

The Immutability of God

Teaching notes – Brody Holloway (SWO21 Staff Training)

Introduction

Hebrews 13:8

Superpowers.

How about if you could have any superpower? How about if you could have any mutation from the X-Men.

The idea of the immutability of God is that he cannot change his original nature or essence. His nature and being are subject to no mutations.

People change.

We've all had experiences where someone changed and it hurt our relationship. Or, maybe you've changed and that has hurt a relationship.

It could have been a change for the better. It could've been a change for the worse.

The bottom line is—people change.

But Scripture teaches us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever. Even when he took on humanity and became truly human, he did not cease to be God.

Let's try to wrap our heads around the importance of this characteristic.

1. God is unchangeable in his essence:

- James 1:17 — “with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change”
- Malachi 3:6 — “for I the Lord do not change”
- Exodus 3:14 — “I AM that I AM”

This means God is trustworthy and consistent.

2. God is unchangeable in his attributes:

Psalms 119:89 — Veracity (truthfulness) “Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.”

Jeremiah 31:3 — His love is eternal. “I have loved you with an everlasting love”. Attached to his character not mine.

John 13:1 — “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the father, having loved his own who are in the world, he loved them to the end.”

Psalms 100:5 — “for the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”

3. God is unchangeable in his counsel:

There are some verses in Scripture that may be confusing on this one. There are places where the Scripture uses language that seems to imply that God might repent, or change his mind. I want to give you a simple answer to this, an explanation, and then support this third point scripturally.

In Genesis 6, the Lord regrets that he has made man. Moses speaks of God repenting of an action, or we may think of God being sorry that he had appointed Saul as king.

The best way to understand these passages is to know that often the Scripture will speak of God in human terms so that we might understand him. The Scripture will speak of God in what we call anthropomorphic terminology. That means we attribute human characteristics to God. These are most often physical, but they are sometimes emotional.

We do this all the time.

- *He is strong as an ox.*
- *He is big as a house.*
- *He is ugly as sin.*

Ok, that last one is just bad.

We've been given these tools in Scripture to help us understand an infinite God in our finite minds. For instance, the Scripture will speak of God rising early in the morning, or of bodily members such as eyes, ears and hands. But God is a spirit. He never slumbers or sleeps, so

why would he rise early or awake? As a spirit, he doesn't have physical characteristics the same way we do. These words help us understand God in terms that humans can grasp.

The Scripture speaks of God with respect to his present attitude in a situation as it exists at that moment. So words are used to help us understand what is going on in time and space through the actions and emotions of a timeless boundless infinite creator.

Concerning the fact that God is unchangeable in his counsel, consider these Scriptures:

- Romans 11:29 — For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable.
- Job 23:13 — But he is unchangeable, and who can turn him back? What he desires, that he does.
- Psalm 33:11 — The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.
- Hebrews 6:17 — Speaks of the unchangeable character of God's purpose.

4. The importance of God's unchangeableness

This is more a practical thought process. God cannot improve. If he could then at some point he would not have been God, so he would not have been sovereign and all-powerful in his plans and purposes.

And if he could improve, then by nature he would have to be able to also digress. That would mean he could move toward evil or sinfulness.

I can think of no more horrible thought than for a being with the least bit of wickedness in his heart to have complete power to do as he wills. An all-powerful being—like Satan.

Consider what happens to *good* people when they are given an abundance of power. We see it most often with celebrities or politicians. (IG: Billie Eilish)

Conclusion

Let's wrap up our time tonight thinking of the importance of an unchangeable God in terms of his *justice*.

We all desire for there to be a day where justice rules and all wickedness is punished. Those who defy God and hurt others and create calamity and pain will one day be judged. To be true and honest, we are all depraved. But through the Gospel, we are made righteous in Christ and given an unchangeable gift through an unchangeable Savior.

The fact that God and his justice will never change, means that my gift of salvation is as sure as the nature of God. And it also means that his judgment against the wicked and those who reject him are set in stone.

Let me explain using a current event.

Right now it's hard to keep up with how quickly standards change. We are constantly redefining the grounds of sexuality and racism. The very definition of progressive is that you're always moving or progressing forward but this is no goal. The goal is to continually progress.

This week Kaitlin Jenner has been ostracized. But Kaitlyn Jenner was being celebrated not too long ago and has not changed at all on any stance. We need to strive for justice and good and mercy that is attainable. Look for true justice attached to One who has perfected it. Christ is going to one day bring all things into perfect and harmonious justice—with mercy properly applied.

Ezekiel 8:18 — “therefore will I also deal in fury. My eye will not spare, neither will I have pity and they cry in my ears with a loud voice yet I will not hear them”.

God's hatred of sin and his love for what is righteous and just is unchangeable. Therefore, the eternal consequence of both are set in the stone nature of God described in Deuteronomy 32:4

Think about what we've seen in the last five years.

We have watched professing Christians embrace what God clearly calls sinful in his word. When we don't walk in the Spirit who is unchangeable and remain rooted in the Word of God, which is unchangeable, we will be changed by winds of doctrine and shadows of turning like a wave that's driven and tossed by the sea. God's Word is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword and will never fade away.

We tend to waiver, but God hates sin the same today as he did before he laid out the foundations of the earth.

Pink says this,

“The divine immutability, like the cloud which interposed between the Israelites and the Egyptian army has a dark as well as a light side. It ensures the execution of his threatening's, as well as the performance of his promises; and destroys the hope which the guilty fondly cherish, that he will be all lenient his frail and erring creatures, and that they will be much more likely dealt with than the declarations of his own word would lead us to expect. We oppose to these deceitful and presumptuous speculations the solemn truth, but God is unchanging in veracity and purpose, and faithfulness and justice.”