Jesus the same

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Preacher: Rev Murdo Alex Macleod

[0:00] Episodio to Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8. Hebrews chapter 13, verse 8.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever. There are many who believe that this letter was written to the church in Jerusalem.
And if that be the case, then that church would have been the oldest in existence.
And consequently, many of its first members would have passed away.
And the majority, for example, of the apostles and Stephen and many others were by now gone.
[1:30] And it is for that reason that someone has said, To what church, then, could a call like this be addressed?

Remember them which have had the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith hallowed, considering the end of their conversation.
It was for granted that this church should seek to prize its past and to recall with gratitude their departed leaders and to remember those who had often spoken to them the word of God.
It was right that they should review their past and thank God for the faithful witness of those people who were no longer with them.
It was but right that they should look back and remember them, admiringly and thankfully. And I suppose that for each congregation gathered today, this first day of the year, and particularly for ourselves as a congregation, we ought to remember with a feeling of reverent admiration the people of God who were with us as a congregation a year ago and who are no longer now gracing this scene of time.
[3:17] And we ought to perpetuate, as the Bible exhorts us to, the memory of the good man, those who have witnessed to the grace of God to the day and generation.

And I'm sure that for many people, the memory of those whom they loved in the Lord and those who saved the generation in the Lord, I'm sure that the memory of such people becomes more fragrant with each passing year.
And we are all, we have all to learn something from their life, from their witness, indeed, from their death. And therefore, you can understand why this writer should say to this church, remember them and imitate them, follow them, emulate them, see that you try to do and to follow the example that they set before you.
Now, there's nothing wrong with that advice, but there's better counsel to follow. And the words in verse 8 are to be taken, I believe, in that light.
Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, or Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.
Here, attention is directed to us, not to the Hebrew Christians, but to the Lord himself, not to their faith, but to the one who was the source and the inspiration of their faith.
[5:17] Attention is directed not to the leader, not to the teacher, not to the guides of the church, but to the great head of the church himself.

Perhaps the connecting link could be found there. It's good to remember these people. But we have to remember something else. Though they have gone, he hasn't.
Though they are no longer with us, he is. And though they have changed, he has not.
And here, the attention of the church is directed to the unchangeableness of the great head of the church, the Savior, the Redeemer, the Mediator of the church of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
Because we all recognize this, the church changes. Its leader and its membership changes.
[6:22] But our great head doesn't. And for all who have gone today, the past tense is to be used. They were. But for him, it is he is.

They have changed and the world has changed. And I said the church has changed. And we have all changed. But this is the great source of our encouragement this day.

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At the beginning of another year. Jesus Christ. The same yesterday, today and forever.
Now, for a little this morning, I would just like to direct your attention to this. Pastor Case will be a shorter service than normal. Just want to direct your attention for a little to one or two thoughts of connection with these words.
Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. And I'm sure that there are thoughts which suggest themselves to yourselves as well. First of all, we rejoice today in one who is the same in his passion.
[7:34] Jesus Christ. Now, I need to spend too much time on this. Jesus. The word that day will forever be associated with this person who came into this world in our nature.

This was the message of the angel of Joseph, thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. I'm sure that the child here today, if I were to ask the child here today, what does the name Jesus mean?
I'm sure that that child would tell me what it means. Jesus Christ. This anointed one, the Christ of God, the anointed of God, the one who was sent by God into this world to be the saviour of the world.
this passion, known forever as Jesus Christ, is the same. This passion is unchanged.
This passion will always remain the saviour of his people, the mediator between God and man. Of course, we recognise at once, we recognise this and we acknowledge it, that the human nature which our Lord took to himself was not free from change.
[9:09] We know that, for example, that nature had a beginning. It had a beginning within the womb of the Virgin Mary. Its life in this world began when he was born into this world and while he was in this world, we know the Bible tells us that he who took our nature to himself, that in that nature he grew in wisdom and knowledge and stature before God and men.

We know that he developed physically and that he developed mentally. We know that from the Bible. The nature that he took to himself was not unchangeable in that sense.
We know that he was subject to the changes that accompany for example thirst and hunger and pain and sorrow and crying and torture and death.
We know that there was some change whatever it was, there was some change attributable to the human nature of our Lord, to the body that he had when he rose from the dead. The body, the resurrected body of the resurrection body of our Lord and we know also, whatever that change was, that some change associated with the exalted, glorified human nature of our Lord when he went up on high and sat on the right hand of God the Father having accomplished the work that our Lord gave him to do.
We know these things, we acknowledge these things from the word of God but the person who took that nature to himself was unchangeable in his person, unchangeable because he was none other than the Son of God and when he took that nature to himself he didn't change and in the process through which that nature went, that human nature of his went and all the changes that I've referred to, he to whom it belonged did not change in any way.
[11:21] He never ceased to be what he was. All that the eternity and the immutability and the unchangeableness which were attached to every single attribute that he possessed as God never in any way changed.

He was always immutable, always unchangeable, always eternal, the eternal Son of God while he was in the world and while he suffered in the world and while he went through all these experiences in the world.
He was what he always was. Thou art from everlasting to everlasting God. He was the great I am at times.
At times. And today this person is the same. In a changing world he doesn't change.
And as I've said, even the church changes it. Membership comes and goes but he who has given being to the church and he who died to save his church he remains the same.
[12:38] Times, time and providences rob us of many things and they rob the church of many things and they rob the church of many who have enriched the church's life.

But they will never rob the church of him who is at the center of its life. He who is Christianity itself.
Notice why someone has said, for a cowardly bewailing of our changed times and departed guides as if heroism or truth or Christian success had been buried in their graves.

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There is no room for such an attitude. And what we have to do as we remember with gratitude and thankfulness to God.
Many who have been and who have gone and who have enriched our lives and strengthened and encouraged us in the way of the Lord. Though we remember them today with gratitude and with in many senses sad that they are no longer here.
[13:49] Let us remember this above all else that Jesus Christ is here and that he is the same as he always was.

And then there is this second thought I want to bring before you that he is the same in the way in which he functions.
Now find out I mean this that we know for example that as our redeemer he executes the office of a prophet of a priest and of a king as our mediator as our redeemer.
Now just let's stop here for a minute because I think that this is relevant to the way in which this text is placed in this chapter.
You see you could say without doing any dishonor to the Lord at all or to his word that Jesus wasn't this world's only prophet.
[15:01] Was he the only priest to function in this world? Neither was he the only king who operated and ruled in the world. And he wasn't the only prophet in the church of God or the only priest or the only king who was in the church of God for that matter either.

We know for example just take the prophet we know that anyone knows his Bible knows that Moses was a great man of God and a great prophet of God.
We know that Isaiah the man who's been referred to as the great evangelical prophet of the Old Testament he was a great prophet as was John the Baptist. Just three examples of men who were great men of God and who functioned in that office to which God had called them.
But you see the point about them all is this that one made way for the other. One made way for the other. No matter how wonderful and no matter how distinguished their ministry no matter how distinguished their period of office to what is written about them this is written of them all.
They died. They passed away. They passed on. And why? They passed on to make way for this person who speaks as no prophet ever spoke and of whom his enemies testified.
[16:34] no man ever spoke like this man. None of whom the word of God says as of no other prophet this man speaks as no one has ever spoke.

We know that for many who were in the church of Christ Moses John the Baptist Isaiah many of the great preachers who have been and gone we know that in many respects though dead they still speak.
And they speak to us today who say great prophet to ourselves but no one speaks as this man speaks and no one functions as prophet eternally but this person.
the ministry of this prophet will never come to an end. Jesus Christ is the same as a prophet.
He's the same as our priest. And one of the great themes of this epistle itself is at the very chapter 7, 8 and 9 particularly and 10 are taken up with this with the argument that the apostle advances for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as a great high priest of the church of God.
[18:05] And one of the arguments is this, look he says that these priests, look at Aaron, look at his successor's office, he goes as far back as Melchizedek, look at all, they exercised tremendous service in the office to which God had called them.

They were all priests but they were not allowed to continue in their office because of death. they all died, they passed on. But you see they were only there making way for the great high priest himself who was to come.
Death has taken them out of the way. But here's one who offered himself in death to God and who was alive with power from the dead exercising an unchangeable priesthood.
Wherefore, he is able to save to the uttermost all those who come unto him seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.
And he's speaking of them as the priest. And then we know that he's the king, the king of kings and lord of lords. I said earlier, he is not the only king who was in the history of this world, nor the only king who was in the church of God.
[19:28] What about David? And what about Solomon? Men who were appointed by God as kings in Israel.

Yes. Oh, how different is this person who rules as king in his own everlasting kingdom.

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The kingdom that David and Solomon ruled over, glorious though they were, where are they today? And where are they?
Where are David and Solomon? But this person, he is alive, exercising authority over his own kingdom. He has been given the scepter of righteousness as king of his own church over which he rules and is subduing all his and his church's enemies.
So he's the same in the offices that he executes, anointed as prophet, priest, and king. And therefore, with us today, no less than he was with them as prophet, priest, and king.
[20:48] With us to help us in the service of this king, in this kingdom, just as he was with them.

With us, just as willing to listen, as the priests to whom they came, just as willing to listen to us, just as willing to teach us as he taught them, he made them great men of God, this heart at his feet, but so can we, because he abides forever as the prophet of his own church.
And you know, as he exercises these functions, let us thank God for the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the sufficiency of his work.
The work of every single servant in the church of God, no matter what task is given, the work will come to an end, he will accomplish his task one day.
Every single member of the church of Jesus Christ will finish his work in this world. I will come to an end. But here's one of whom it is written that the sufficiency of his sacrifice and of his work and of his righteousness endures forever.
[22:16] endure forever. And how thankful you and I ought to be today that he is the same to cleanse us from our sins as he was sufficient to cleanse them from their sins.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness as he was sufficient to cleanse them from all their unrighteousness. And he did that for them. And they went, having been cleansed, but he is still with us to do for us what he did for them.
And just in a word, he is the same in his relationship to us as he was with them. I've mentioned this already. What he was to them, surely he will be to us.
We speak of these men of God and these people who enriched the life of the Church of Christ in this world, and they did, they verily did. But who enabled them to do it?
He did. Who gave them the grace to do it? He did. Who strengthened them for their tasks? He did. Who gave them the wisdom to deal with the problems that confronted them?
[23:40] He did. Who empowered them? Do you think they were sufficient in themselves? No, remember what perhaps the greatest of all said. Who is sufficient for these things?

Our sufficiency is of God. Who gave them the worthiness? Was it in themselves? Was it native to themselves?
No. None is worthy. No, not one. But all the worthiness is in him. Has he changed? Certainly not, as someone put it.
He in whose strength and fellowship lay all the glory and hope of their career. Is to us exactly what he was to them.
The same unoffered, undiminished object of trust and source of power. And there's power nowhere else for you today nor for me. This is where our power is to be found, our wisdom, the grace that we need and the strength that we require for every task that God gives to us in this coming year, whatever it may be.
[24:52] You remember that you can say with Paul, I can do all things, but only through Christ who strengthens only. He doesn't go, he doesn't fail, he doesn't change, and he will never die.

And also, just this, he's the same in his purpose. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. The same in his purpose.
Now, I wonder if I could just sum this up very briefly in this way. When you think of the purpose of the Lord, the purpose that he has, I often think of Psalm 22, especially on verse 22 onwards to the end of that psalm, whereas someone said the mind is thought of Jesus Christ when after, when as it were, the darkness lifted during his sufferings on the cross and after he had cried, why hast thou forsaken me?
As someone put it, it's as though he said the thoughts of the thought of the Lord Jesus Christ ran along their accustomed channels and these were two and they were the glory of God and the good of men.
The glory of God and the good of men. glory of the glory of the glory of the Father glorify thy name and the voice answered him I have glorified and I will glorify it again.

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[26:35] This was a channel along which his thoughts always run to the glory of God the Father for the display of the glory of his wisdom and his justice and his holiness and his truth and his mercy and his love and his grace.

And the Lord is always he was always displaying the glory of God as the glory of God displayed in Jesus Christ today in the preaching of the gospel as nowhere else.
You read 1 Corinthians chapter 1 for evidence and for proof of that. And also his mind was always along this channel in which he was seeking the good of men.
Seeking salvation of this world lost world into which he came. He came to die born to die the just for the unjust.
And he is the same in his purpose today. He hasn't altered, he hasn't changed in any way. Seeking the glory of his father's name. Seeking the salvation and the good and the blessedness of men and women, boys and girls in this world.
[28:01] And therefore he is the same in his attitude, in the care that he exercises, in the provision that he makes, in the protection that he offers, and in the faithfulness that he displays.

Of all that was said of him, that he never refused anyone who came to him. It's the same today. He will in no wise cast out any who come to him.
It was his greatest delight, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. What joy? There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents.
He's the same in the intercession that is exercised on behalf of all for whom he died. I mentioned this earlier. He lives forever to make continual intercession.
You prayers fail. Even the prayers of the godliest who are in this church failed. They failed themselves. But he never did and he never does.
[29:07] He has an eternal intercession, an unchangeable intercession. His prayers never come to an end and they never fail. The father here with them always.

Unchanging in his attitude of upholding and sustaining and ministering help to people. And you and I will discover that new situations and differing providences will bring us into face to face with new difficulties.
I have no doubt in the ensuing year and new challenges. This year will not be the same as last year. but no one, let no one rob you of the strength that is available to you in the Lord Jesus Christ.
As I said earlier, he strengthened those who went before us. And day, let us be encouraged in the knowledge that, as someone put it, the deathless presence of Jesus Christ burns on through all the ages.
His compassions they fail not, and his mercies are new every morning. And therefore he stands as close to us as he did to them.
[30:43] But the great question is this, do we stand as close to him as they did? That's the question.

Don't doubt, my friend, the relationship that Jesus Christ has to all who come to him. Don't doubt the relationship that he has to all who put their trust in him.
It's for you and for me to come to him just one word on this yesterday, today, and forever.
When you look back, as I'm sure we've all done since this new year dawned, when you look back, what a comfort it is to know and to recognize that in all the changing scenes, he remained the same.
As you sit in this church today, can you look back on 1986 and say, yes, the Lord Jesus Christ was the same right throughout here.
[32:02] perhaps your problem is not so much looking back today as looking forward. Tomorrow, if your spirit is to see it, or as this word puts it, forever.

Ah, well, there's one thing for which you and I ought to be thankful. There are many things. we ought to be thankful that we don't know what tomorrow holds if we spare to see it.
That's one side of the page, but there's another side to it. And the other side of it is this, we know that whatever happens, he will be the same.
Of that we are absolutely assured, he will be the same. But then again you see, maybe that isn't your problem at all.
Maybe your greatest problem is not the certainty of the past, not the uncertainty of the future, but maybe the difficulty and the problem of today.

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[33:21] And I have no doubt that there may be people in this building today for whom that is the greatest burden at this very time. The difficulty, the trials, the temptations, yes, the things that almost border on despair for them at the moment.

It's today that is the problem. God, and in many senses it is. Because your responsibility and mine with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ is today, at this very moment in time.
Well, let me assure you of this, as I would want to assure myself, and we all need this assurance, he is the same today.
Nothing has changed him, and nothing ever will. He is the one with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow caused by turning.
And you remember this as you set out on this new year, that life inevitably will change. change. And I have no doubt that there are many homes which will see many changes as well.
[34:47] And the world in which you and I live will assuredly change. But ah, what comfort to know that we can step out on this year in the company of one who will never change, and one who will never fail us, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

I wonder if you can exercise the hope today that you have that comfort in your own life. Let us pray.
May the Lord bless us, and thou help us, O Lord, to look to thyself. Give us grace that our hope and our trust and our confidence may be in thee.
And help us, O Lord, to honour thee in all our ways, to acknowledge thee. Bless us in our gathering around the word of thy grace.
We thank thee for the privilege, and we thank thee for the opportunity. And we pray that thou dost glorify thy holy and thy blessed name in all that is done in thy name here and in every other place.
[36:08] In the days that unfold, have mercy upon us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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