

HANDLING CHANGE
MALACHI 3:6

Introduction

There are many things that are **CHANGING** rapidly all around us. We are living in an **ever-changing** world – and as the years go by, the rate at which **CHANGES** occur seem to be faster and faster!

Practically every phase of life **CHANGES**. Travel has **CHANGED** – from the horse and buggy in our grandparents or great-grandparents time to all the many different modes of travel today (automobile and airplanes).

I grew up in the days of the early space programs of Mercury, Gemini, Apollo and then the Space Shuttle programs came along after that. Every time someone went into space in those days it was a big event. Today, we hardly even take notice anymore when another rocket ascends and sends someone or something into space.

The entire **medical field** has **CHANGED** – things that were once impossible are now routine (e.g. Organ transplants)! What used to take weeks or months in a hospital to heal is now often done on an outpatient basis and the recovery time is sometimes just a matter of a few days at home.

Communications have **CHANGED**. There was a time when if you wanted to communicate with someone on the other side of the world, it would take months to do so. Now we can punch a series of buttons on a phone and talk with them in a matter of minutes or even seconds. Not only that, but we can talk with them and see them on a device we hold in our lap or in our hand!

Kids seem to handle **CHANGE** better than most of us adults do. In fact the older we get, the harder it is for us to deal with **CHANGE**.

Many folks like a nice, comfortable rut and don't like **CHANGE** of any kind. But **CHANGE** still happens and sometimes there are **CHANGES** that happen that we don't like or have a difficult time dealing with.

How is it that we can handle **CHANGE** in our lives?

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I. **HANG ON TO THE THINGS THAT DO NOT CHANGE!**

I am thankful that in our world of constant **CHANGE** there are some things that **NEVER CHANGE**. Read with me *Malachi 3:6*.

GOD was referring to **HIS** own qualities of **PATIENCE**, **LONGSUFFERING** and **MERCY** when **HE** said, *“I am the LORD, I change not...”*

The word **“LORD”** in our text is the Hebrew word **“YAWEH”** or **“JEHOVAH.”** **“JEHOVAH”** means that **HE** is the **ETERNAL**, **SELF-EXISTENT**, **SELF-SUFFICIENT GOD WHO** created everything and sustains it all.

HE never had a beginning and will never have an ending. **GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN, ALWAYS IS and ALWAYS WILL BE!**

If you understand all that then you can explain it to me sometime! **GOD** is **MORE AWESOME** and **INFINITELY MORE COMPLEX** than we can even begin to understand in this life.

HE transcends **all time, all space, all knowledge, and every other dimension you can come up with.**

Psalm 102:25-27–“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.”

GOD existed before the heavens and earth were made, and **HE** will exist long after they have been destroyed. **GOD** causes the universe to **CHANGE**, but in contrast to this **CHANGE HE IS EVER THE SAME!**

JAMES said that our **GOD** is the **“. . .Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”** (*James 1:17*)

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The writer of **HEBREWS** said that **JESUS CHRIST** is “. . .*the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*” (*Hebrews 13:8*)

Listen, **GOD IS UNCHANGING – HE is UNCHANGING in HIS BEING, in HIS PERFECTIONS, and in HIS PURPOSES!** **GOD** is the great “**I AM.**” **HE IS ETERNALLY PERFECT** in every way, and **HIS PURPOSES WILL STAND FOREVER!** **GOD** has **NEVER CHANGED** and **HE IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE!**

II. GOD IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE HIS LOVE TOWARD MANKIND!

GOD LOVES MANKIND and created him to have a relationship with **HIM**. **HE LOVED ADAM** and **EVE** in the garden before they sinned, and **HE LOVED** them after sin entered the picture.

How do I know **GOD LOVES MANKIND?**— **GOD’S WORD!**
1 John 4:9-10— In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

GOD LOVED MANKIND enough to send **HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON** into this world to live and die for him.

Romans 5:8—“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

We all ought to be thankful today that **GOD DOESN’T CHANGE HIS LOVE TOWARD US!** **HE LOVES** us just as much today as **HE** has ever **LOVED** us and no matter what we do we won’t change that. We can’t do anything to make **GOD LOVE US** any **MORE** or any **LESS** than **HE** already does!

Some folks have wrecked their lives with **SIN** and **SHAME**. They’ve thrown away many opportunities. They’ve kicked against the pricks of **GOD’S GRACE** and **MERCY** in **CHRIST JESUS**.

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They’ve kept their back turned against **GOD**, and yet **HE** stands there with **OPEN ARMS** waiting to receive them to **HIMSELF!** Why? Because **HE LOVES THEM!**

I’m thankful that when I was lost **GOD** saw through my stupidity and kept me safe. I’m thankful that when I didn’t know what to do with my life **GOD** was making and molding me into the man I am today for **HIS PURPOSES!**

I am thankful that even today when **we mess up**, when **our pride gets in the way**, when **our impatience gets in the way**, when **we don’t LOVE** like we ought to, when **we’re not as FAITHFUL** to **HIM** as we ought to be, even when **we neglect His Word and prayer... that through it all God loves us still!**

How can **GOD LOVE** us through all of that? How can **GOD** continue to **LOVE** mankind when mankind treats **GOD** with such contempt? **HE** can **LOVE** us this way because **HE DOES NOT CHANGE – HIS LOVE AND MERCY ENDURES FOREVER!**

GOD IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE HIS LOVE TOWARD MANKIND...

III. GOD IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE HIS STANCE ON SIN!

Now as much as people and times **CHANGE**, **GOD** doesn’t **CHANGE** how **HE** stands when it comes to **SIN**. When **ADAM** and **EVE SINNED** in the garden, **GOD WAS OFFENDED!**

Sometimes folks look at that incident and think to themselves, “*What’s the big deal? He ate a piece of fruit?*” But it was a big deal, and why? Simply because **GOD TOLD ADAM NOT TO DO IT!** Listen, the difference between **GOD** being the **LORD OF YOUR LIFE** and you being the lord of your life is **OBEDIENCE!**

If **GOD’S CHIEF PURPOSE** is to **GLORIFY HIMSELF**, then we can rightly reason that our chief purpose is to glorify **HIM** too.

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Revelation 4:11– “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

If you never learn anything else from me, I hope that you learn that your sole purpose for being on this earth is to **PLEASE GOD** by **BRINGING HONOR** and **GLORY TO HIM!** But **SIN** doesn't do any of that! **SIN** is **OFFENSIVE TO GOD**, it **REPULSES HIM**, it is **LOATHSOME TO HIM!**

Now this world and even some in this room might call **SIN** by some other name but **SIN IS SIN!** What was **SIN** in **JESUS' DAY** is still **SIN** today. You might change the label on poison but it remains the same. Poison is poison and **SIN IS SIN**, no matter what one calls it!

- One might call it an alternative lifestyle, but the Bible calls it sodomy and an abomination to God.
- One might call it cohabitation, or experimentation, or love, but the Bible calls it fornication and it is sin.
- One might say they can't help the way they feel about someone when they harbor resentment or bitterness or hatred, but the Bible says we are sinning and being unmerciful, unloving, impatient, or hateful.

We make some of the sorriest excuses for our sin as though we've got to convince people that what we're doing is alright, and most of the time I think what we're doing is trying to convince ourselves, but listen, **GOD** has **NEVER CHANGED HIS STANCE ON SIN** and **HE'S** not going to.

The **CAUSE OF SIN** has **NEVER CHANGED!** From **CAIN** and **ABLE** until today, everyone born from **ADAM** has an inherited **SIN NATURE**. We didn't **BECOME SINNERS**; We all were **BORN SINNERS!** We were **BORN WITH A SIN NATURE** that we inherited from **ADAM**, and the only one who can do anything about that **SIN NATURE** is the **SECOND ADAM—JESUS CHRIST!**

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Romans 5:12– “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Because of one man's disobedience we all were made **SINNERS**. We may not like that, we may not agree with how that works, but we don't have to like it – we don't have to agree with it, that's just the way it is, and the very fact that mankind doesn't agree with the way things are is further evidence that they are **SINNERS**. We don't like to admit something is wrong with us. We don't like to admit when we are wrong. But the **BIBLE** says that “*all have sinned.*”

Just as the **CAUSE OF SIN** has never **CHANGED**, so also the **RESULTS OF SIN** has **NEVER CHANGED**.

Romans 6:23– “*The wages of sin is death...*”

GOD told **ADAM** that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would **SURELY DIE**. **DEATH** simply means **SEPARATION**, and **ADAM** would experience **TWO KINDS OF DEATH**. First, he experienced **SPIRITUAL DEATH**, or **SPIRITUAL SEPARATION FROM GOD**. He hid himself in the garden hoping that he wouldn't have to face **GOD**. But **GOD** came to man and made a **PROVISION for HIM** that day that pointed to the future **PROVISION IN CHRIST!**

Many years later **HE** experienced **PHYSICAL DEATH** at a very old age as well, but had he never eaten the fruit he would have lived forever.

Listen, the **BIBLE** tells us that because of our **INHERITED SIN NATURE**, we were **BORN SPIRITUALLY DEAD**, **SPIRITUALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD**, and only a personal relationship with **JESUS CHRIST** through **HIS GOSPEL** changes that. We can't do anything to prevent the **PHYSICAL DEATH**. *Hebrews 9:27* says, “*It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*”

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This is the **LAW OF THE HARVEST** found in *Galatians 6*. Because of **SIN** we **DIE**, and if you don't allow **JESUS** to do something about your sin you'll not only **die physically**, but you'll **experience eternal spiritual death, eternal separation from GOD in hell**. That's not pretty, it's not pleasant, but neither is **SIN**, and if there's one thing you can count on, **GOD** is not going to change **HIS** stance on **SIN** or the results of **SIN**!

IV. GOD IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE HIS PLAN OF SALVATION!

There's only **ONE PLAN OF SALVATION!** And it comes our way **BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH!**

It's the plan **HE** used in the garden with **ADAM!**

It's the plan by which **NOAH** was saved!

It's the plan by which **ABRAHAM** was saved!

It's the plan by which **MOSES** was saved!

It's the plan by which every man, woman, boy or girl that has ever been saved or ever will be saved has been saved!

Salvation is *“by grace through faith.”*

Salvation is by *“confessing with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believing in your heart that God has raised him from the dead.”*

Salvation is by “believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The men and women who lived before Jesus looked ahead by faith believing that Jesus would come and be the sacrifice for their sins, and those of us who live afterward look back believing that Jesus did come and die for our sins.

Either way, looking forward or looking back, the look is a look of faith. God's plan of salvation has never been complicated. In fact, He's made it so easy that most people stumble right over it.

Conclusion

Have you ever experienced the great **LOVE OF GOD?** When others fail you and forsake you, you can count on **GOD'S LOVE!**

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When you sin and fall short of what **GOD** wants you to be, when your life is a mess and you don't have a friend to turn to, you can count on the **LOVE OF GOD. GOD LOVES** you in spite of your **SIN! HE** hates **SIN**, but **HE LOVES the SINNER!**. Have you ever accepted that **LOVE** by receiving **HIS SALVATION?** Have you ever turned to **GOD** in **REPENTANCE** and **FAITH?** If you haven't, would you today?

Perhaps today you need to move past that first step of **FAITH** and **FOLLOW the LORD in BAPTISM or CHURCH MEMBERSHIP** – maybe it is service that **GOD** is calling for. Is **HE** speaking to you about **HIS** great desire to enjoy intimacy with **HIM** in **PRAYER and BIBLE STUDY?** How will you respond to that invitation today?