

The Unchanging God

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[0:00] You can turn in your Bibles, invite you to do that if you will, to the Old Testament prophet of Malachi, last book of the Old Testament.

! And we'll be in chapter 3 this morning and looking at some things that I think are appropriate for the time in which we live.

It's something good for us to know, something good for us to remember and to stand upon as well.

So let me ask you to stand together with me as we honor God's Word in Malachi chapter 3.

And let's begin, well, let's begin with verse 1 this morning. God says,

Our focus today is going to be on verse number 6.

[2:24] Pray together with me, if you will. Father, we thank you again for your love and grace, your kindness to us, your goodness in our lives through the days.

And we thank you in particular for the time you've offered us today to come together to worship you. And now we come to the point in time of listening to what you have to say to us through your Word this morning.

So I ask that you open our spiritual eyes and hearts and minds to be able to understand what you're saying to us and then provide for us the grace to apply those things to our lives.

So just give us wisdom, give us discernment to hear from you today and honor your Son through it and thus yourself we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. And be seated if you will. Quite evident to all of us that we're living in a time when God has been relegated to the back seat in the lives of many people.

[3:35] And even in some, he's just been totally cast out. It's quite evident. But in spite of that fact, no matter what the world may do with God, no matter what they may say, the truth of the matter is, to their dismay, God remains the central figure, if you will, in all of life.

Cannot dispute that. Well, you can dispute it if you want to, but you can't do away with the reality of it. God is the central figure of all of life and all of living.

So no matter what they say, we realize that God is the creator and he is the sustainer of it all.

According to Colossians chapter 1, verses 16 and 17, the scripture says, Catch that.

All things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things and by him all things consist, that is, cohere and are held together.

The prophet Malachi, in the passage that we read just a moment ago, expresses the fact that God is God and that he is forever.

[5:05] That he's in the central, he's the central figure of all of life. He declares that in what we read. In the context of it now, Malachi is dealing with the sinfulness of the covenant nation of God.

They have rebelled against God. They've rejected his law. They've rejected his word. And so now he is dealing with them in their sin.

And so in that dealing with their sin, God declares again in verse number 6, For I am the Lord, I change not.

Therefore, you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Now I want you to notice, if you will. I am the Lord, he says. I am.

Not maybe. Not could be. Not should be. But I am. And when God says, I am, that settles it.

[6:06] Amen? That settles it. No room for speculation. No place for doubts. No questions to be entertained.

It's simply settled. God said, I am the Lord. Scripture testifies of the fact as well. In Psalm 86, verses 8 through 10, the scripture says to us, Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord.

Neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name.

For thou art great and doest wondrous things. Thou art God alone. And in Psalm 90, verses 1 and 2, as we heard just a moment ago.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hast formed the earth and the world.

[7:13] Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. I am the Lord, he declares. So, who is this one?

Who is it that he really is? He said, I am the Lord. Capital case letters. The word Yahweh, or the word we know as Jehovah.

As Yahweh, or Jehovah, he is the eternal, self-existent one. He always has been, always will be, and there's never a time when he will not be who he is.

He's the almighty, the omnipotent, all-powerful God. I am, O Lord.

You recall with me, that's a familiar phrase to us. As we remember what happened in the book of Exodus, in the life of Moses, in chapter 3, you recall God had said to Moses, I'm going to take you and I'm going to use you to deliver my people Israel out of bondage.

[8:25] And Moses then, again, just being a common, ordinary individual, begins to ask questions. In Exodus chapter 3, verse 13, Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say, What is his name?

What shall I say unto them? Now, you have to realize when they ask that question, What is his name? It's not just the idea that they want an identity here.

They want to know what this character of the one that has spoken to Moses really is, as the name denotes the idea of the nature and the character of the one named.

So, they ask, What is his name? He says, So what shall I say to them? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am.

And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you. When they ask, What is the nature and character of this one that has sent you?

[9:40] Tell them, I am that I am. I will be what I will be. Now, in the context of the passage here, what God is really showing to Moses and then conveying that to the people of Israel is that the one that has made the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, then later on as the nation of Israel, as the one that has made that covenant a promise, he will be the one then that will actually fulfill and keep that covenant.

More importantly in that is that in the keeping of that covenant and the things that God does in keeping that covenant, he would then be manifesting the character or the nature found within the name Jehovah.

Look, interesting idea here, and very important to what they do, what they see, as well as what we see. God is going to explain to them the name Yahweh, the name Jehovah, that name by which God made himself known to Abraham years past when he initiated that covenant with him in Genesis chapter 15.

He said in verse 7 of that chapter, he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit.

I am the Lord. I am Jehovah. I am Yahweh. I am the Lord, he says. But then he says, I change not.

[11:25] Literally, the idea, I will always be all that I am in who I am. Think about that. I'll always be what I am in who I am.

And that will never change. My character, my nature will always remain the same. I change not. Not just some of the time. Not when it just seems convenient.

But all of the time. I will remain the same. Now, he says, and this is interesting, because you recognize he's saying this in the context of dealing with a sinful nation.

Dealing with their sins. He said, I am Jehovah. I change not. Therefore, and this is a good part.

Because I'm Jehovah, because I'm unchangeable, you sons of Jacob, therefore, are not consumed.

Now, get the picture there. Dealing with sin. But he said, because I'm the covenant God, because I'm Jehovah, because I'm Yahweh, because I'm unchangeable, you will not be consumed.

[12:47] I am Jehovah. Remember, one of the characteristics of the name Jehovah that God possesses is that he is a revealer of himself to mankind.

He reveals who he is by what he does. And so, to the nation of Israel, and to us as well, as the revealer of himself to man, he reveals himself as the loving, compassionate, redeeming father to his

people.

It's as if God is saying to them and to us, I love you. Always have. But I've got to deal with your sin. Now, just because God has to deal with a sin does not mean that he does not love them. Amen?

Yeah. I always loved you, he said. Always have.

Always will. But because of who I am, I have to deal with your sin. I am holy. I am righteous. That's who I am.

[13:56] And so, consequently, I must deal with your sin. But yet, when I deal with your sin, I do it in love. I do it in love with the motive of drawing your heart to me.

That's the tremendous aspect of God's work within the life. God deals with sin. He has to deal with sin. Because he's the holy and righteous God.

Cannot tolerate sin at all. He has to deal with that. But he does that in a loving effort to draw the heart of man to himself.

Draw the heart of man to himself so that we'll not only see him in his love, but experience him in his love.

You know, I was just taken aback. Was it last Sunday morning? I think it was. That hard message that Pastor Mike had to preach.

[15:01] And during the invitation time, you remember what happened? little Jack came up. And I thought, well, that's interesting.

I don't know what Pastor Mike and Danny have been dealing with with Jack. Maybe there's something there. And so when he came to hug his dad and then later find out, he just came to hug his dad.

Because dad was preaching a hard message. Jack loves his dad. That kid, that kid just, I just stand in awe of that boy. Some of the things he does.

But he loved his dad. What was that? It was not just the idea that we know that Jack loves his dad. But right there at that moment, dad got to experience Jack in Jack's love for his dad.

Amen? And that's what God wants to happen for you and I as he did the people of Israel. I deal with your sins, but I do so lovingly so that you can not only experience experience my love, but you can experience me in my love.

[16:24] Know my love, but experience me in my love as well. Now, that's what God desires. Not only for the nation of Israel, but for us.

To experience him in his love and that in its fullness. Yeah. How much does God really love us with love that's unexplainable, incomprehensible, but he expresses it to us.

And he wants us to know that love in its fullness. So he desires the same for us. To know that he is God, to recognize his love through his son, that's the greatest expression of God's love he's given to us, is through the sacrifice of his son.

Then to appropriate the salvation that he offers through that love. And as we appropriate that salvation, then we can experience the joyous relationship that that affords us with God.

Notice I said the joyous relationship. Oh yes, there are times when that relationship can be difficult. Amen? Is there, let me see the hands of any man here that has not found that sometimes the relationship of you and your wife becomes difficult.

[18:04] Anybody? Anybody? Put your hand down, Danny. Yeah, Danny's going like this. Yeah, yeah.

I'm on Danny's case today if you can't tell that. But yeah, yeah, yeah. It's a joyous relationship in spite of the fact that he has to deal with our sin.

Because we realize that it's the sin within our lives that hinders that relationship. Well, no, let me back that off. It hinders the fellowship that we have in that relationship.

All right? So, when God deals with us in our sin, he does it so that we can completely enjoy the fullness of the relationship and the joy that that provides within our lives.

In Hebrews 11, verse 6, the scripture says, without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

[19:10] When he says it's impossible to please God without faith, to please him literally means to please him at all. Amen? Not at all. Without the exercise of faith in him, it is impossible for him to find any pleasure in us at all.

Yeah. The one that comes to God must believe two things. First of all, that he exists, and then secondly, that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

It's not the idea that God's merely a God that is a rewarder, but that he will prove himself to be a rewarder. All right?

Boy, there's benefits. Now, I hate to say this because I don't want to be misunderstood, but there are benefits in knowing Christ, and there are benefits in growing in our relationship to God through him, because God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

There are things, there are blessings, there are special things that God will do in the life of those that diligently seek after him.

[20:28] Now, the word diligently seek there literally means to seek him out. All right? To seek him out. One of the things we've got to be sure we do in our time with God, in our time in the scripture, it's not just, you know, a lot of times we'll open the scriptures in the day, and see what it is God says to us, and see what he, you know, kind of get a reminder of what he expects out of our life today.

That's all right, and it's good to do that. But the thing we've got to be sure we're doing in all of that is as we look into his word, and as we go through our day, we are seeking after him, coming to know him more completely, coming to know who he is.

That's why it was important for him to say to them, I am the unchanging God. I am. I am, I will be what I will be.

I'm going to manifest the character of my name so that you can come to know who and what I am. That's my endeavor in your heart and your life.

So as we seek him out, as we search to know more of him, more about him, and enter into that fellowship with him more intimately, then he is a rewarder of those that seek him.

[22:03] He's a rewarder, and God's reward and attitude toward those that seek him is sometimes not immediately apparent.

Do you know we're such impatient people? Amen? We expect everything to come just like that. I'm surprised I could snap my finger. Can you hear that? I haven't done that in a long time.

Don't ask me to whistle. All right. But sometimes, you know, when we're seeking God and we're seeking him out and learning to know of him, we're watching to see, all right, where's the reward? Where is it? Where's that benefit that he said he would give to me in my life? It doesn't always come instantaneously. There are times when God delays the obvious.

He delays enabling us to see what it is he's doing in our life. Because there are times in those delays when the exercise of genuine faith becomes even stronger.

[23:08] I like the old story in Luke chapter 18. Turn there with me just a moment. Luke chapter 18. You guys are in real trouble today. I hope you know that because somebody has moved the clock down there.

It's just not there. I do have a watch on my wrist. I was going to say it's rude to go like this when you're preaching.

Anyway, in Luke chapter 18 we have the story of the unjust judge. I just love this story. In verse number 1 of Luke 18 he spoke a parable unto them to this end that men ought always to pray and not to faint, not to become weary, saying, there was a judge which feared not God neither regarded man.

And there was a widow in that city and she came unto him saying, avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God nor regard man, that tells you what kind a guy he was, yet, and here's the part that's good, yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

Literally the idea there is that she does me bodily harm. Amen? Can you catch the picture here of this dear little lady? She comes time after time after time to get the judge to deal with this thing, somebody dealing unjustly with her.

[24:56] He just wouldn't listen to her, give her the time of day, but she kept coming. He became fearful that she was going to do him bodily harm. I can see her with a cane.

Amen? You've got to watch the ladies with the cane. And get ready to bop him on the head. But she continued with the weary to him. So he answered her cry.

Now look at what it says in verse 7. Shall not God avenge his own elect, vindicate his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Now here's the question. Here's a tremendous question that Jesus raises here. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Will he find it? Will he find that embodiment of faith within the heart of his people to that extent that causes them to, in spite of delay, in spite of having to wait, that they still diligently seek after him?
[26:16] Yeah. Good question, isn't it? We seem to be in a generation today that if we don't even get our way spiritually, we just cry and cry and cry.

Amen? Our lives and hearts and minds have to be soothed to the things that we would like to hear. Now, realize in all of this, I am Jehovah, I change not.

All of the promises that God has given to his people, us included, all hinge on that idea, on that truth, on that basis.

all hinge on the unchangeable nature and character of God. In 2 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 1, Scripture says, Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Now, that's an interesting statement. Just thought about that. Interesting statement. Tom, here's one for you to check out. Let's cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh. We know what that is. But what's the filthiness of the spirit that he talks about?

[27:44] Now, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. He speaks of the promises there that are found in the 6th chapter of 2 Corinthians.

He says, I will dwell in them and walk in them. I will not be as a wayfaring man who stops to lodge for the night, but I'll take up a constant residence with them.

I'll dwell in and among them. And then secondly, in the promise, he said, I'll walk in them. I will walk among them. And that, of course, by the presence and guidance of the Spirit of God, and that denotes the fellowship that he has with us.

Then I will be their God. I will be to them all that an infinite, eternal, self-sufficient being can be to his offspring.

That is to bless them, to take them under my special protection, and let us then enjoy his favor in the midst of that.

[28:56] Then fourthly, I will receive you, he said, I will receive and recognize you as friends and my adopted children. And then I will be a father unto you.

Realize what a father is. He's a protector, counselor, and guide of his children. He instructs them, proves, or provides for them, and counsels them in the good times and in the times of difficulty. There's no more relationship that's any more tender than that relationship of father to son. Now, ye shall be my sons and my daughters.

Ye shall all be of the household of God, the family of heaven, and thusly be holy, be happy, and be continually safe.

2 Peter 1:4 says, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. Oh, good way to label those.

[30:03] That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Now, that being said, here's God's invitation to us.

1 Chronicles chapter 28 verse 9 says, For the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou wilt seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.

Then Psalm 119 verses 2 and 3 say, Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart. they also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.

Proverbs 8, 17, I love them that love me and those that seek me shall find me. Jeremiah 29, 13, Ye shall seek me and find me when ye shall search for me with your heart.

And of course, the idea in all of this is seeking God with all of our heart. Oh, that our hearts would echo the thought of the psalmist in Psalm 63, verse 1, when he says, O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and a thirsty land where no water is.

[31:45] I don't know about you, but I find the land we're living in a dry land, a land that creates thirst.

And I trust that in our heart and our lives, the scope around us causes us to long for, to thirst after God to the extent the psalmist speaks of fear.

I, my soul thirsteth for thee, it longs for thee in the dry and thirsty land where no water is.

Now, Hebrews chapter 6, verses 10 through 20, turn there just a moment if you will, because there the writer speaks a great deal of the unchangeableness of God.

And in reality, the fuller extent of that, if you will, and the fuller joy that we find in that, in Hebrews chapter 6.

[32 : 55] Begin in verse 10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward his name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.

We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Verse 13. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.

Now remember, this is the promise that God gave, speaking of the promises that God gave to Abraham in the establishment of the covenant with him. He could find no one greater to swear by, so he swore by himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, multiplying I will multiply thee. So, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

[34 : 14] So, wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

Now, I want you to notice what he says here. God's desire is that his people recognize the unchangeableness, that's the immutability, the unchangeableness of the promises that he has made to them.

Now, so he confirmed that by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil, whether the forerunner is for us entered Even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Mel Chizedek.

A lot of stuff in there, and it's all good stuff. But realize what in reality he's saying is, again, God's desire in making promises to his people is that they realize the strength that lies within that promise. Nothing at all can change it. The literal rendering of some of this is the idea that God is not a turncoat. He will change what he has said.

[35 : 51] He will not say one thing and then later on decide something different. That's a familiar phrase today. Decide something different. He will maintain steadfastness in everything he says.

So as a result of that unchangeableness of the promises of God to us, we then have a hope. a hope that is secured for us.

It's an anticipation that we have that we know is going to take place. One day we have that hope and he said that hope for us has an anchor, an anchor and that anchor is steadfast and sure.

I remember years ago sometimes when we were in a boat trying to fish, we decided here's a good place to throw out the anchor and just sit. So we throw the anchor out and just sit there and wait and all of a sudden we notice the boat's drifting.

It's still moving down the water and we figure out what's happened. Anchor never made it to the bottom. Amen? The anchor never found something to grab a hold of and anchor itself.

[37 : 09] Make it secure. Make it steadfast. The writer of the Hebrews is saying the hope that we have is attached to an anchor and that anchor is steadfast and it's sure.

It's the idea that it won't be made to totter or teeter to be troubled in despair and it will not be crushed if someone were to step upon it.

Yeah. That's the anchor we have and guess who that anchor is? That anchor is the person Christ Jesus who he goes on to say has gone in before us into the inner part of the tabernacle of heaven into the holy of holies.

But then he makes a differentiation here. He said it's not like the Arianic priesthood when Aaron as a representative of the people would go into that holy of holies and offer sacrificial blood upon the altar or upon the mercy seat.

But the people could not follow him. They were not allowed to go with him in there. But this great high priest that we have who is that anchor for our soul Christ Jesus enters into that holy of holies not as our representative but as our forerunner and therefore he bids us to come within that place with himself.

[38 : 59] He is a high priest forever. unending duration of his priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

So as a result we have strong consolation strong as an indwelling strength embodied or put forth and it stands strong against any obstacle or resistance like a strong army or fortress.

So he speaks about the idea that the encouragement that God gives us in his promises and God's oath that solidifies that promise is a strong army or fortress against doubt and discouragement to us that have fled to him for refuge.

that's what God has provided for you and for me. Now our great high priest unchangeable not a turncoat I am Jehovah I change not.

likewise the salvation that he provides is based upon that anchor that has entered into the holy of holies for us and invites us to come and the salvation that he provides in that is just as unchangeable as he is in himself.

[40:48] but likewise his expectations remain the same and his promises are everlasting. You realize with me if you will back in the first verse of chapter 3 of Malachi he said behold I will send my messenger many equate that to be John the Baptist he shall prepare the way before me and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to his temple even the messenger of the covenant whom you delight in they tell us that that little phrase right there the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come never quoted in the New Testament and the picture being is that it is yet to be fulfilled you see he's coming and will stand before him this one who is never changing this one whose promises are always secure will come so thus it's our duty it's our obligation to live accordingly as

God has determined his people were to live he rebuked the people of Israel because of their sin but aren't you glad for his mercy and his loving kindness and he shows that to us through Christ Jesus folks our obligation is to live a life that's holy and righteous not just before him but before an unsaved world because we're saved and purchased by the unchanging God who loves us and gave his son for us oh that we attach ourselves to that now if there's anybody here today they've never trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior those promises can hold true for you because he's made that possible through the death of his son those unchanging promises by an unchanging God I encourage you to place your faith and trust in Christ Jesus for those that know that you have been saved by the grace of God and there's no question in your heart and mind about that I want to simply encourage you to latch further on to those truths so that your relationship to God can become even more intimate that it is right now you see there's never a stopping place in our growth with God in its intimacy to know God more to seek him out diligently to know him and to be able to fully as fully as we can in this life experience the joy that comes in that relationship Thank you.