

# Morning sermon: 2nd January

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever  
(Hebrews 13:8)

New Year's Resolutions come out of a worthy aim to progress rather than to stagnate: we want to be different, better people. As Christians we are not taken in by the world's superficial idea of a "new you", achieved by diets or mindfulness, but we still need to change. There is one person who doesn't need to change - Jesus Christ. As we look back over the last year, we can see that He has been with us, and be thankful for the many ways He has helped us. For example, we have been able to stay open for worship throughout most of the pandemic, and the roof and pointing work has been completed.

## **We are not alone**

Jesus is a real Person, really present with us. Prayer is real: He hears as we express our adoration, hopes, desires, frustrations and disappointments. The world without God has no hope. People in the world have no lasting answer to their loneliness, guilt and fear of death. Investing in new plans to hope in is worthwhile, but not sufficient. With God, though, life makes sense, even though we can't explain everything. Christmas may be over, but its truths are still there.

## **Is this the same?**

Some people are disappointed that Christ is always the same. Just like the Athenians of Paul's day, they are always looking for novelty. Too often the novelties are just old heresies dressed in new clothes. But the Jesus who is the same still holds to the same ethics (eg in sexual morality and forsaking covetousness (Hebrews 13:1-5)), and offers the same reward, Heaven. Hell is also the same. Jesus brings stability - he is not tossed around by "various and strange doctrines"(Hebrews 13:9). He is everything to His disciples, in the past, present and future.

## **Because He is the same, we shouldn't be**

He wants us to change and grow, and to achieve this He will issue us with challenges, and rebuke us for our sin. Through these experiences we should become more self aware and self critical, which should lead us to repentance. Some of our aims and goals will need adjusting.

Tragically, it is possible for believers, including church leaders, to grow older without growing wiser.

There is always more assurance to be had, as we rely on Jesus' continuing love, not on our works. We can never lose our inheritance in Christ. Even in Heaven we will still be changing, from one degree of glory to another.

So as we embark on this New Year, let us travel in hope because of the unchanging Jesus, and seek to bring Him glory in 2022.