

“The Solid Rock”
Hebrews 13:8 and Matthew 7:24 – 27

Since the time of our marriage on June 26, 1960, my wife and I agreed that, God willing, we would eventually move back to our home county and enjoy living out our retirement years in familiar surroundings. The long years of planning turned into reality about two years ago when we sold our house in Thomasville, NC, and made the move to our small farm in Catawba County. Some years earlier, our daughter, Rose Marie, her husband, David, and their daughter, Lindsey, had moved from Charlotte and built a house on the farm. About that same time, our son, Ray and his wife, Patrice, purchased a small farm in Catawba County and moved from Winston-Salem. Eight months ago, Ray and Patrice were blessed by the birth of their daughter, Clara. Jewell and I rejoiced that finally our family would be living within fifteen minutes of each other.

Almost immediately, Jewell and I realized that indeed we were not returning to “familiar surroundings”. One day, as we were riding around in our home county, I turned to Jewell and exclaimed, “Nothing ever stays the same!” Later during a time of meditation, I started reflecting on that statement. All of a sudden I said to myself, “Things may not stay the same, but I know SOMEONE who stays the same!” The inspired writer states that truth very clearly in Hebrews 13:8 where he declares, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

During my reflection time that day, I was encouraged by considering some of the great qualities of our Lord that never change.

1. Jesus Christ is the same in His Love. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) What a verse! What rich meaning! What remarkable spiritual truths are found in that one verse! Divine love starts with Almighty God and includes all the people of the entire world. The degree of God’s love is proclaimed in that little word “so” which is often just skipped over when we read or quote John 3:16. Accepting God’s great love supremely revealed in the coming of Jesus Christ – God’s only begotten Son – brings salvation for now and for eternity to “whosoever believeth in him.” That divine love never changes.

2. Jesus Christ is the same in His forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As the Word declares, we have “all sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) But divine forgiveness is always available. Jesus Christ is the SAME....His amazing forgiveness never changes.

3. Jesus Christ is the same in His presence. The Bible makes it clear that God is with his people. His divine presence is a blessing to cherish. The psalmist makes it clear that even “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear for God is with me.” The word THROUGH is key even if we “slide” over it quickly when we read or quote Psalm 23. We walk THROUGH not just INTO. We move on THROUGH that dark valley and INTO eternity on the other side. And God is with us all the way. Our Lord’s final promise to His disciples, including all of us, is “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20)

When I was a boy growing up in the little town of Catawba, NC, Sunday night services at Catawba Baptist Church were special. The evening services usually had three parts – a time to sing, a time to pray, and a time to hear God’s Word read and proclaimed. The “time to sing” part of the service gave us the opportunity to request that a verse or two of one of our favorite songs be sung by the congregation. Hymn number 400 in the old Broadman Hymnal was one of my Daddy’s favorites. Hymn number 400 was entitled “Never Alone”. I can still hear my father as he called out “Number 400” over and over again in those Sunday night services. As a church, we would stand and sing together the words and message of the great song:

He (Jesus Christ) promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.
No, never alone, no never alone.
He promised never to leave me,
Never to leave me alone.

The message of that hymn, even at age 69, keeps ringing in my mind and remains planted in my heart. Our Lord will never leave nor forsake us. We are never alone, His presence does not change.

Our son, Ray, is a fisherman. As often as possible I go with him to the Yadkin River where we enjoy fishing for catfish. Sometime ago, following several days of hard rain, we went to the Yadkin to fish. The water was higher than I had ever seen and really rough. On that day it could be called “the mighty Yadkin”. We launched the boat in one of the most remote areas of the river and went upstream to one of Ray’s favorite spots. The anchors were dropped at the front and the back of the boat but they would not hold in the raging water. We floated downstream almost as if we did not have the anchors down. We pulled up the anchors and moved downstream to another location where a huge rock started over on the bank and extended over to the middle of the river. The water was so high that only the top of the enormous rock could be seen. At that new spot we dropped the anchors again with the same results as before. Down the river we floated! This time we pulled up the anchors and Ray said, “Dad I am going to ease the front of the boat up against that big rock. You catch hold of it. Someone has bored a hole in the rock and I have a medal rod in the boat that will fit right into the hole. We are going to anchor to that solid rock.” We did just that and before long eight lines were out there in the water. The water continued to rage all around and over the top of that big rock but the boat stayed secure. We were anchored to the solid rock and could not be moved by the raging waters. Before long, Ray caught a twenty-five pound catfish!

When we loaded the boat and left the river that day, I was so happy that Ray caught that big fish. But I must confess that my mind was focused on the solid rock. Then I thought of Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday and today and forever. He is the solid rock and if our lives are anchored in Him the winds of change and the circumstances of life may rage all around us but we will not be moved. But whether or

not we are truly anchored to Jesus Christ is our individual decision to make. I don't know about you, but I take me stand with the hymn writer who declares:

On Christ the solid rock I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand. AMEN.

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