

GOD'S LOVE NEVER CHANGES
Easter Sunday –March 31, 2013 –Hebrews 13: 8
The Church of the Covenant

The man I served who was the most mercurial and changeable, who you had to live moment by moment and try to anticipate his every move, was the pastor in the field education church when I was still in seminary. Now I tend to be consistent, plodding, keeping to a direct course, never changing. So this was quite an experience for me. The first Easter Sunday I was in that church was the first Sunday I participated in worship...only I didn't know it. I went to lead the Senior High Sunday School class and I had been told that the local fire chief was speaking, only he had cancelled at the last minute, and no one had bothered to tell me. So I had to come up with a spontaneous Sunday School lesson! I went over to sit with the youth group up in the balcony for the service, as was their custom, was a little drained by having to be so spontaneous in class, and was just sort of sitting there as the choir began singing the processional hymn. One of the kids said, "Say, Stu, aren't you in the worship service today?" So I grabbed the bulletin to see that my name was next to the Call to Worship, only no one had bothered to tell me. So I ran downstairs, grabbed one of the ancient black pulpit robes hanging in the closet, evidently of someone who was at least 6 foot four because I kept tripping on the robe, and was flipping through the old hymnal, remembering somewhere in my dark memory that there were Calls to Worship printed in the front. The entire choir has almost departed from the Narthex area by the time I arrive. I am flipping through the hymnal desperately trying to find a Call to Worship, and am tripping all the way up the center aisle of the church on my too-long choir robe. I arrive in THEE Nick of time at the lectern in time to deliver the Call to Worship I have just found. By the way, I am describing the reality of the modern world where EVERYTHING changes, all the time, and without notice, and where nothing seems constant or secure or steadfast and universally true. On this Easter Sunday I will tell you –the world is always changing, is never constant and true...but that we know by an empty tomb on that first Easter that...God's love never changes!!!!!! The world may change; your circumstances may change but on Easter we know that "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever!*" (Hebrews 13:8)

+*At the beginning of Jesus' ministry He is tempted by the devil out in the wilderness.* He is tempted to try to accomplish His Father in heaven's will by other means other than the cross. But Jesus does not. He remains committed to God's plan of salvation for the world. God's love never changes. He never wavered. He is the same yesterday, and today and forever!

+*Jesus' ministry on earth is about three years in length.* He prays and knows that His time is drawing near and so, as the scriptures say, He "*set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" (Luke 9: 51) This is a phrase indicative of his total commitment to do His Father's will no matter what; He will not be distracted; He will not go either to the left nor the right; He has set His face to go to His death and fulfill His destiny. He will not be dissuaded from His task. His best friend, Peter, tells Him He does not need to go to the cross, but Jesus rejects this and knows this as the temptation it is. He remains immovable where God's plan is concerned. God's love never changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever!

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We know *God is Good all the time* because we know *God's love never changes* and we know God's love never changes because we know that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever*. In an utterly inconsistent, changeable, feckless and unreliable world...He, Jesus Christ, remains absolutely the same. We know this to be true, because Jesus endured the cross for us unwavering, and Jesus even came back from the dead, just to prove to us, once and for all time, that God's love never changes. Praise God and Hallelujah, the Savior who was raised from the dead 2,000 years ago is present, alive and with us today. He is risen! He is risen indeed! And, praise God, He is the same yesterday, and today and forever! Amen.

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