

# Jesus Changes Everything

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, both last week and this week, we are spending a bit of time looking at the wonderful words of Hebrews 13 verse 8. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

And we're looking at these words conscious that life is full of changes. So boys and girls, you're all in new classes at school. The seasons around us are changing. And even in the last two weeks, nations of the world like Afghanistan and Haiti have changed dramatically.

And we change as well. And at the very least, we are all a week older this week than we were the last time that we took, we were together. Although saying that yesterday, I was putting a roof on a barn in back. I feel like I'm 10 years older this week than I was last week.

But I think you know what I mean. Change is a huge part of life. It can be wonderful. It can be awful. It cannot be avoided. And in relation to that, we're thinking about two things that arise from this verse. Last week, we said that Jesus isn't changing.

And so in terms of who Jesus is as the Son of God and our fellow human, in terms of what he's achieved in his death and resurrection, and in terms of what he's now doing as our great High Priest, Jesus isn't changing. And I hope that for those of you who were here last week, I hope those words have given you comfort and security over the past seven days.

[ 1 : 56 ] This week, we're going to look at the second big thing that we want to say. Jesus changes everything. Now in all of our houses, there are two main types of glass that we will look through, I think, on a daily basis. One is a window. And as you go and look out the window, you can see far and wide. The other type of glass, though, is a mirror. And when you look into that, you see yourself. And these two types of glass that I'm sure we all look at every single day, these are an illustration of what I want to do in our sermon today.

I want briefly to look out the window and to see some of the big ways in which Jesus changes everything. But even more so, I want us to look in the mirror. Because when we say that Jesus changes everything, that means that he changes us as well. So first of all, out of the window, Jesus changes everything. And as we survey that view, I just want to show you four things. Number one, Jesus has changed the Old Testament religious system.

That was the key issue for these Hebrews to whom this letter was written. They were Jews who had become Christians. That meant that they had left behind much of their previous religious life as Jews. And as we were saying last week, that had now led to opposition.

And because of that opposition, they were tempted to go back to their old religion. But to do so would have been a massive mistake because what Jesus has done has made such a massive difference. He came not to completely abandon everything that the Old Testament said, but to fulfill all that it was pointing towards. So the Old Testament had many, many sacrifices and they were never enough. In Jesus, you have a once for all, perfect, satisfaction for sin through Jesus' death on the cross. The Old Testament was full of restrictions, full of requirements, circumcision, food laws, ceremonial purity. In Jesus, there is wonderful freedom. In the Old Testament, humanity was divided between Jew and Gentile.

In Jesus, all the families of the earth are being blessed. There is now a new humanity. United has won in him. So through Jesus, the shadow of the Old Testament is now being fulfilled.

[ 4 : 57 ] The old has gone. The new has come. And there's now full forgiveness, freedom and unity. And Hebrews speaks about this. You can see it in chapter 10, verse 19, where he says, brothers, we've got confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he has opened up for us. What Jesus has done is new. But it's not just for the Old Testament Jews that things have changed. The second thing I want to say is that when we say Jesus changes everything, Jesus has changed the whole of history. So from the fall of humanity through to the coming of Jesus, the creation has been in slavery and bondage. Satan causing havoc as the ruler

of this world. When Jesus comes, everything changes. Satan is defeated. The kingdom of evil is conquered. Death is swallowed up in victory. And Hebrews speaks about this in chapter 2, speaking about Jesus coming and doing so through his death, he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

History changed forever when Jesus came, lived, died and rose again. And because of that, the third thing I want to show you is that Jesus is changing the whole universe. So Jesus's goal is not just to create a nice wee society called the church. Jesus's goal is to restore the whole of creation. So when you look out the window, everything you see is part of what Jesus has come to restore in him, the whole universe, which was broken by sin is now being put back together. That restoration work began at Jesus's resurrection. It will be completed on the day when he comes again. And when he does so, he will establish a new heavens and a new earth that will never be broken again. And again, Hebrews speaks of this in chapter 12, speaking about the future that at the time his voice shook the earth, but now he's promised, yet once more I'll shake not only the earth, but also the heavens.

This phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken, that is the things that have been made in order that things that cannot be shaken may remain. And all of this means that for everyone who trusts in Jesus and follows him, Jesus has changed dying. Death is the great constant of humanity. It's the one thing that lies ahead of every one of us. A guarantee that we all face and that we all dread. Jesus changes it because if you trust in Jesus, death becomes the doorway to paradise. I want you to imagine that your house is high enough on a hill so that you can see the whole of Carl away out of your window. And so you're looking at the window, you can see everything. Where is the one location that has been transformed the most by Jesus? You can see everything. Where's the one location that's been transformed the most by him? Is it this church building? Is it the maps?

No. It's the cemetery at Dalmore. Jesus transforms dying for all he trusts in him. And the crucial point in all of this is that Christianity is a waste of time if it doesn't make a massive difference. We are not following Jesus and proclaiming Jesus in order to make a wee difference in your life. We are proclaiming him because he changes everything. Jesus is not some lifestyle guru. He's not an influencer. He's not a convenient crutch for the week and he's not someone who just gives us a ticket to heaven. He is Lord and King of everything.

He's the one in whom the whole universe finally makes sense. He's the one who's changing everything. And that makes perfect sense because it's no surprise that the single most influential figure in the whole of human history is who? It's Jesus. And he's the same yesterday, today and forever. So if we go and look out the window and survey the whole of the Bible, the whole of history, the whole of creation, Jesus changes everything. But the thing I want us to really focus on is what we see when we look in the mirror. If Jesus changes everything, that means he is also changing us. These great words that we have in Hebrews 13, 8 are very easy to take in isolation. So they're a great example of what you could call a fridge magnet verse.

[11:02] Sometimes you get fridge magnets with verses on them or plaques or whatever. And that's a great thing. It's a lovely verse to have on your fridge or to have on your wall or whatever it may be. But when we do that, and we just kind of grab a verse and stick it on a plaque, it means that we kind of forget what sits either side of that verse. And we have to be very careful about that because it's always incredibly important to remember the context around a verse, what comes before it, what comes after it. And the astonishing thing we discover that when we look at Hebrews 13 in a little bit more detail, we see that this verse has been placed right in the middle of a list of practical, ethical instructions regarding how Christians live. And that is telling us that these great words, that Jesus is the same yesterday and together, yesterday, today and forever, we need to remember them not just in terms of our theology. We need to remember them in terms of our behavior.

So I want to look at that in a wee bit more detail. The key point is that if Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, if Jesus has changed history and brought us into a relationship with God, if Jesus has transformed our lives and our futures, then that has got to have an effect on the way you and I live our lives this week. And we can see that in the practical instructions of this chapter, and I want us just to go through that together.

Starting at verses one to three, here we see the fact that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, changes how we treat one another. So Jesus has offered a once for all sacrifice for sin. In doing that, he is restoring our vertical relationship towards God, but he's also restored a horizontal relationship between us all as believers. He's brought us into a family of brothers and sisters, which is why brotherly love must continue, as you can see in verse one. So as we think about Jesus exalted at the right hand of God, interceding for us, we mustn't think, we mustn't just think, wow, that brings me into an unbreakable relationship with God as amazing as that is. At the same time, we must remember that that brings us into an unbreakable relationship with one another and with every other Christian on earth and in heaven. That's why our love for one another, our friendship in the Gospel and our unity as believers is so crucial. And this is a massive issue for the Christian church in the West, because we've all been infected with the spirit of our age by the fact that ever since the Second World War, the West has been dominated by individualism.

And it's everywhere. The church is no exception. And that's why our emphasis can fall maybe even too much on our personal, private relationship with God. That's why people will fight for our own preferences in church. That's why we can come focusing more on what we get, rather than on what we offer. And that's why division is rampant in the Christian church.

And we have it ourselves in our community where for a hundred years we've had the awful reality of two Christian churches worshipping separately. If Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever, then there's never a single moment when we're not united to him and when we are not united to one another. And our behaviour must reflect that. That's why hospitality is so important. You can see it in verse 2, even towards people you don't know. So this week, Hebrews 13 verse 2 is telling you to invite someone to dinner.

[ 15 : 35 ] Go for it. And that's why it's so important that we don't forget the prisoners and those who are mistreated. Now of course in our nation we're so blessed that we have freedom to worship Jesus without government oppression. But we know that for so many that's not the reality.

We'll hear more about that on Thursday at our prayer meeting. But even here you can be mistreated for your faith, even though we're not going to be imprisoned. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then we are one body yesterday, today and forever.

That's why it's so important to pray for one another, to text one another with words of encouragement, to come alongside one another and be together. Jesus isn't changing, but that reality must change the way we behave and treat one another. Verses 4 to 6, this is an example of one of the many times where the Bible is so brilliantly relevant. Because in these verses the writer tackles two of the most powerful influences on society in 21st century Scotland. What are they? Sex and money. TV, movies, newspapers, books, internet, I don't need to tell you that they are saturated with an obsession with sex and it seems to be coming more and more extreme. That's caused huge problems in the world today.

We've had the last few years the Me Too movement highlighting the awful way in which men have abused their power for sexual pleasure. There's a huge trial in America just now for R. Kelly, accused of doing exactly that in over many, many years. Even the awful events in Plymouth a couple of weeks ago, there were early reports that the gunman had been involved in what's called the incel movement, which is where men plot violence against women because they're so angry that they can't get any women to sleep with them. The fact that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever means that as Christians our attitude to sex has got to be different from the world around us. That doesn't mean that we've got to become all awkward or frigid or celibate. What it means is that in a world obsessed with passion, pleasure, parties and pornography, we are to be obsessed with purity. That's why for

Christians marriage is to be held in honour. That's why the intimacy of a sexual union is always to be enjoyed within the security of a lifelong commitment between husband and wife. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then every part of life, even the most private and the most intimate, they need to be done the way he created them to be. And it's the same with money. The world around us is obsessed with it. We want better pay, better pensions, lower taxes, cheaper prices. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, all of that changes. Because in him we have everything that we really need.

[ 19 : 16 ] In him we have a peace and joy that money could never buy. And we have security that no amount of possessions can give. We have a hope that is more precious than words can describe. And that is why we can be content with what we have, as verse 5 says. If Jesus is the

same yesterday, today and forever, it doesn't actually matter if my bank balance goes up or down. And God forbid that in the week ahead we worry more about possessions than we do about people. Or that we care more about money than we do about mission. Going to verse 7, it's the same for leadership. So often today, leadership is about exercising power, getting people to do what we say. And anybody here who has or has had a harsh boss knows exactly what that is like. For Christians, it's different. Leadership is about setting an example that others are to follow. And of course the greatest model of that was Jesus himself. He washed the disciples' feet. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death and the cross. He did not come to be served, but to serve. And if he's the same yesterday, today and forever, then he's still the model that we are to follow if we want to know what real leadership looks like.

Verse 9 speaks about truth. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then we must hold fast to what he has said and not be led astray. And our understanding of the world around us needs to keep changing until it's the same as his. Verse 10 to 13 speaks about suffering. So often we think that suffering is something to be avoided at all costs. Jesus changes that as well, just as he endured suffering, so we are to be ready to endure it as well.

And then in verse 14 we see that Jesus changes our perspective. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then that's got to change our perspective on our lives. If he's exalted at God's right hand, if he's our high priest forever, then it means that we have got to live today and this week in light of eternity. And so often we spend our time and our energy seeking stuff now. We want stuff now and we put huge amounts of effort into making everything perfect now, whether it's our grades at school or our job or our house or our children or our reputation or our achievement. So often I put my energy into stuff now when all the time what really matters is the city that is to come. As Christians, our perspective has got to be different. Because if Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, then we've got a lot more to live for than houses or cars or football results or Facebook likes or whatever it is, it may be. And all of this together raises a final point that I think is really important. All of this is telling us that Jesus changes, change. Jesus changes, change. Now what do

I mean by that? Well, when I was young, I was very afraid of change. I hated things changing. So for example, our car, I didn't ever want to change our car. We had a Volkswagen campervan, not the really old cool ones, but a B-Redge 1982 or 83 one, a cream colored boxy thing. I never wanted us to change our car. I once had a nightmare that my father was painting it blue and I was terrified of it changing. Now my parents were amazing and they really helped me through this because whatever it was, I was scared of change. I hated things changing and my parents were amazing because they helped me to see that change was okay. But the reason I was scared of change was because I attached my sense of happiness and security to the stuff around me, whether that was the way my room was decorated or the color of our car, the color of our sofa. In fact, another one I'd forgotten I'd done this. My parents got our sofa recovered. So it had been cream and they got a new one.

They got it recovered and it was blue and it had really kind of intricate tassels around the edge. It must have cost a fortune to get a sofa recovered. When I saw it, I hated it and I went and got scissors and started cutting the tassels off the bottom. I can't believe I did that now. I'm really quite ashamed of that. Anyway, I did that. That's because I hated change. And as I said, that was an insecurity that my parents helped me overcome.

[ 24 : 49 ] But we can all be like that in terms of our homes, in terms of our possessions, in terms of our routines. Maybe the litmus test of this issue is, are you bothered about what you do on Christmas Day? Because many, many people are. And often we can be like that in terms of church too. We can be quick to think that any change in any part of life is going to be bad and that fear can come from our sense of insecurity. And I'm the leader of that cult. I've been guilty of that so many times. What I want to say is this.

Insecurity can make us afraid of change. If Hebrews 13.8 tells you anything, it's telling you that if you are a Christian or if you become one, then you are totally and utterly secure. Because Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. That is the great unchangeable of Christianity. And that is where we must all go for our security. And it means that if change comes in life, in our health, in our community, in the colour of your car or your sofa or even in church, we do not need to be afraid. Our security lies in him. So for us as Christians, Jesus isn't changing. And Jesus changes everything. If you look out the window, he's changing the world for the better. If you look in the

mirror, he's changing you for the better too. And for anyone who's maybe not yet a Christian or not sure, this is what Jesus is offering you. He's the unchanging Savior who will change your life and change your eternity. And I cannot even begin to describe what an amazing difference that's made to my life. And I know that every single Christian in here would stand up beside me and say, me too. Jesus has made a difference that I cannot even begin to describe. So if anyone's maybe not yet a Christian, you just need to follow him too and find out for yourself.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you never change. And we thank you that you are changing everything. We bow before you as the one who is the same yesterday, today and forever. And we thank you so much that that's through. Amen.