



Ministry of the Word

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Scripture: Hebrews 11:5-6

Subject: Part 29 - Walk by Faith

One could be allowed to wonder how the Jews who read this book, actually read their Torah, and if they did, what conclusions did they come to? Remember most of the Jews in those days, consider their traditional works righteous most important. Here at this point of the book, after all the doctrinal arguments, the writer points the readers back, reminding them, that Faith was always the key to please God even from the dawn of history.

The first person we are given as the first illustration of this, was the fourth person that was on this earth. Abel worshipped by faith, not by law nor on his own terms. He recognised his sin and obeyed God by offering a blood sacrifice to cover that sin. It pleased God. Abel still tells us today how to enter into the life of faith and how to worship God in the accepted way. It is out of worshipping God, on God's terms everything else flows from that.

The next person that we are introduced to as the next illustration is Enoch. His life tells us how to walk by Faith. Abel knew what it was to worship by faith, but he did not really understand the concept of walking with God. Revelation in Scripture was progressive. Abel received some revelation, and Enoch received more.

To find the story of Enoch, we need to go to Genesis chapter 5. There we find not just the Genealogy from Adam to Noah, but we are also given God's Gospel plan from the meaning of their names.

Seth was Adam and Eve's third son and it is through his line and not Cain's that we see this plan unfolded. As you look at each name, you will also read about the age which they 'begot' the next in line and you will also read 'And he died'. There is an old Sunday School riddle, and let's see how many get the correct answer –

Who is the oldest man who ever lived, but died before his father did? Methuselah!

You see, everyone, regardless of who they were or what they did died, that is to say everyone died in that line except Enoch.

Let's read what happen in Genesis chapter 5 verses 21 to 24

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. ²² After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. ²³ So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. ²⁴ And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

At the birth of Enoch's son Methuselah, something happened to Enoch which was more than becoming a father as shocking as that may be. It wasn't that it was happening at 65 years old, because Enoch was only a child in relation to how long people lived then. We have to remember, that in those days in particular, names had meaning and it matter hence we can see the gospel plan in the first ten names. Enoch who's name in Hebrew means 'teaching' or 'dedicated', named his son Methuselah which means 'His death shall bring'. You see Methuselah's names was a prophesy that once he died judgment would come. We can see the demonstration of God's mercy for Methuselah was the longest living man on the earth ever. He died when he was 969 and that same year, the great flood came which wiped out every human and living thing on land bar Noah and his family, and the animals that the took with him in the ark.

After Methuselah was born, it appears that Enoch sorted out his relationship with God, because we can see from the verses that we read in Genesis, that it was from that point on he walked with God.

The ultimate destiny of man seems to have been reclaimed with Enoch, who stands as an illustration for all men of what it is to be in fellowship with God. In Enoch the true destiny of man was again reached, as he experienced the fellowship with God that Adam and Eve had forfeited.

Enoch's faith included everything Abel's faith included. Enoch would have offered a sacrifice to God because a blood sacrifice is the only way into God's presence. He could not have walked with God unless he had first come to God, recognised his sin and gave a blood sacrifice. No-one ever could or every would be able to approach God apart from the shedding of blood. This principle has not changed from the days of Abel and Enoch, not even today. Thankful, Jesus was that perfect once and for all sacrifice on our behalf.

There are 5 features in Enoch's life that were pleasing to God: he believed that God is; he sought God's reward; he walked with God; he preached for God; and he entered into God's presence.

1. Enoch Believed That God Is

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is. (11:6a).

Kenneth Wuest wrote concerning this verse

'The writer lays down an axiomatic (self-evident) truth. He used the aorist tense in the infinitive 'to please'. The statement is universal in its application and timeless. The idea is, 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him at all'.

Absolutely nothing from men can please God apart from faith. Religion does not please God, because it is essentially a system developed by Satan to counteract the truth. Nationality and heritage do not please God. The Jews thought they pleased God just because they were descendants of Abraham but most of the time, they were displeasing to Him. Good works in themselves do not please God, "**because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight**" (Romans 3:20). The first step of faith is simply to believe that He is. Enoch did.

We cannot know God by sight. "**No man has seen God at any time,**" Jesus said (John 1:18). Nor can we know God by reason. Two chapters of the book of Job (38-39) are devoted to God's forceful and colourful illustrations of how man cannot even fathom the begins and

operations of nature. How much less can we really comprehend God Himself by our own observations and reasonings.

God gives much evidence of His existence, but it is not the kind of evidence that men often are looking for. He cannot be proved by science, for example. At best, scientific evidence is circumstantial. Paul Little a great biblical teacher and author wrote,

“The reason lies in the nature of history itself, and in the limitation of the scientific method. In order for something to be proven by science, it must be repeatable. One cannot announce a new finding to the world on the basis of a single experiment. But history is, by its very nature, unrepeatable. No one can rerun the beginning of the universe. Or bring Napoleon back. Or repeat the assassination of Lincoln or the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. But the fact that these events can’t be proved by repetition does not disprove their reality.”

You cannot put love or justice or anger in a test tube either, but no sensible person doubts their existence. Studies by anthropologists show that man is universally God conscious. While not every man may believe in some sort of god, much less in the true God, this does not disprove the rule, any more than a one-legged man proves that men are not two-legged creatures. The universal need for man to worship implies that God is.

The belief that He exists alone is certainly not enough, we must know Who He is.

He did not believe God was merely a great impersonal cosmic force. He believed in and knew God in a personal, loving way. You cannot "walk" with a ground of being or a first mover or an ultimate cause. For three hundred years Enoch had fellowship with the true God, a God whom he knew to be just, merciful, forgiving, caring, and very personal.

It is not enough merely to postulate a God. Einstein said,

"Certainly there is a God. Any man who doesn't believe in a cosmic force is a fool, but we could never know Him."

Brilliant as he was, Einstein was wrong. We can know God. In fact, in order to please Him, we must believe that He is personal, knowable, loving, caring, moral, and responds graciously to those who come to Him. It is not enough even to believe in the right God. Many Jews to whom the letter of Hebrews was addressed acknowledged the true God, the God of Scripture. But they did not have faith in Him; they did not trust in Him.

When Enoch personally walked with God, he was completely aware of who God is. He knew that God is more than a Creator as in Genesis 1 and 2, more than a Just God who dealt with sin, and more than a Holy God who is loving and merciful. Enoch knew more about who God is because he spent time with Him, He fellowshiped with him, He walked with him and knew He could be trusted. It must have been a wonderful time he had with God. Can you imagine it? If you think about the bible study that the two men had on the road to Emmaus for 7 miles, what kind of study would it have been for 300 years? Do you think part of that study would have been Genesis 1 verse 26?

To be save we must believe in the full disclosure of who God is. By this I mean, we must believe not just in the characteristics of God but also that He is a triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We must believe that Christ is one with the father and the Holy Spirit and no-one can come to the Father except through the Son which the Holy Spirit reveals. Enoch most certainly believed in God and Who He is as revealed to Him by God Himself.

2. Enoch Sought God's Reward.

He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (11:6b).

This is a very encouraging verse isn't it. It is saying that those who seek Him will find Him and their reward will be in Him. This reward is not for those who are after the material things, but only those who are after God himself. Diligently seeking takes time, focus, attention, thinking, perseverance, it needs heart. It is the complete opposite to half-hearted or no heart at all! Both Old and New testaments are filled with teachings that God not only can be found but that it is His great desire to be found. David said to his son Solomon,

"If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever" (1 Chronicles 28:9).

"Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God who judges on earth!" (Psalm 58:11).

"I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me" (Proverbs 8:17)

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Jesus was very explicit:

"For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened" (Luke 11:10).

The reward that God gives for faith is salvation.

"Whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

In other words, every good thing that God has, including eternal life, constitutes as the reward for belief. For faith we receive forgiveness, a new heart, eternal life, joy, peace, love, heaven and everything! When we trust in Jesus Christ, we become mutual heirs with Him. All that God's own Son has is ours as well.

3. Enoch Walked with God.

To continue pleasing God, we must fellowship with Him, commune with Him, "walk" with Him just as Enoch did. In the four verses of Genesis 5:21 to 24, Enoch is twice spoken of as "walking with God." In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) this phrase is translated "*pleased God*," using the same Greek word "*euaresteo*" to be 'well pleasing'. This word is used twice in Hebrews 11:5-6. It means that walking with God is pleasing God.

Why is it pleasing to God? William MacDonald wrote –

"Faith is the only thing that gives God His proper place, and puts man in his place too. 'It glorifies God exceedingly', writes C.H. Mackintosh, 'because it proves that we have more confidence in His eyesight than in our own'"

The term walk is used many times in the New Testament to represent faithful living.

"Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, ... so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

"Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us" (Ephesians 5:2).

Christ even speaks of our fellowship with Him in heaven as a walk:

"They will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy" (Revelation 3:4).

Like Enoch, every believer should walk with God every day he is on earth. When we get to heaven, we will walk with Him forever. Our walk implies a number of things. God loves it when we trust Him, it pleases Him to no end. The more we walk with God, the more we grow, our believing heart grows stronger and doubt shrinks.

Enoch's walk teaches us a lot. One of the things is that in Enoch's walk with God is reconciliation.

"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?" (Amos 3:3, NIV).

The point is obvious. Two people cannot really walk together in intimate fellowship unless they are agreed. Walking together, then, presupposes harmony. Enoch walked with God, he obviously was in agreement with God. Rebellion was over for this man of faith. Since Adam fell, every person born into the world has been in rebellion against God. We do not grow into rebellion or fall into rebellion; we are born into rebellion. Our very nature, from before birth, is at enmity with God. We are all ***"by nature children of wrath"*** (Ephesians 2:3). The purpose of salvation is to reconcile men to God, to restore the relationship broken by sin. Because of his faith, Enoch was reconciled with God; and because he was reconciled with God, he could walk with God.

Another lesson is that Enoch had a Corresponding Nature with God. This is an important lesson for it is impossible for an unbeliever to have fellowship with God (2 Corinthians 6:14-16), and for this reason his nature is too different from God's. Even though an unbeliever is created in God's image, that image has been so shattered by sin, and his nature so corrupted, that fellowship with his Creator is not possible. There is no common sphere in which he and God can be agreed. When we are saved, we become citizens of a new domain. We are still on earth, but our true life, our real citizenship, is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). As Peter said, we ***"become partakers of the divine nature"*** (2 Peter 1:4). In Christ we are given a heavenly nature, His own nature, and we can therefore have fellowship with God. Because Enoch walked with God, he must have had a nature corresponding to God's.

A third lesson which we have is Moral Fitness - God doesn't walk with just anyone. God is Holy which is why we must be Holy. He is perfectly righteous and He has imputed righteousness to us so that we can be in fellowship with Him. We could not have a new nature unless God took away sin. Because a person walks with God means that his sin has been forgiven and that he has been justified, counted righteous by God. Only when sin has been dealt with can we move into God's presence and begin walking with Him. God will not walk in any way but the way of holiness.

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6 and7).

This is why sin can cause harm to our fellowship with God and each other if we are not diligent. What I mean by this is, not that we won't sin but when we do, we deal with it as quickly as possible.

Another lesson Enoch demonstrates to us is that walking with God implies a surrendered will. God does not force His company on anyone. He only offers Himself. God must first will that a person comes to Him, but that person must also will to come to God. Faith is impossible without willingness to believe. Just as walking with God presupposes faith it also presupposes willingness, a surrendered will, a desire for fellowship. A surrendered will is not abject submissiveness or a weakness, but it is freeing and glad surrender which takes strength to say – whatever you want God, that is where I will go, that is who I will talk to, that is what I will do. A surrendered will is a surrender in love. *"And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments"* (2 John 6).

Like Enoch, we can walk with God. The New Testament refers to this sort of living as walking in the Spirit. We are to live continually in the sphere of the Spirit's presence, power, direction and teaching. The fruit of this walk in the Spirit are: *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"* (Galatians 5:22and23).

Walking in the Spirit is allowing Him to saturate your thoughts. It is saying, when you get up in the morning, "Holy Spirit, this is Your day, not mine. Use as You see fit." It is saying throughout the day, "Holy Spirit, continue to keep me from sin, direct my choices and my

decisions, use me to glorify Jesus Christ.” It is putting each decision, each opportunity, each temptation, each desire before Him, and asking for His direction and His power. Walking in the Spirit is dynamic and practical. It is not passive resignation but active obedience.

The New Testament describes walking with God in many ways. 3 John 4 says it is a truth walk; Romans 8:4 calls it a spiritual walk; Ephesians 5:2 describes it as a love walk, Ephesians 5:8 as walking in the light and Ephesians 5:15 as a wise walk.

Chapter 11 presents to us great examples of those who walked by faith, but we have an even greater example—our Lord Jesus Himself, the One who supremely walked with God. He did nothing, absolutely nothing, that was not the Father’s will. The beloved apostle reminds us that

“the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (1 John 2:6).

If we want to know how to walk, we need simply to look at Jesus. From childhood He was continually about His Father’s business, and only His Father’s business. He constantly walked with God. He could not have walked with God for three hundred years without trusting in God. While Enoch walked with God,

4. Enoch Preached for God.

We learn only from the book of Jude that Enoch preached for God. Let’s turn there to Jude verse 14 and 15

“And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Judging from this account, his message on ungodliness was brief and perhaps repetitious, but it was inspired. We have no hint as to how effective it was, but Enoch’s purpose was to be faithful, not effective. He did what God required of him and left the results to Him. One thing is certain: because of his faithful preaching and faithful living, no one who heard Enoch or lived around him had any excuse for not believing in God. Whether any of these people believed or not, the influence Enoch had on them must have been powerful. Now we need

to remember, that when Enoch preached, they were tough times, no different than the days in which we live. As each day passed, the days became more evil, darker than the day before. Not only were the days evil but Jude reports of Enoch's preaching contradicts any notion that Enoch lived in an easy time for believing. He was surrounded by false teachers and false teaching. He could not possibly have preached as strongly as he did without considerable opposition. He battled against his own generation in the same way that Noah would later battle against his. He let them know they were ungodly, and he let them know God was going to judge them. I believe God was pleased with Enoch because his faith was not just something he felt in his heart. It was heard on his lips and seen in his life. His faith was active and dynamic, vocal and fearless. What a challenge for us today! Are we willing to stand up and stand out by faith? Are we willing to allow God use us as He sees fit and not hid our light under a bushel?

5. Enoch Entered into God's Presence.

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained a witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. (11:5).

At last, after three hundred years of believing and walking and preaching, he went to be with the Lord in a marvellously unique way. God took him up without the experience of death. One moment he was there, and the next moment "*he was not, for God took him*" (Genesis 5:24). We do not know the reason why God waited three hundred years before taking Enoch to be with Himself. Perhaps it was to allow sufficient time for him to preach and witness to the hard and unbelieving generation in which he lived. Furthermore, we do not know why God took Enoch in that unusual way at all.

Oliver Greene wrote –

"Enoch is definitely a type of the New Testament saints who will be translated when the church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air, in the midst of an age of wholesale death and in an hour darker than any yet known, to man! Surely that hour is upon us. Surely these are the days known as 'the beginning of sorrows,' The darkest hour is always just before the dawn, and surely the night is far spent. Surely Jesus will come quickly. We do not know the day or the hour of His coming, but we do believe He is coming soon."

Enoch is a beautiful picture of believers who will be taken up directly to heaven when our Lord returns for His bride, the church. Just as Enoch was translated to heaven without seeing death, so also will be those of God's people who are alive at the rapture.

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord"

(1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Should Jesus come and you disappear, what will the world notice when you are gone? What will your absent say about your relationship with God at home, in work, or in your area? What impact do you, do we as a church have on our society?

Verse 6 of this chapter is so important that it really is a verse we should not just underline in our bibles, not just memorise it but make it a reality in our lives. Even at the dawn of history, based on our understanding of Able and Enoch, we see that God loves to be trusted.

I've had people tell me, if only I could see a miracle, I'd believe. If only I had a chance to chat with Jesus face to face. Does this type of 'faith' please God? No! The faith being spoken here is living faith, active faith, its worshipping by faith, walking by faith, believing by faith. It is the kind of faith that says yes to God's Word. This is the faith that God is pleased with.

W.H. Griffith Thomas put it this way – *"Faith rests on God, receives from God, responds to God, relies on God, realizes God, rejoices in God, and reproduces His life and character."*

This is what is meant by biblical faith.

I just want to end with this. Enoch had testimony that he pleased God. This just goes to show that having assurance isn't just a new testament theme and yet through-out the new testament we are told that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins. We are told because of these promises, we will one day be with him, whether he calls us personally or collectively.

Amen.