Verses: Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8 Occasion: Worship

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Lake Mary November 13, 2020 Pastor: Joe Raymond

**Song**

O what a wonderful, wonderful day
Day I will never forget
After I'd wandered in darkness away
Jesus my Saviour I met
O what a tender, compassionate friend
He met the need of my heart
Shadows dispelling, with joy I am telling
He made all the darkness depart

Heaven came down and glory filled my soul (filled my soul)
When at the cross my Saviour made me whole (made me whole)
My sins were washed away
And my night was turned to day
Heaven came down and glory filled my soul

**New Normal But Same God**

Scripture readings**: Malachi 3:6 and Hebrews 13:8**

**Malachi 3:6**

6 **For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished.**

**Hebrews 13:8**

8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

**This is the word of the Lord! Thanks be to God.**

**Let us pray**

 Heavenly Father, please quiet our minds and open our hearts

to Your truth, and please

**…let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
   O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.**

**Amen**

**Sermon**

1894 Rev. J.F. Sundell and other believers started First Presbyterian Church of Lake Mary, my grandparents were not born yet.

55 years ago on November 1965 Bro. Zonicle, Bro. Brown, Bro. Wood, Bro. Jean Elion Raymond (my father) founded Bahama Island Baptist Association, I was not born yet.

1984.

That was 36 years ago.

1984 was when my father Jean Elion Raymond first introduced me to BIBA youth night! (What is BIBA?- explain)

In my mind, in some ways that seems like yesterday, yet during that time, so much has changed!

For example: I used to be tall dark and handsome, but I was not what I would call very wise! I was born in the Bahamas, grew up in Haiti. I had no children.

Now, well….I am still dark.

I make much better decisions, …. and I have children!

Some of the changes have been good, and some, not so good.

(Having children of course is very good!!)

I remember I had things planned out. I was going to own a yacht and cruise around the beautiful deep blue ocean in the Bahamas. I was going to be a doctor.

As it turned out, I have vertigo when I am on the water (no fun!), and I cannot tolerate being around blood!

Actually, none of those plans turned out the way I expected!

Is it the same for you?

We put together exactly how we think something should go (Plan A) and something always seems to go sideways, and we have to change quickly to plan B, or C, or D…Think about it, has your plan A ever gone exactly the way you planned?

After years of adjusting to changing plans, we come to reluctantly agree with the old saying,

 “There is nothing so constant as change! Change is normal!”

Some of the changes we will like!

For example, I never intended to be a preacher!

No, that was God’s plan, not mine, but I have happily adjusted.

Some of the changes we do not like!

Yet, good or bad, we have to keep going and adjust to the “new normal”-whatever that might be.

Coping with all the changes might lead us to the conclusion that EVERYTHING changes! If we have been upset with recent changes, we might feel anxious and fearful about it and say, “Nothing ever goes the way I want, so, maybe I should give up trying!”

Well, I am here today to let you know that there is something-or rather, SOMEONE who never, ever changes.

**God never changes**! It is the message of the Old Testament and of the New Testament!

From the Old Testament we read,

**Malachi 3:6**

6 **For I the Lord do not change**

In the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews has the same message, but he states it differently.

**Hebrews 13:8**

8 **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

What do we mean when we say God does not change?

We mean He is as He has always been and will always be the way He is.

Why should that matter to us?

Friends, stop and think about that.

It matters because, this means that every word we read in this Bible that tells us about God has always been true, is true now, and will always be true!

I hope you spend much time reading your Bible! We can come to know more of God through the experiences of Moses, David, the apostles, and all the other writers!

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible displays that God does not change.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

[Revelation 22:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+22%3A13&version=ESV)

13 **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**

We could go on for days and days talking about all the ways God is, has always been, and will always be the same, but we will just look at 3 ways this morning.

1st God made this world, and He remains in complete control

2ndHe will return, and He has given us work to do while we wait.

3rd He loves His children and provides all we need to do His will.

Let us look at the first of these:

God made this world, and He remains in complete control.

Hear what the psalmists wrote:

# Psalm 102:25

**25 Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,
    and the heavens are the work of your hands.**

Psalm 22:28

**28 For dominion belongs to the Lord,**

 **and he rules over the nations.**

Psalm 50

**For every wild animal of the forest is mine,
    the cattle on a thousand hills.**11 **I know all the birds of the air,
    and all that moves in the field is mine.**

12**…for the world and all that is in it is mine.**

(Expound) He made the world, He sustains the world…..He knows everything, all the time…

Let us turn to our second point:

2nd He will return, and He has given us work to do while we wait.

This truth is best displayed in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. I will paraphrase the parable, but it is your homework to study it.

It is important to know that all of Jesus’s parables were about the Kingdom of Heaven. As you read any parable, look for Jesus’s message about the Kingdom of Heaven in it.

Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man, going on a journey, who entrusted his property to his slaves. He did not give to each equally, but rather what he knew was within their ability to handle. He was gone for a long time. When he returned, he wanted to know what the servants had done with his resources. Two of the servants had eagerly used the provided resources to multiply the return for their master. Both were commended as good and faithful. But the third had wasted his opportunity to serve by burying his resource.

Friends, just as this master expected his servants to use the resources he gave them while he was gone, God expects us to use what He has given us as resources to the benefit of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is what God has expected of His children from the beginning of time.

This is not only speaking of material resources, but all we possess.

We must come to understand and believe that all our physical abilities, all our intellectual abilities, all our time and money belong to Him.

(examples here)

1 Corinthians 4:7 asks the question,

7 **What do you have that you did not receive?**

God expects us to be stewards-CARETAKERS of what we have received! We must pray and follow His leading as He shows us whom we need to serve with the resources He has provided.

This means we must be watching for all opportunities God brings to us. Has He provided the means for you to get an education, so you can provide for others with your work? Be diligent at this effort!

Has he provided you with……..( more ideas?)

You may say, “I cannot do this. I am weak, and afraid.

This brings us to our 3rd point:

Our Heavenly Father loves His children and provides all we need to do His will.

Friends, remember Paul’s encouraging words in Philippians 13:4,

**I can do all things through him who strengthens me.**

No, this life of serving our Lord is not easy. The Bible teaches us that we will experience hardship because, as children of God, we have crafty enemies-Satan and his demon helpers!

They work hard against God’s will as it is stated in John 3:16-17 **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.**17 **“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**

So, to serve Him in His will, He not only gives us resources, but He also gives us Himself to strengthen and protect us.

Listen to King David’s words.

Psalm 18:2

**2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,**

Psalm 27:1

**The Lord is my light and my salvation;**

**whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;**

**of whom shall I be afraid?**

Yes, we have strong enemies, but we are not to fear!

We can stand firm, wearing God’s spiritual armor.

* Belt of truth
* Breastplate of righteousness
* Gospel of peace shoes
* Helmet of salvation
* Shield of faith
* Sword of the spirit-His WORD

Maybe you have heard somewhere that, “God never gives us more than we can handle.” This is only partly true. What the Bible teaches is that He will not give us more than we can handle WITH HIM! This truth enables us to trust Him and depend on Him. We must stay in constant prayer for ourselves and each other.

Friends, in our lives on this earth, change is normal and sometimes very difficult, but we can be strengthened by knowing our Heavenly Father will never change.

* He remains always in control.
* He remains always faithful to provide resources as we work and wait for His promised return.
* He always will love and care for his children.

I leave you with one final verse that encompasses all.

I encourage you to memorize it.

Romans 8:38-39 **For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Friends,this is truly good news that needs to be shared with a world in turmoil! Please remember, this good news came to you on its way out to someone else, using YOU as a messenger.

To those of you who do not yet know our God who never changes, I urge you, please call or come see me as soon as possible, so we can have that life and death conversation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

We join our voices to your servant David’s, as he prayed to you so many years ago. We thank you that these words are still gloriously true.

Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name.

Amen

And now:

Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:23-24

**Go in peace.**