FOR IT IS A GOOD THING

THAT THE HEART BE ESTABLISHED WITH GRACE

**DATE: 5/13/2015 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 13:8, 9**

**INTRODUCTION**

The book of Hebrews is a book of contrasts … in which the old is contrasted to the new

This whole book presents Jesus Christ as superior to ceremonies, religious systems, Angels, and Men

Our text tonight showcases the often neglected, but very vital doctrine of, the *Immutability* of God

In simple terms, the doctrine of Immutability means that God Almighty has never, can never and will never change

He is, by His very nature, unchangeable!

This means that He is as powerful, as loving, as merciful, as full of grace, as holy and as much in control as He has ever been

He is still God and He will always be God

He is absolutely unchangeable

This is one of the essential doctrines of Christianity!

Why is Immutability so important?

Because change implies imperfection and God is absolutely perfect

Therefore, He cannot change, ever!

The world around us, even our own lives, are in a constant state of flux

Things are always changing for you and me

I find it very refreshing and comforting to know that the God I serve, and the Lord I have received as my Savior, will never change

Let’s read **vs. 8 & 9** and then pray and think on this thought tonight

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace”***

(Read **vs. 8 & 9**)

***~~~Prayer~~~***

 **I. OUR “STANDARD” – v.8**

**Standard –** *widely used and highly regarded norm*

***“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”***

We’ve all heard **Hebrews 13:8** recited at one time or another

But just exactly what does it mean?

This passage teaches the Immutability of Christ

So again, what is Immutability?

Webster defines **Immutability** as *Unchangeableness; the quality that renders change or alteration impossible*

Immutability is one of God's great attributes

**James 1:17 –** ***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”***

The reference to ***“no variableness, neither shadow of turning”*** is referring to the Immutability of God

**Psalm 102:24-27 *– “I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations” “Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands”
“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:” “But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end”***

The Immutability of God means that God in His nature is absolutely unchangeable

**Psalm 90:2 – “*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God”***

**Malachi 3:6a –** ***“For I am the LORD, I change not;”***

God remains forever the same

All that Jesus has ever been … He will always be

Jesus is the Never changing Saviour in an ever changing world

Our Standard for Christian living is our Unchanging

Saviour

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace”***

We can be Established (confident) in our Hearts because of

3 things

His … Power, Promises, and Personality

**A. ‘Power’**

**Matthew 28:18** tells us that Jesus is the One in charge

***“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth”***

So, what does this mean?

The word ***“power”*** here literally means - *power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; to have leave or permission; the power of authority (influence) and of right (privilege); the power of rule or government (the power of him whose wills and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed); authority over mankind*

Simply stated, Jesus is the All-powerful Lord

He is All-Powerful in His …

**1.** Creative Acts

Jesus is the Creator –

**John 1:3 – *“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made”***

**Colossians 1:16, 17 –** ***“For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:”
“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist”***

That same power is working in and around us

**Ephesians 3:20 –** ***“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us”***

That is why we can say with all assurance of heart, that Jesus is "Able!"

This is the power that makes prayer such an effective tool in the hand of the believer

**Matthew 21:21 – *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done”***

His Creative Power

Jesus is All-Powerful in His …

**2.** Redemptive Act

According to **Hebrews 12:2** Jesus is ***“the Author and the Finisher of our faith”***

That is, He paid the price for man’s sin and He is the only One in whom salvation can be found

**Acts 4:12 – *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”***

He will never lose His Saving power!

**Hebrews 7:25 – *“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them”***

His Redemptive Power

Jesus is also All-Powerful in His …

**3.** ProtectiveActs

Jesus is still the Good Shepherd

**John 10:11 – *“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep”***

He will care for the sheep until they all arrive safely home

**Hebrews 13:5b – *“… for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

In **Psalm 23**, the Lord promises to care for His sheep in every conceivable manner

If He will do it for others, He will do it for you

**Romans 2:11 – *“For there is no respect of persons with God”***

He will see to it that you arrive safely Home!

Jesus is the Great Redeemer

**Jesus is All-‘Powerful’**

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace”***

We can also be Established (confident) in our Hearts because of His …

**B. ‘Promises’**

**Romans 4:21 – *“And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform”***

In **Romans 4:21** the word ***“Promised”*** describes an *action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated*

To put it very simply, when God makes a promise …

He has no need to repeat Himself, but His promises are good forever

Let me give you some of these precious promises that you and I have from the LORD

These are things that the Lord will not change His mind about!

Because He is ***“the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”***

**1.** He has *Promised* to Save Us

The promise is clear

**Romans 10:13 – *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”***

When a lost sinner comes to Jesus by faith, he is saved by grace and preparation is begun for Heaven

This is a promise that will never change!

Therefore, do not let the devil play mind games with you

If you have trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, as the Bible teaches, then you are saved and going to Heaven

If not, then you need to be saved,

And please understand that Jesus will save you

**John 6:37 – *“All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out”***

**2.** He has *Promised* to Supply Us

Again, the promise is clear

**Philippians 4:19 – *“But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus”***

As the song writer said – *“God will take care of you!”*

He may not maintain your standard of living,

But He will meet your needs,

**Matt. 6:25-34 …**

When you have finished your journey, you will never be able to honestly say that the Lord ever let you down!

**3.** He has *Promised* to Satisfy Us

When Jesus met the woman at the well in **John 4**

He promised her a drink of living water that would eternally satisfy

He also promised to satisfy the hungry soul,

**Psalm 107:9 – *“For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness”***

Why does it seem, then, that most Christians are unsatisfied?

Why are they always looking for something else?

Many have never learned the secret to genuine contentment

Most Christians think that they have to have things to satisfy them

They have never learned to be happy with Jesus and what He can give

**I Timothy 6:8 – *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content”***

**Hebrews 13:5 – *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have …”***

It would do us all good to be reminded that in Jesus we have all we need

He knows our needs and will take care of the things which we lack

**4.** He has *Promised* to Secure Us

There is no doctrine more precious to the saints of God than the doctrine of our eternal security in the Lord Jesus Christ

Simply stated, if you have ever been saved, then you will ever be saved!

Jesus didn't save you to abandon you along the way

He saved you to take you to Heaven as a trophy of grace and as a part of His body

He will ever keep His saints until they arrive safely home in glory

**I Peter 1:5 – *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”***

**John 10:28 – *“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand”***

I wonder how people believe that a God who can't keep them can save them?

It takes more power to save someone (to begin with)

… Than it does to keep someone saved

Because, in salvation, God justifies the sinner

He declares us righteous, putting away all our sins, past, present and future!

**5.** He has *Promised* to Sustain Us

By this, what I mean is that God has promised to give us grace along the way

I think of the trial endured by the Apostle Paul

**II Corinthians 12:7-9 – *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me” “And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. …***

***Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”***

God did not remove the burden borne by the Apostle,

But, instead, He gave him grace to bear the burden!

Please know that no matter what you are called upon to face in life,

You can face it with the assurance that Jesus will always be there,

**Matthew 28:20 – *“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen”***

- And that He will give grace

**II Corinthians 12:9 – *“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”***

- And that He will keep things under control

**I Corinthians 10:13 – *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”***

- And that He will use every trial and valley for your good

**Romans 8:28 – *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”***

**Jesus’ is the Real ‘Promise’ Keeper**

**C. ‘Personality’**

**Hebrews 1:12 – *“And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: (the earth) but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail”***

This verse simply reaffirms the truth of our text

Jesus Christ will never change!

Therefore, any attributes which He possessed in the beginning, He still possesses today, and He will possess them into eternity future

That which He was, He is and He ever will be!

Therefore, His Personality will never change!

According to **I John 4:8 …**

**1.** He is ‘Love’

That is, in His very nature He is a God of love

Everything He does is an expression and an outcome of His love and He will never change

If God is love (and He is) then there will never be a time when you will not be loved by God,

**Jeremiah 31:3 –** ***“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee”***

**Romans 8:38, 39 –** ***“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”***

God loved you before He saved you

He loves you now and He will love you forever!

He is love and you are the object of His love!

**2.** He is ‘Light’

**John 8:12 –** ***“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”***

By His very nature, Jesus is Light

His very purpose in coming into the world was to bring the light of God to those drowning in a sea of darkness

He came to manifest the Father to fallen men

**John 14:9 –** ***“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”***

He is still in that business tonight and He ever will be

He is the Light and He will ever be the Light!

He offers hope to those in darkness

He can and will bring them out and into the Light of God

**3.** He is ‘Life’

**John 14:6 –** ***“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me”***

**John 1:4 –** ***“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”***

Jesus is not just another life, He is The Life!

It’s in Him and in Him alone that dead sinners are made alive

**Ephesians 2:1, 5 –** ***“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”***

To know Jesus is to know life, to be without Him is to abide in death

**I John 5:12 –** ***“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”***

He is Life and He will ever be Life

All the life on this planet sprang from Him

**John 1:3 – *“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made”***

Even man was created by Jesus and has life today because the Creator breathed the breath of life into man

**Genesis 2:7 *– “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”***

He is the Creator of life and He is the sustainer of life

This will never change!

For a man to truly live, he must know Jesus

**John 1:12 *– “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:”***

**John 3:36 *– “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”***

**4.** He is ‘Lord’

**Acts 2:36 –** ***“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”***

As I have shared with you in the past, no one *"makes"* Jesus the Lord of their life

He is already Lord whether you and I acknowledge it or not!

- The world certainly does not live like Jesus is Lord,

But that changes nothing!

- Many churches and Christians do not live like He is Lord,

But that too changes nothing!

Jesus is Lord and will be forever!

One day, His Power and Position as Lord will be revealed to everyone …

Just read **Revelation 19 & 20**

He is Lord and the best you and I can do is live like we know it and honor Him!

 ***“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever”***

**JESUS IS OUR “STANDARD”**

**II. OUR “STABILITY” – v.9a**

***“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines”***

Based upon Christ's unchangeableness the believer is exhorted to stand firm and stay true

Notice the phrase *“****be not carried about”***

It carries the idea of a ship being driven about by fierce winds

Paul had warned the Ephesians (**4:14**) to

***“... henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”***

What a solemn warning for us

We live in ***“perilous times”***

**II Timothy 3:2 – *“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,***

The word *“****divers”*** in our text means *various, manifold, several, many*

The word *“****strange”*** means *uncommon, unusual, odd, irregular; not according to the common way*

There has never been a time when there were more strange doctrines than today

The doctrine of salvation has been perverted by men with various systems of theology

There are constantly new doctrines and ideas concerning prophecy

All kinds of false and blasphemous teachings about Christ are appearing

Yes, the powerful winds of false doctrines are blowing and the tempest is raging

But instead of being shaken and blown about,

God's people are to stand firmly anchored in Christ the Solid Rock

**JESUS IS OUR “STANDARD”**

**JESUS IS OUR “STABILITY”**

**III. OUR “STRENGTH” – v.9b**

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein”***

Paul was pointing out that the false teachers were attempting to lead these Hebrew Christians back into a religion of outward forms and ceremonies

Paul draws from the background of the old Jewish services to teach how Christ is the fulfillment of it all and that in Him we serve and sacrifice by grace

Many of the Hebrew Christians to whom Paul was writing still held to OT ceremonial worship

To make the situation worse there were among them teachers who taught and promoted obedience to the law

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats...”***

The word ***“established”*** means, *to be set; fixed firmly; founded...*

Paul wanted their hearts to be right

The Lord wants our hearts to be right

This is simple principle of Scripture

Our life will follow our heart

**Proverbs 23:7 – *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”***

Therefore, the heart must be established with grace

And how is the heart to be established?

Not with meats, temple sacrifices, rituals, and standards,

But with Grace

No number of external ceremonies or standards can strengthen the heart

The Christian life is lived from the inside out

Legalism is always bragging about the outside

**Quote:** F. B. Meyer wrote: *“There is ever a tendency in the human heart toward a religion of rites. It is so much easier to observe the prescriptions of an outward ceremonial than to brace the soul to faith and love and spiritual worship.”*

Notice what Paul says at the end of **v.9** …

***“…which have not profited them that have been occupied therein”***

It is an absolute waste to attempt to live the Christian life from the outside

Someone who lives this way simply becomes so preoccupied with a system of do's and don'ts that they miss the real meaning of the Christian life

Yes! The outward is extremely important in that it manifests what is in the heart

But the outside straightens up because the inside is straightening up

Too many of God's people get this backwards

Jesus dealt with this problem with the Pharisees

**Matthew 23:25-27 – *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness”***

No amount of fixing up the outside will change the heart

However, fixing the heart will straighten up the outside

When our heart is right … our Christianity will show up in our actions

Standards and convictions must come from the heart rather than an outward conformity to some set of rules

Yes! We believe in standards, we have standards and we enforce standards for leadership

However, these things do not establish the Christian life,

Instead they emit from the Christian whose heart is established by grace

**CONCLUSION**

**JESUS IS OUR “STANDARD”**

**JESUS IS OUR “STABILITY”**

**JESUS IS OUR “STRENGTH”**

***“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace”***