

‘Jesus, the same yesterday.’

We’re beginning a new sermon series today, with **Hebrews 13:8** in mind, where the Hebrew writer tells us that **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** Next week we’ll look at how **‘Jesus is the same today’**, the following week we’ll look at how **‘Jesus is the same forever’** but today I want us to focus on how **‘Jesus is the same yesterday’**.

A Sunday school teacher was asking her students some questions after a series of lessons on God’s abilities. She asked, **‘Is there anything God can’t do?’** Everybody was silent. Finally, one boy held up his hand. The teacher, on seeing this, was disappointed that they had missed the point of the lesson. She sighed and asked, **‘Well, what is it you think God can’t do?’** The boy replied, **‘He can’t please everybody.’**

And there’s a lot of truth in that young boy’s answer because over and over again within the Scriptures, we see people who are never pleased with the things that God does and the way He does them. Cain wasn’t pleased with God and His ways, the Jews in the wilderness weren’t pleased with God and His ways, the religious leaders in Jesus’ time weren’t pleased with God and His ways.

And even today, people are still not pleased with God and His ways, they want to promote same-sex marriage, they want to promote assisted suicide, they want to promote abortion. Some people want to change His Word and make the Gospel more appealing through prosperity or by abusing people’s emotions. But they all, whether it be in Bible times or even today, want God to change His ways because they refuse to change their own ways.

And if there was ever a Scripture to draw encouragement from in an ever-changing world, this would be it, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” Hebrews 13:8**. Heaven is screaming out that, everything around you may change and people may change and try to change His Word but Jesus Christ doesn’t change. He won’t cancel His offer of unconditional love and grace but He won’t withdraw His demands for repentance and obedience either.

And if the Bible tells us anything, it tells us over and over again, God won’t change. **Hebrews 6:17+18** **“Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.”**

Scripture tells us over and over that God won’t change, look at **Malachi 3:6**, **“I the Lord do not change.”** Look at what James says in **James 1:17**, **“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows”**.

Do you remember in Numbers 23, when Balaam was paid to curse Israel? God didn’t allow it, instead He pronounced a blessing on them through the prophet. Look at what he says, in **Numbers 23:19**, **“God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.”** God wanted them to know He won’t change and loved ones, Jesus is the same, He will not change.

I want to focus on Jesus being the same **‘yesterday’** but what we should understand is that **‘yesterday’** can go back as far in history as you like. It could go back to a literal **‘yesterday’** or it could go back to when you were born. Now in the context of **Hebrews 13**, it’s speaking about since the arrival of Jesus as we read about Him in the Gospels. But I would like for us to go even further back in history, I want us to go back to a time before Jesus existed as a man.

Turn your Bibles to **John 1:1-3** **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”**

Now who is ‘the Word’ mentioned in these verses? It’s Jesus. And we know John is speaking about Jesus because if you read on further down in **John 1:14** it says that, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

Now remember Jesus didn’t become Jesus until He **‘became flesh’** and that’s important to remember because this tells us that Jesus was **‘the Word’** before He became Jesus, God in the flesh. And we know that the Word, who is Jesus existed before creation because John says, **“The Word was in the beginning.”**

In other words, the Word was in existence before the world was even created. Jesus wasn't a created being as some religious groups believe because He existed before anything else was created. The Word didn't come into being, He already existed and has continually existed. Jesus Himself claimed His own divine pre-existence in **John 8:58** when He said to the Jews, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."**

And notice that John doesn't leave any room for 'ifs' 'buts' or 'maybes', he says, **'In the beginning was the Word.'** Which is very similar to what Moses wrote in **Genesis 1:1 'In the beginning God.'** Both Moses and John are writing as a matter of fact, the Bible doesn't set about trying to convince us that God exists, it's written as a matter of fact that He does exist.

Now you might ask, well, **what did the Word do in the beginning?** Before we answer that question, let me ask you this question, **what does the word, 'word' mean?** Well, just like you can't make a cup of tea or coffee without water, you can't communicate with people without words. If I want you to understand what I'm thinking, I need to use words to tell you.

The Greek word for **'Word'** is the word **'Logos'** and it means a thought expressed, or something said. The Greeks saw **'logos'** as reason or wisdom and they thought **'the Logos'** was some kind of a go between, between a spiritual God and the material universe. The Jews would understand what **'Logos'** meant and their minds would have gone straight back to **Genesis** because they understood that this was a revelation of the mind of God.

Turn your Bibles to **Genesis 1** and notice throughout **Genesis 1** we find the words, **'God said.'** **Genesis 1:3 "God said, "Let there be light."** **Genesis 1:6 "God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."** And we could go on but the point I'm trying to make is that **'the Word'** was the One speaking creation into existence.

And just as a side note, each of these days were a command, the words **'let there,'** are misleading, it should read, **'be light', 'be a vault between the waters.'** The Word of God was the One commanding creation into existence and so the Word, wasn't just present at creation but actively involved in creation.

That's what Paul is trying to get us to understand in **Colossians 1:16+17**, **"For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."**

That's what John is trying to get us to understand when he says in **John 1:1-3**, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."**

He's trying to tell us that **'The Word'** was there before creation, **'the Word'** commanded creation into existence and **'the Word'** was with God even before creation and the Word was God, **John 1:1**. You see loved ones, **'the Word'** is a person, not an attribute of God or a production of God, He is of the same essence as the Father, in other words, He is Deity. **Hebrews 1:3** says, **"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."** Notice that phrase, **'the exact representation of his being'**, the literal translation says, **'Jesus is the carbon copy of God.'**

Now we hear a lot about the word **'trinity'** but that word doesn't exist in your Bibles, but we do have the word **'Godhead'** used within the **KJV**. When Paul is speaking on Mars Hill he says in **Acts 17:29** **"Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."**

He also says in **Romans 1:20** **"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so, that they are without excuse."**

Colossians 2:9 **"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."** The **N.I.V** writes that verse, this way, **Colossians 2:9**, **"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."**

I remember a few years ago, Josh asked me to explain to him, how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same but yet different. **And so, I shared a practical illustration with him. I got one potato and put it in the middle of the table and then went on and got a plate of mashed potatoes, a plate of boiled potatoes and a baked potato.**

I went on to explain that although the mashed potato was different in appearance from the boiled and baked potatoes, and vice versa, they are all essentially still potatoes but in different forms.

The Bible talks about God as being Deity, the Bible talks about Jesus as being Deity and the Bible talks about the Holy Spirit as being Deity. Three different personalities but one in the same, as **1 John 5:20** tells us. You see, whenever you read your Bible and you find Jesus referring to Himself as the **'Son of man,'** He's talking about His human nature. But when you find Him referring to Himself as the **'Son of God,'** He's talking about His divine nature.

And so, although the Son existed **'in the beginning with God,'** it was necessary that **'the Word'** should **'become flesh'** and **'dwell'** or **'tabernacle'** among us as **John 1:14** tells us. **But why did Jesus need to come in bodily form?** Paul tells us in **Philippians 2:6-8** that Jesus **"Though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross!"**

Notice Jesus **'existed in the form of God'** and Paul says without that human form, it would've been impossible for Him to fulfil the unique purpose for which He came. **But why did He need a body?** **John 20:30+31** **"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."**

Now remember John never uses the word **'miracle'** in his Gospel, he always uses the word, **'signs'**. And here Jesus says, He needed a body in order to present the **'signs'** which were to be the authentication and endorsement of His Messiahship. He needed a body to set the human race the perfect example of obedience to the will of the Father. And above all, by means of that perfect life, to demonstrate His worthiness to become the perfect offering for the sin of the world.

You see, the Word had to become flesh because this was the divine plan right from start. Remember what God said to the serpent in **Genesis 3:15** **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."** The Word needed a body, so He could die on the cross and crush Satan once and for all.

That's why we find the writer of the letter to the **Hebrews**, quoting from **Psalms 40:6-8**. **Hebrews 10:5** **"Therefore when he comes into the world, he says, "Sacrifice and offering you didn't desire, but you prepared a body for me; You had no pleasure in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of me) to do your will, O God.'" Notice that the **'body'** was prepared for **'me.'** The Word becoming flesh was all a part of God's plan.**

Why did He come in the flesh? He came in order to be able to communicate with mankind in a personal, unmistakable and uncomplicated manner. **I remember being told a story about millions of ants that were walking along a railway line. There was a man there watching them, when he looked up and saw there was a train coming and so he shouted as loud as he could at the ants, telling them there's a train coming, they need to get off the track.**

Well, obviously, the ants didn't know nothing about the train coming and they certainly wouldn't be able to understand what this man was telling them. And then he had a thought, I will become an ant and so he became an ant and told them of the upcoming danger and so some of the ants listened to him and got off the tracks whilst others just ignored him to their own peril.

You see loved ones, in a way that's what God did. Over and over again, He told His people He was coming but they simply didn't understand. **Isaiah 7:14** **"Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."**

Malachi 3:1 **"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the LORD, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts."**

And so, Jesus had to come in the form of man to explain to us in simple human language exactly what God wants us to hear. **Do you want to know what God is like?** Look at Jesus. **Do you remember when the Philip wanted to know what God was like?** **John 14:9** **"Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"**

Do you want to know what God's will is? Listen to Jesus. **John 6:38** "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." **Do you want to know how to live a life which pleases God?** Follow the example of Jesus. **1 Peter 2:21** "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."

The point I'm trying to make loved ones, is that everything we can know about God is revealed in Jesus Christ. In other words, Jesus isn't merely a representation of the Word, He is the Word of God. **Revelation 19:13** "He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God." John here is speaking about the sacrificed Jesus, as the Word of God.

John 5:37-40 "The Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they searched the Scriptures and didn't find Jesus, even though the Scriptures did speak of Him.

Now **what does all this mean in light of Hebrews 13:8?** It means that yesterday Jesus was the Word, it means that yesterday Jesus was God in the flesh, it means that yesterday Jesus was the Word of God. But not only yesterday, but today and forever more, He will be the Word.

Jesus never changes loved ones but He does ask us to change. And the word for that in the Bible is the word 'repent'. Now I think the word 'repent' has had a lot of bad press over the years, sometimes all you hear people say is, 'repent, repent, repent' in a very negative way. And sometimes the word 'repent' isn't used at all in some religious circles because its seen as offensive and comes across as a very negative word. The Greek word for repent is 'metanoeo' and it simply means to think differently, to reconsider. And in the Bible, repentance, just like faith, leads us somewhere else. You see loved ones, the word 'repent' is a positive word because it leads us to blessings.

Remember when king Hezekiah became ill in 2 Chronicles 32? **2 Chronicles 32:24-26** "He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore, the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore, the LORD's wrath did not come on them during the days of Hezekiah." Hezekiah's repentance led to him and the people of Jerusalem being blessed by God.

Proverbs 1:23 "Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings." Solomon says when a person repents, God will let you know what His will is.

When Peter preached the first Gospel sermon, he says to the Jews listening in **Acts 2:38**, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Peter says when a person repents, they not only receive forgiveness, they also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **2 Corinthians 7:10** "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

Do you see how real, Biblical repentance always leads to blessings? Hezekiah had to think differently, Solomon encourages us to think differently and Peter asked the Jews to think differently, but there's more to repentance than just thinking differently. The Bible says that our thinking differently is more than just feeling sorry for our sins, it should lead to a change of direction and a change of behaviour.

I remember speaking with this young girl who became a Christian and I asked her, 'what difference has Christ made in her life?' She replied, 'well, before I used to run towards sin, but now I run away from it'. And that's what Biblical repentance is, it's taking the time to thinking differently, which leads us to live differently. But repentance isn't a onetime act, Christians will repent many times during their life, especially if they have sinned against God or their fellowman.

And loved one's repentance is something God wants all of mankind to do, **Acts 17:30** "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent." **Have you ever wondered why God hasn't come back yet to judge the world?** **2 Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

God hasn't come back yet because He's giving you time to think differently about Him, He's giving you time to think differently about your lifestyle. He's giving you time to think differently about your relationship with Him. If you didn't believe that Jesus was the Word yesterday, you have no reason to carry on believing that today. If you didn't believe that Jesus became God in the flesh yesterday, you have no reason to carry on believing that today. If you didn't repent yesterday, you have no reason, not to think differently about your relationship with Him today.

Loved ones, **"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,"** as **Hebrews 13:8** tells us. He is the Word, the Word who became a man, the Word of God and whose Word still stands yesterday, today and forever.