

These Have Not Changed

1 Corinthians 15

By Dr. John Blanchard

Well thank you for that, and it is a great privilege to be here. I want to thank publically the pastor and leadership of the church for giving me this privilege. It's also a very special joy because as it has rightly been said, I try, whenever possible, to include First Pres. Jackson in any visits I take to the United States and I've lost count of the number of times in which I've preached to this church, either here in the sanctuary as a whole or in other parts of the facility. My only sadness on this occasion is that for the first time I don't have my wife Joyce with me. As some of you know, in February of last year she left to join a bigger congregation and she's in much better company now, even than First Pres. Jackson. I know you'll allow me to say that! But it is a great privilege to be here and I've looked forward to it with great anticipation. In the natural order of things, at some point it has to be said, that this could well be my last visit here. Of course every visit could well be the last visit, and there would be obvious and natural reasons why the last visit must be getting closer all the time, but if it is, that does make this evening very special as far as I am concerned.

Giving a little hint of the subject, but I see it's already in print so I'm not giving the game away here, it's always important to be sure, in so far as you can be sure, that you have the right subject for any given occasion. When Joyce and I were married, we were attending a Church of England church at that time on the channel island of Guernsey, just off the coast of France but part of the United Kingdom and its dependencies, let me get all that historical part right, and we were framing the order of service, which was largely following the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, and we wanted to include the singing of a psalm, which would be very common among regularly church-going people. And as we looked through the Book of Psalms together we decided that the one that began, "God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us," would be just the psalm we needed. That happens to be Psalm 67. Well, we took the Book of Psalms to the printer with the other instructions and just told them to print that particular psalm. Unfortunately, the numbering of the psalms was in roman numerals and I got my "L's" and "X's" and "V's" and "I's" mixed up. And when the order of service came back from the printer, I discovered to my horror that we were inviting the congregation to sing Psalm 57, which began, "God be merciful to me until these calamities be over passed." So I kind of got the wrong psalm for that particular occasion!

And thinking and praying about tonight, I want in fact not to preach on a given text, but rather on a subject. And I believe the subject is in print, which is, "These Have Not Changed." We live in a world of change — geographical change, political change, moral change, financial turmoil. This is the first time, I believe, that I've preached in the fully and wonderfully furnished auditorium that you have here, so this too has changed since I was last with you. But one of the glories of the Christian faith is that we can hold firmly to those things which were true at the very foundation of the Christian church, that nothing has changed them, nothing can change them, and we can hold to them as firmly, preach to them as fervently as they were first preached in their day. This church, I believe, was founded about 147 years ago this year. We could take whatever was preached on that very first day, preach exactly the same sermon now, and not need to change a word of it. Now that's a very remarkable thing. I can't think of any other sphere in which that would be true. It wouldn't be true in the scientific sphere because true science is a humble vocation — always prepared to adjust and to tweak things as they go along. It would be an astonishing thing if you went to your doctor or your surgeon and he said, "Well, whatever was believed and taught and done a hundred years ago, I'm going to believe and teach and do today and I'm not going to change a single thing." I think you would change your doctor very quickly! But in the Christian church, we can hold firmly to things that were held two thousand years ago and not change one single phrase.

And so I want to give you three or four of these things that have not changed tonight. And firstly, the Bible has not changed. Since the very formation of the Christian church, the Bible has not changed. I've discovered — I was in New Mexico this morning — and I've discovered in the course of this particular trip that some of you Americans are getting very excited about the forthcoming royal marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton, and all you can do from across the Atlantic is to just get excited in a vicarious kind of way. Well, it's your fault! If you hadn't been so awkward in the 18th century he could have been your king in the future and so I have no sympathy whatever if you feel outdone because we're going to have a king and you're not going to have one! Whether it's too late for you to ever change your mind about what happened around 1776, that's not for me to say! But let me tell you what happens when a new king or queen is crowned in England. In the course of the service, somebody presents the incoming monarch with a copy of the Bible with these words: "We present you with this Book, the most valuable thing this world affords. Here is wisdom. This is the royal law. These are the lively oracles of God." Now what a wonderful statement to make at the coronation of a king or queen in the United Kingdom.

But wonderful as the words are, they are merely a reflection of something we read in the Bible itself. They underline the Bible's own claims. Here's the prophet Isaiah — "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of God stands forever." In the New Testament, here is the apostle Peter writing about the "living and enduring Word of God." No book in the world has been subject to such examination and criticism. No book in the world has been so venomously hated

and so viciously attacked and persecuted as this Book. And yet it has triumphed over all of its adversaries.

Let me just mention three of them. It has triumphed over the opposition of scientists, not of course of all scientists, but all those who do take a very different view to that which the Bible states. One of the greatest myths of the 19th century and onwards, into the 20th and now into the 21st, is that science has disproved the Bible. That is not only untrue, it is actually nonsensical because a working definition of science would do this — Science is the ongoing process of discovering truth in the natural world and by natural means. But the Bible speaks of another world, of a supernatural world, of a spiritual world, and it is one in which science can have no say whatever.

I remember a few years ago when a bishop in the Church of England virtually denied the virgin birth of Jesus and His resurrection. In response to it, thirty eminent scientists in our nation wrote a letter to *The Times*, arguably the world's most prestigious newspaper, in which they said that as far as miracles are concerned, science can have nothing to say on the subject. So the argument that science has disproved the Bible is truly nonsensical. The Bible is God's declared word of spiritual truth and whenever the statements of science, and incidentally, statements by scientists are not necessarily scientific statements, and I hope you realize the difference between the two, but when an apparent scientific statement contradicts with what the Bible says, then the Bible is the one that should be believed.

In 1861, the French Academy of Science, a very prestigious body, published a booklet listing fifty-one scientific facts which it was said conflicted with the teaching of the Bible. That was only in 1861, not really very long ago. Today's science disowns every one of those fifty-one scientific "facts." Every single one has now been discredited. In 1997, Professor Peter Atkins who lectured in physical chemistry at Oxford University, said this, "Science is mightier than the Word. Religion will atrophy and die." Well, I don't know what planet he lives on, but it's not the one in which I live on. I heard someone recently returning from China and telling us that at the time of Mao Zedong's revolution there were thought to be five million Christians in China. Today, there are eighty million. A number of new churches are actually being founded every single day without exception. Isaac Newton, thought by some to be the father of modern science, once said this of the Bible: "It is a rock from which all the hammers of criticism have never chipped a single fragment." We need to be reminded that not a single scientific archeological discovery made, relating to Biblical times, has ever disproved any statement made in Scripture. So the Bible has certainly successfully rejected the opposition of scientists. And scholars too — no other book in the world, none in the whole corpus of literature, has been the subject of so much detailed investigation as to its origin, its reliability, its integrity, and so forth.

Let me give you one extraordinary example. In 1963, the Reverend A. Q. Norton

of Glasgow University submitted the epistles of the apostle Paul, thirteen or fourteen of them, this is not the place to go into that, submitted them to computer analysis. And as you know of course, computers never make mistakes, and whatever the computer says simply must be true. His investigation revealed this by the computer - that nine out of the fourteen epistles were not written by the apostle Paul. Now that would seem to torpedo the integrity of the New Testament. However, somebody had the interesting idea of submitting the writings of the Reverend A. Q. Norton to the same computer analysis and the computer spewed out this very interesting result, that he hasn't written a word of his own books.

So the Bible has certainly, and I've only given you, in a way, an unusual example, has successfully resisted the attacks of the scholars and also of the skeptics. About a hundred years ago, one of the world's most notorious skeptics was the American General Lew Wallace. On one particular occasion, he was on a train journey with Robert Green Ingersoll, a renowned skeptic. And they got into conversation about religious things and Ingersoll said to him, "You're a clever man. Why don't you write a book proving that Jesus was not the author of the New Testament?" Now we would know what he meant by that, that Jesus was not the critical subject of New Testament teaching. And Wallace accepted the challenge. He went into a long assiduous study of documents relating to the relevant time period about two thousand years ago, but the more he studied, the more of what he was finding in the early documents contradicted the very thesis he was trying to establish. And the longer he went on in his studies, the more convinced he became not only that Jesus Christ did exist but that He was precisely who He claimed to be — the Son of God and the Savior of the world. And at fifty years of age, Wallace dropped on his knees and cried out, "O God, show Yourself to me. Forgive my sins and help me to become a true disciple of Jesus Christ!" He continued to write, but the book he wrote turned out not to be a distraction of Christianity, but a masterly defense of it. The book concerned was *Ben-Hur*, a classic defense of the truth of Scripture.

My friends, the Bible has not changed and we have no need to be intimidated by scientists or scholars or skeptics who say that it is irrelevant and untrue and unreliable. They live their little lies, they say their little words, they write their little books, they die their little deaths, and the Bible remains unchanged and utterly unchangeable — the living and enduring Word of God. So the first thing that has not changed is the Bible.

Secondly, God has not changed, and the two are related. Nearly four thousand times in the Old Testament, seven hundred times in the first five books — the most disputed books in the Old Testament — the Bible claims to be the Word of God. And the reason we can say the Bible has not changed is that it is the Word of the living God, working through a number of authors over the course of about 1,500 years, but these men writing what God, by His Holy Spirit, told them to write. And that God has not changed. Let me read to you the closing words of

Psalm 102. "In the beginning You laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment, like clothing. You will change them and they will be discarded, but you remain the same and Your years will never end. The children of Your servant will live in Your presence. Their descendents will be established before You." God is unchanged and unchangeable and unchanging. God alone can say, His is the only voice in the entire universe that can say, "I am the Lord. I do not change." In once translation of a beautiful phrase by James towards the end of the New Testament we read that "God does not change like shifting shadows."

Theologians speak about this and they call it the immutability of God. Theologians are great at long words, but the simplest way I know of explaining immutability is by the use of an even longer word, which is unchangeability, and that's easier, I think, for all of us to understand. And the Bible is crystal clear about the unchangeability of God. And I want to mention just two things this evening and the first is this — God's power has not changed. The Bible begins with surely the most majestic words in all literature. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." There is not a single atom, proton, neutron, micron in the entire universe that was not brought into being by God. God created all reality outside of Himself. Even the time and space in which we live and move and have our being was created at the hand of the living God.

There's a lovely phrase in Scripture which, I think if we are writing the book we might put it in brackets just as a kind of side comment, and it says this — "He made the stars also." Just a simple phrase, "He made the stars also," and yet here is our earth orbiting around the sun which is a million times its size, that activity going on in what Stephen Hawking, not to be confused with Richard Dawkins, delightfully calls the "outer suburbs of an ordinary spiral galaxy." The ordinary spiral galaxy is the Milky Way which measures 621 thousand million million miles across has a hundred thousand million stars in it and is one of a hundred thousand million galaxies in the known universe. And the Bible says, "Oh, He made the stars too." The enormous, unspeakable, unimaginable power of God. And that God's power is unchanged and unchangeable today.

Now do you see, as a congregation of God's people here, the relevance of that statement in the life here of this church at First Pres? There is no place too hard for God to work in. As I've travelled around, and I've kept being reminded by the church in New Mexico where I was preaching earlier this week, that I'm just on the brink of beginning my fiftieth year in fulltime ministry, and I can't tell you the number of places to which I've gone where people have said to me, "This is a tough place to work." You know, "This is an inner-city situation. My, it's hard to work here." So you go to a rural situation where houses are miles apart and the pastor will say, "Christian witness is very difficult here in this very widespread and rural community." I recall going to preach in Alaska and I was told, "It's really tough up here in Alaska. People either come here to start a new life or to end

their present one and it's a very difficult place." So I went to Hawaii. And the very first thing a pastor said to me there was, "This is one of the toughest imaginable places in which to work." And it seems to me that those in the heat of the battle can often find themselves saying, "This is a very difficult place in which to work." I read today, in order to be fully up to date with what's going on in the world, I read in *USA Today* that Mississippi has the highest density of church-going people in the entire nation. The state of Mississippi is the most church-going state in the entire nation. But I'll guarantee you there are leaders of churches in Mississippi who would tell you the going is very tough here. And you have a just a magnificent auditorium here, wonderful facility. I can't think offhand of any church in England that I've been in that could match this, but I'm sure there are those who are actively working in the church who would say, "You know, we're up against all kinds of real difficult problems here."

I want to tell you, God's power has not changed and there is not a single situation that any of you in leadership or in the next layer, if you will, or rung of Christian service in this church, there's not one of you that has a situation so difficult that it is beyond the power of God to work in. There is no place too difficult for the Lord to work in. There is no problem too hard for the Lord to solve, not one. There is no problem that causes God to furrow His brow and to say, "Well, I have to confess, I've not come across this before and this is something that I really don't know how to handle." There is no person too hard to save. Some of you who have taught Sunday School or led study group or raised families may have those very dear to you or very well-known to you and you would say, "They heard the Gospel so often, I've sought to communicate the truth to them as well as I can, and over long years, and they still don't seem to show the slightest sign of true repentance and faith." And you may at times been on the brink of saying, "I think they're simply beyond the pale and there's nothing further that I can do." My friends, there may be nothing further that you can do, but there's always something further that God can do because no person is too hard for God to save. God's power has not changed.

And secondly, God's love has not changed. It's been said that the greatest statement in the whole of Scripture about God is the simple statement: "God is love." Everything that God does, He does in love. He created the world in love; He sustains and upholds creation in love; He provides our needs in love; He sent the Lord Jesus into the world to save sinners as the most stupendous act of love. Everything that God does, He does in love. He disciplines His people in love. There are times when, as Christians, we wonder why things are so tough, things are so painful, that we seem to be being hurt in one way and another. It may well be, when we are able to reflect on those things with a more mature mind, we will see that God is doing something, God is speaking to us, through those very situations. C. S. Lewis, wonderfully helpfully said this, "God whispers in our pleasures, He speaks in our conscience, but He shouts in our pains. It is His megaphone to rouse a dead world." And I would give my testimony that in the year since my wife was called home, God has spoken to me more loudly than at

any time that I can consciously remember before that.

So when the clouds are dark, when the road is long, when the burden is heavy, when there doesn't seem to be any solution to the situation you're in, as a believer, I would encourage you to listen for God's voice, to ask the question, "What is God saying to me through this and what should my response be to that?" God is always more concerned with our holiness than He is with our happiness, although the two are not necessarily incompatible. But God will go to extraordinary lengths to work out His eternal purposes and to confer upon His people the blessing of becoming more and more in the likeness of His beloved Son. God has not changed. He hasn't changed in His power, He hasn't changed in His love, and His power and His love are available to you in your situation today and in the coming days.

And thirdly, the Gospel has not changed. The heart of the Christian message is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Andrew Alexander of Princeton University in his very last days said this — "All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Now what a remarkable and helpful thing to say. Here was a man who, for decades, had immersed himself in the study and the transmission of Biblical theology and all of its wonder and depth and richness. And yet, in his final days, he says, "All of my theology is reduced to this narrow compass: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." That is the Gospel and it has not changed. In fact, it cannot change. And the reason it cannot change is that it is history. The Gospel is a recording of facts or of one great fact expressed in many ways in the birth, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it is a fact or the fact of history. And history cannot change. We sometimes say of a situation, "It's been developing in a certain way. It's caused us all kinds of difficulties." And then finally we come to an end of it, realize there's nothing we can do about it, and we use the phrase colloquially, speaking to each other we say, "Well that's history." What we're really saying is, "We cannot undo what was done." We may do something in relation to it but you cannot undo it. You cannot undo the battle of Waterloo. You cannot undo the discovery of radium. You cannot undo the journey of the Pilgrim Fathers. These are facts of history.

So much of preaching that I hear today when I watch religious television — allow me to say this — we don't have very much Christian television in Britain; you have very little of it in America. You have a lot of religious television. That's very different from Christian television. And I, I watch a little of it for information. I only watch a little of it for the sake of my sanctification but I do watch some just to get a handle on what's going on. And a great deal of what I hear is not a declaration of fact. What I'm hearing are religious commercials for the preacher concerned, or the ministry to be had, or the organization that he represents, or the program that he's developing, but the Gospel is not a commercial. The Gospel is fact. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is not a theory. It's not an idea. It's not even a creed. It's a declaration of fact, a declaration of history.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 15 and let's read a verse or two there to show you exactly what I mean. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Some of you will know the passage well. Paul says, "Now brethren, I want to remind you of the Gospel I preach to you, which you received and of which you have taken your stand. By this Gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preach to you, otherwise you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," which means just as the Scriptures said He would, "that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures," just as the Scriptures said He would. My friends, that is the Gospel, and a great deal of what I hear — and I'll say this, this will be my last reference to it — when I glance at religious television, this is not what I'm hearing. What I'm hearing is a wonderful and immediate offer for the solution of your financial problems and your personal problems, your health problems, your medical problems — oh, of course it does come — the flip side of that is you send a check to the ministry then this will certainly happen to you — that is not the Gospel. The Gospel is: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

A friend that some of you know very well, a good friend of mine Jeff Thomas from Wales, he and I were discussing together some of the trends in the Christian church today. The Christian church at times reminds me of a public swimming bath. Most of the noise is coming from the shallow end. And he was discussing this with me and he said, "John, all we have to offer is a crucified and risen Savior," and he was right. That's all we have to offer — a crucified and risen Savior — and that is the Christian Gospel and it simply cannot change. And here is the challenge that faces us, and I'll come to this in a few moments as we close. Most people in the world have never heard the Gospel. More people in the world today have never once heard the Gospel than the entire population of the world in 1995. And most who have heard it reject it, but it is the only solution for man's sinfulness and his depravity and his corruption. William Plummer, a 19th century American Presbyterian once said this: "The annals of the world tell us of not one instance where a sinner was converted, sanctified, filled with pious hope, made willing to suffer in the world, and enabled mightily to triumph over the world the flesh and the devil, over fears temptations and death itself, except by the Gospel of Christ." Let me repeat what I said toward the beginning. This church was founded 147 years ago this month. We could take the foundational statement, the foundational preaching of this church nearly a century and a half ago, and we would not have to change a thing because what was preached in the foundation of this church was what stands as the foundation of the Christian faith, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that is not a commercial. That is not "come into a relationship with Jesus and you'll feel so much better, feel good about yourself." It's not about the "feel good" factor; it's about the "be good" factor, indeed, the "be godly" factor, and the only way in which that could be true is when people come and submit themselves to

the claim of Christ. The Gospel is rubbished by the media, it's rejected by the masses, but it remains the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. And it has not changed. We have no new message because man essentially has no new problem. The heart of man's problem is the problem of the heart. He is depraved and corrupt, and godless and powerless to help himself, and only the Christian Gospel can lift him from that situation, bring him into a living relationship with God, and utterly transform his life. And the Gospel has not changed.

And finally, our responsibility has not changed. The Bible hasn't changed, God hasn't changed, our responsibility has not changed. Turn with me to the last recorded words of the risen Christ to His disciples. We find them at the very end of Matthew's gospel. Matthew 28 verse 18: "And Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" This is the great commission. These are the standing orders of the Christian church, and we have only to go back to the beginnings, the birth if you will, of the Christian church to see that that is precisely the message that it had.

Key Scott Latourette, a famous historian of the early Christian days in the church and of course beyond that, said this — "The chief agents in the expansion of Christianity appear not to have been those who made it a profession, or a major part of their occupation, but men and women who earned their livelihood in some purely secular manner and spoke of their faith to those whom they met in this natural fashion." What he was saying was that the Christian gospel in the early days was not mainly and essentially preached by the leaders of the church but by the laypeople in the church.

There's a very telling expression of this at the beginning of Acts chapter 8. "On that day, a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." So here's the situation. The church has been born, it is growing, it's had the most remarkable opening period, there's great persecution against it, as the result of which all the church except the leaders were scattered. And then we read this: "Those who had been scattered, preached the word wherever they went." They weren't qualified preachers; they hadn't been to seminary; they didn't have doctorates; they hadn't been to training classes on how to preach, but "those who had been scattered," the ordinary people, they "preached the word wherever they went." That doesn't mean they produced three-part sermons. It simply means they shared heart to heart, man to man, woman to woman, person to person — they shared the reality of the faith that had revolutionized their lives. And that is the standing order of the church and it has not changed. Michael Green says somewhere, "The Gospel was too good to leave to the professionals." Ordinary people were those who were most widely used in the dissemination, the

proclamation of the Christian gospel.

And I'm going to dare say this, that even though you are blessed with fine preaching in this church and that if I were living in this area I would count it the most enormous privilege to be sitting where you sit Sunday by Sunday and hear the preaching from this pulpit, I am absolutely certain, though I've never discussed it with them, I'm absolutely certain that the leadership of this church would say the main evangelistic work of First Presbyterian Church is to be done not from this pulpit but from the people in the pew. I'm absolutely — I've got no doubts about that whatever. It is the responsibility of all of those who have come to faith in Christ to share the Gospel with others. And that responsibility has not changed. Are you genuinely, honestly, earnestly, seriously concerned about the eternal fate of friends, colleagues at work, people you meet socially, members of your own family, occasional contacts? Are you really seriously concerned about their eternal destiny? If so, surely you must do something about it. It is your responsibility to do so.

December 1984, on the N-25, which is, as you would call it, the freeway that goes all the way around London, and only about six miles from where I live, it was early in the morning and a massive fog shrouded the N-25. Now I know people in America who feel that a massive fog shrouds the whole of England 360 days in the year! Well like all of your conceptions about Britain, it's wrong! So I've put that one straight. The hazard lights were on. Most motorists took no notice of it and carried on driving much too fast. A huge lorry, loaded with massive rolls of paper, got involved in an accident. The paper, the rolls of paper, spread out all over the road, and suddenly chaos reigned. One vehicle after another crashed into those in front of it. Within minutes, the carriageway was a scene of carnage. Dozens of cars were wrecked. Many people were injured. A police patrol car happened to be near at the time. The policemen jumped out and they took the traffic cones from the side of the roadway, they screamed at the motorists to stop, they flung the cones at the windshields of the car, and with tears streaming down their faces they cried out that the motorists would stop. Most of them took no notice and they got to the point where the policemen could count the number of seconds before there was another appalling squeal of breaks, a grinding of metal, another crash, and somebody else killed. It was a devastating incident.

The fact of the matter is, you and I have a great responsibility than those police had, that day by day we are in charge with people who are in much greater danger than those motorists were. There are people going along through life getting nearer and nearer to the point when they drop off their experience of living on this planet and into an eternity without Christ.

Allow me to give you this illustration. My wife, Joyce, was laid to rest on the forty-eighth anniversary of our travelling from the Channel Islands to England to begin fulltime Christian service. If that was not prearranged - and I'm not sure I realized until the day after that it was precisely on that day — and some months later, and

it takes that time because of the settling of the earth and so forth, we were able to erect a memorial stone on her grave. It doesn't have very much writing on it. It has her name, Joyce Sylvia Blanchard. It has her date of birth, the second of December 1933; her date of death, the seventeenth of February 2010. And then there's a space at the bottom, where in comparative terms, in relative terms, my name will soon be added. And in between are these words: "With Christ, which is far better." And I rejoiced to have put that there because it means that even when, to quote the hymn writer, "this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave," I will still be able to give my testimony to all who pass by. "With Christ, which is far better." Do we realize that those towards whom we are exercising, perhaps what John Stott called "a guilty silence," are heading for an eternity without Christ which is far worse, worse than anything that we could even imagine. Do we realize that? Do we believe that? And if we do, how are we responding to it?

Charles Wesley wrote a wonderful hymn with these words: "My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord, into Thy blessed hands receive; and let me live to preach Thy Word and let me to Thy glory live, my every sacred moment spend in publishing the sinner's Friend." If there are any sense, any degree, any level in which you can pray those words with Charles Wesley.

Let's bow our heads in prayer together.

These have not changed — the Bible has not changed, God has not changed, the Gospel has not changed, and our responsibility has not changed. Lord, speak to us through Your Word and by Your Spirit give to each one of us the grace of understanding these truths, and give us the greater grace of obedience in response to them. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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