

HOPE IN CHANGING TIMES

Sermon written by Martha-Jean Fitch

June 27, 2021

TEXT: Various Scriptures, including Malachi 3:6, James 1:7, Hebrews 10:23, Psalm 145:13, Joshua 1:9

In 1962, a cartoon came out called *The Jetsons*. It only lasted for one year – but re-runs of the cartoon were shown many times. Anyone remember that cartoon?

The Jetsons was a cartoon that depicted what life 100 years into the future would look like. All sorts of things would change by the year 2062 – amazing new technology and ways of communicating and working. In watching the show, I remember as a child thinking – “*well, that’s a fun story but things like that will never happen*”. But what is amazing is how many things in the show actually have already happened.

For example, look at this picture. Jane Jetson is sitting in a chair, holding a small, handheld computer of sorts – almost like the tablets we use today. She is having a video call with her husband, George. How many of us, just this past year have learned how to do video calls, either on our phone or on our computers? And down in the bottom of the picture is the robotic vacuum that is cleaning the floors in the Jetson home. Incredibly - I have a Shark Robot in our home that does that very thing today! Look at this next picture. George Jetson has a smart watch where he can talk to his boss Mr. Spacely. Definitely something that many people have on their watches today! And then here is Jane, doing her exercises in front of a flat screen TV. Back in the 1960’s, I couldn’t imagine TV would ever be like that...and that we would have so many channels and would have remote controls and could watch TV shows even on the miniature computer that I carry around in my purse –my phone.¹

My how times have changed over the last 60 years. And who would have ever thought that our times would change as much as they did over the last year? It almost seems surreal. To think that our whole world would be threatened by a microscopic virus – causing churches and schools and restaurants to shut down – to go into quarantine and have to wear masks. And then, add in the economic and racial upheaval – the refugee crisis and the political division and civil unrest. Not to mention all the changes that have happened within families – and lifestyles. And through news broadcasts and social media – we wonder, what is the truth and who can we really believe and trust?

The changes are mind-boggling and overwhelming at times. The pace of change that is happening around us is going so fast – that we just don’t know what is going to happen tomorrow. We live in a world of uncertainties – and confusion – that can be very unsettling. In the midst of all these immense and rapid changes, we need something steady in our lives will *not* change... an anchor that we can cling to - to get us through these changing and turbulent times.

And the good news is that we have such an anchor! And that anchor is Jesus Christ! He is the anchor that we can cling to in the midst of the storms. He is the one that never changes!

All throughout Scripture, we are assured again and again – that God never changes and that we can trust Him to be strong and sure and faithful.

Malachi 3:6 says, *“I am the Lord and I do not change.”*

Hebrews 13:8 says, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”*

And Numbers 23:19 says, *“God is not a man, so He does not lie. He is not human, so He does not change His mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried through?”*

In this world that is changing in a blink of an eye – and circumstances in our lives that can often overwhelm us and make us feel helpless and hopeless; it is comforting to know that we have a God who never changes. The God who walked with Adam and Eve in the garden – is the same God who walks with you and me this very day. The same God who gave Moses the 10 Commandments and was in the lion’s den with Daniel is the same God who is there reaching out to us and is right beside us in the storms of life. The same God who sent Jesus to be our Savior and rose Him from the dead is the same God who can deliver us today and give us resurrection power.

As Chuck Swindoll says: *“The world has changed and is going to keep changing but God never changes. We are safe when we cling to Him.”*²

God is not like the world – shifting and always changing. He is our rock and refuge that we can have confidence in, during those times when everything seems to be falling apart. He is the Light of the world, in whom there is no darkness. James 1:17 says – *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*

What this means is that we can have hope and trust God’s promises. Psalm 145:13 tells us that *“the Lord always keeps His promises. He is gracious and faithful in all He does.”* What He says in His Word – He will do. He will be with us and never leave us. He will carry us as on the wings of an eagle and give us His strength to face whatever life throws us. He is preparing a place for us in heaven and will one day take us home to be with Him forever. Hebrews 6:18-19 says: *“God has given both His promise and His oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls.”*

All these various Scriptures should lift us up and give us hope and strength to face the future. No matter how crazy our world gets – we know that God will always be there – unchanging, strong and faithful and keeping His promises. We can have hope for the future – that God will be with us to help us navigate the uncharted land ahead of us – and will be there to help us fight our battles.

God has been our help in ages past and is our hope for years to come. *“In a world that*

changes every day; we can have our hope set on the One who never changes. The same God that provided for all our yesterdays will also take care of all our tomorrows."³ I know for me, it helps me to remember, "God has carried me through tough times in the past – and He's promised He won't abandon me. Because He doesn't change – I can count on Him to be with me through whatever tomorrow brings."

The promise God made to Joshua, who was facing great changes and challenges as he was starting to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land – that same promise holds true for us. God says, "*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord Your God is with you wherever you go.*" He will go ahead of us to prepare the way – will walk beside us to encourage us and walk behind us as our rear guard. (Isaiah 52:12). We don't know for certain what the future holds – but we can be certain who holds the future in His hands – and will carry us through.

So, how do we live in the midst of the changes in life? How can these words of our unchanging God help us? Where do we go from here?

First, remember to praise God, even in the storm. Make a choice to praise God, remembering who He is and claiming His promises. When we focus all our thoughts on the changes and uncertainties and problems – we live lives that are worried and fearful. And we might just even start to feel like we are drowning and unable to handle the stress. But when we choose to praise God and remember who He is, it changes our perception of our problems. We see that God is still in control and He is bigger than all our problems. He is the **ONLY THING** that is unchanging in our world – and He is the only One who can get us through these changing times.

What I have found is that when I am feeling worried or fearful – and I don't really have any answers – if I just start calling out the name of Jesus and praising Him – my whole spirit changes. There is power in just speaking the name of Jesus and praising Him for being there with you. And somehow, moving my focus on Jesus – He enables me to see the problem in a new light and can give me the strength to overcome my fears and worries.

Remember to praise God – and then trust God. Proverbs 3:5-6 says to "*Trust God and lean not into your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.*" We have to depend on Him to show us the way to get through these tough times. God's wisdom and His faithfulness will never change. Our minds and understanding can change and be fickle and not know the right direction to go. But God has given us the Holy Spirit to be our Advocate and our Helper. We must seek Him and listen for His voice.

Praise God – Put your trust in God – and then Hang on to the Anchor of Hope. Even when our circumstances fall apart, God is still our hope and help. I recently read that "*lasting hope is deeper than circumstantial hope. It is hope fixed on a source outside myself. It is hope fixed on an anchor that is not inside the haul of the ship.*"⁴ Our anchor goes down deep and holds us firm and secure. He will not move like shifting sands but will be a strong rock and fortress that we can depend on throughout every up and down in life.

When we go through dark nights and confusing times, God wants us to saturate our hearts

with the great truths of God. Instead of filling our thoughts and spirits with the disturbing news of the day or the hopeless situations that we might find ourselves in – we need to fill ourselves with God’s promises and the hope we can know in Him. He will give us the strength and the hope to get through the tough times.

One of my favorite things to do when I was a teenager and even into college was to go on long walks – usually around a lake or at a park – where I could just spend time in prayer and singing. There always seemed to be something that I was worried or confused about. I would use that time – walking and praying – to clear my head and re-focus my heart. And music always played a huge part in that – as I would sing songs that I loved from choir anthems – or would sing a lot of great hymns. One hymn became my favorite for it would point me to the unchanging faithfulness of God and the hope we have in God for each and every day. Somehow in singing those great words again and again – I knew I could make it through whatever was troubling me. Those words still bring me hope still to this day.

I’d like to end today by sharing those words, in the form of a prayer. Would you join me in praying together?

Great is Your Faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with You.
You don’t change and Your compassions don’t fail,
Just as You have been, You forever will be.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endures
Your dear sweet presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside.

Great is Your Faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Your hand has provided.
Great is Your Faithfulness, Lord unto me.

INVITATION:

RESOURCES

¹Kelly Walsh, “12 Cool Technologies ‘The Jetsons’ Predicted for 2062 That We Have Right Now.” November 5, 2019.

<https://www.emergingedtech.com/2019/11/10-cool-technologies-the-jetsons-predicted-for-2062-that-we-have-right-now/>

²Quote found on a Google Search, under *Unchanging God*.

³Quote found on a Google Search - daughtersbydesign.wordpress.com

⁴Quote found in doing research on this topic of hope. However, I was unable to go back in my search history to find the author.