

# Change and An Unchanging God

How many of you believe God created the heavens and the earth? Good! Just about everyone!! How many of you believe that that same God is here with us in this room? Good! Just about everybody!! Our expectations should be running pretty high, then, shouldn't they? I mean, God Almighty is here, ready to change and transform us!!

Annie Dillard asks the obvious question.....

“Why do people in church seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute? ... Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us to where we can never return.” Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), pp. 40-41.

May the Lord Almighty show himself mightily this morning, and take us to places where we've never gone with him before! Amen? Amen.

## Shake This Place

### PRAYER

Lord, we get so set in our ways, and you have something new for us to discover, about ourselves and about you. Don't leave us frozen in the past. Grab us by our shirt collars this morning and pull us into newness with you. Scrape off the barnacles of doubt that have attached themselves to our sides. Excite us with all we have in you, and all that lies ahead for us. Beguile us with hope, so that the things of earth that we have grown so attached to suddenly seem insignificant and irrelevant. Open our eyes to who you are, and what you want from us. And give us willing hearts to follow after you. Amen.

Anybody here going through an unwelcome change? If you are not, just wait - you will. As we worship God this morning, we want to remind ourselves that, though we don't know what's next, our God has a plan, and it is good. And wherever we go, he goes with us. Psalm 139:7-10 asks **“where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”**

God this morning is intimately concerned with the details of our lives, and has promised to go ahead of us, leading and guiding us. Let's remind ourselves of his presence, and praise him for his nearness, and his willingness to plan out and walk with us the rest of our lives.

## **Ancient Of Days**

The children of Israel had a major transition when Moses died. Let's think about the advice God gave them, and be encouraged, just as they were. From Joshua 1, the first 5 verses.....

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Great Sea on the west. No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.

## **God Is For Me**

Continuing with verses 6-9.....

"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything

written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

## **God Leads His Dear Children Along**

Listen to these words of Moses from **Deuteronomy 30:11-20.....**

Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

## **I Have Decided To Follow Jesus**

**OFFERING**  
**Have Faith**

**SERMON**

### **Benediction**

May the LORD will guide you always;  
May he satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and strengthen your frame.

You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.

**Isaiah 58:11**