things.

And the other thing, and in particular, we are to consider the end of their conversation, insofar as it is scripturally orientated and Christ centered.

You are, says the apostle, to consider the end of their conversation when the end of their conversation is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

And it is clear that we are to do this, you are to do this, so that you would be more deeply devoted to the person of Jesus Christ.

[ 30 : 19 ] You see, as Christian people, we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength. we are to seek to comprehend with all the sense what is the length and breadth and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, so that we might be filled with all the fullness of God.

love, says Scripture, is to abound, yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, says Paul, in Philippians chapter 1 verse 9.

This is a particular thrust, a particular direction, in which our love is to abound, in knowledge and in all judgment. And this of course is the reason, the reason why we should consider the end of their conversation when that conversation is centrally based on Christ.

The more we hear and the more we learn of the excellence of his person, then the more meaningful will our love become and the more real and biblical and practical will that love become.

And you're also to consider the end of their conversation so that you would be more zealously committed to the cause of Christ. You see, lack of zeal and total commitment of life to the cause of the gospel stem largely from a failure to imbibe basic biblical truth and give them that place in our affections which properly belongs to them.

[ 32 : 06 ] The zeal which characterized the Savior himself and to which reference is made here in verse 12 wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate.

This zeal is a zeal which ought always to characterize his devout followers in the world. And this zeal I think will find expression in there when they emulate him in their own lives in their behavior taking him as their exemplar setting him before them.

And this indeed is what verse 13 suggests. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. This is a commitment that we have in these words of the apostle Paul. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believe in. And so you are to consider the end of the conversation for this purpose.

So that you will be more zealously committed to the cause of Christ. And you are also to consider the end of the conversation so that you will be more firmly established in the word of Christ.

[ 33 : 27 ] And in the doctrines of that word. The doctrines of grace are the spiritual muscles and the sinews of the believer. The more we know that word and the clearer we grasp its doctrines, the more able we shall be to stand in the day of testing and refute what is erroneous and what is spurious around us.

And there is so much of that in the day in which we live. And unless we give time and diligence and devotion and prayer to this martyrs, searching the scriptures daily as the Bereans did in Acts 17 to see whether these things are so, then we shall never attain to that spiritual maturity and that spiritual firmness which are so beneficial to ourselves and so glorifying and so honouring to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ considering the end of their conversation.

And we are to consider the end of their conversation that we may come to a firm knowledge, a firm knowledge of our interest in the Lord Jesus Christ if we have not yet come to that knowledge.

to that knowledge of salvation which is and ought to be proclaimed by every true messenger of the gospel if he is indeed preaching a whole Christ yesterday, today, and forever.

If that word of his is to become a saving word to our souls we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer.

[ 35 : 19 ] we must lay it up in our hearts and practice it in our lives. We must seek by the grace of God to come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified because there is none other name given amongst men whereby we must be saved.

God let us let us then take to heart this twin obligation of remembering those who exercise authority over us in holy things and let us consider the end of their conversation so far as that conversation is in accordance with the mind of God and the honor of Christ so long as Christ is being glorified and lifted up and set before us for this will greatly profit us it will bring great benefit spiritual and eternal benefit to ourselves and it will be the means of glorifying God and this after all is our chief end in everything we do let us ensure that Jesus Christ is central in our preaching in our thinking in our living that he is the same yesterday today tomorrow that he may be glorified amen shall we pray together oh lord our god we pray thee to give us a proper understanding and a proper grasp of spiritual things of eternal truth so that that truth may lay hold upon us and give direction and purpose to the way in which we live and to the manner in which we walk in the world we bless thee oh god that there is nothing meaningless in life when we look upon life and relate it to thee and see that thou art in it that thou art working thy purposes through it through jesus christ thine own son who was the same who is the same and who will always be the same bless thy word to us at this time seal it to our hearts and consciences with power grant oh god that it may bear fruit in us and that we may go forth resting upon it and seeking direction from it in all things pertaining to life and to godliness and all we ask we ask in jesus name and for his sake amen