

September 9, 2018
There is nothing permanent, except GOD
Psalm 145

Great is the Lord

2500 years ago, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote, "*There is nothing permanent except **change**.*" Everything changes. As we begin a new school year and move in the Fall, we can't escape the reality of changing seasons. People change. Technology changes. Communities change. The weather changes. Even the landscape changes and the stars change (slowly in most cases, but they do change). Sometimes people try to build things that will not change – the pyramids or the new LDS temple in Edmonton (built with calcium-free cement so it's supposed to last two thousand years) – but they too will eventually succumb to change. Here is my intellectual challenge for the week for you – think of something in the world that never ever changes.

But generation after generation, one thing does not change – there is really nothing permanent except **our God**. Psalm 145 reminds us that the great God beyond time and space, the God whom we know and worship, does not change!

*"I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.
One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty –
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.
They tell of the power of your awesome works –
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness."
(Psalm 145:1-7)*

- The same God that was present in power, and creativity, and design throughout creation is the same God who is active in our world today.
- The same God who desired an intimate personal relationship with Adam and Eve, is the same God who desires an intimate relationship with us, today.
- The same God who urged Adam and Eve to live in keeping with His commands, is the same God who urges us to live in keeping with His commands.
- The same God who was hurt by Adam and Eve's sin is the same God who is hurt by our sin.
- The same God who reached out in love to sinful people in the past is the same God who reaches out to sinful people today, offering them the same free gift of grace, forgiveness, and new life that He did back then!

With God we can look back to the “good old days” knowing that God hasn’t changed! The things that God did back then, God is still doing now! These still are the “good old days” (or “good new days”!). Over the course of this year many of us will be reading regularly from the Bible. It will be tempting to say, “Well that was then, but this now,” but with God, “then” is still “now”!

- It is tempting to say, *“God took Adam and Eve’s sin seriously, but that was then, this is now.”* No – God still takes sin seriously!
- It will be tempting to say, *“The whole story of God’s miraculous help and care for Noah and his family was then, but this now; God doesn’t miraculously care for people anymore.”* No – God does still miraculously care for people!
- It is tempting to read the story of David and read about his faith as he faced Goliath, and think, “That was fine for David – God was different back then.” But God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!
- It’s tempting to read Jesus’ teachings and say, *“That was great for the 1st Century, but times are different now.”* No – Jesus’ teaching still rings true.
- It’s tempting to believe Jesus death and resurrection meant something 2000 years ago but aren’t relevant anymore. No – the good news is that God still loves, still calls us to repent, still forgives sin, and still blesses those who come to Him in faith with new life.

The God who was is the God who is and the God who ever will be! God is still doing wonderful works, still doing awesome and great deeds, is still abundantly good and righteous. While everything else is changing around us, our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Our God loves us

*“The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.
The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.”
(Psalm 145:8-9)*

God’s love is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We read about it through the entire Bible. Time and time again the people of God turned their backs on the Lord, and time and time again God kept reaching out to them in love. Many of us can relate to the people in Scripture: there have been times in our lives when we turned our backs on God – when we deserved God’s wrath – yet He showed mercy and love. The God of the ancient past is the God of our past and the God of the present, and the God of the future!

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The ultimate expression of God’s love is that He comes among us, as Jesus. He lives with us. He teaches us. He heals us. Ultimately, on the cross He dies for us so that we might live.

On the cross, Jesus paid the price for all sin and evil so that we might be forgiven and our relationship with God might be restored.

"At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly ... God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8).

Our God still cares for us

*"The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.
You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing."*
(Psalm 145:14-16).

The story of Jesus' life is the story of lifting up those bent beneath loads of physical pain and emotional grief. It's the story of providing food for those who need it. It's the story of providing health and healing. It's the story of giving people back their dignity. It's the story of helping people rediscover community. Most of all it is the story of giving spiritual food and drink to those who hungered and thirsted for meaning and passion in their lives. It's the story of providing forgiveness and mercy. It's the story of reestablishing our relationship with God, our loving heavenly Father.

Does God still do that? Yes! We know people who have been healed physically and emotionally by God (No, God in His sovereign will does not heal everyone, why not is a deep question! But He does undoubtedly still heal some!). We know people who have had physical needs – whether it be for food, shelter, transportation, etc. – whose needs have been miraculously met. We know people (maybe ourselves) who were hungering and thirsting for something that brought meaning, passion, and purpose to our lives, and we found God!

The God of the past is the God of the present and the future! He meets us in our struggles and stresses, in our joys and griefs, in our celebrations and sorrows. As our loving, heavenly Father, He carries us through the good times and the hard times.

Our God is with us

*"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.
He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
The Lord watches over all who love him ..."*
(Psalm 145:18-20).

This Psalm is written by David. If anyone knew about trouble it was David! Yet in the midst of all his difficulties, David was nurtured and grew as a person of God. His

psalms – his prayers – show a deep, passionate faith, even in the midst of intense stress and overwhelming challenges.

Have you experienced God's presence in the tough times? I hope you have! Tell the story! Maybe you haven't. My encouragement is to seek God, even in the difficult times, for you will find Him. God is often most easily found in the stables of life. When we have nowhere else to turn but to God, there we often find him closest of all. That's the story of the Bible. The people who have been through the deepest waters have developed the deepest faith, because they found God in the depths. And the God of the past is the God of the present and of the future.

Are things changing? Yes, definitely! Are the changes good or bad? Probably a bit of both. Are the changes something to be worried about? Definitely? Possibly? No! *"He will keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."*(1 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Benediction

There is nothing permanent except change – and our loving, merciful, gracious God.

"Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom"(Psalm 145:4). The God of the past is the God of the present and of the future! This new season, may we go forward in confidence knowing the God of the past is the God of our present, and the God of our future! And may we tell the story!

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