

THE MAN WHO PLEASED GOD

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:5-6).

Out of the dimness of the early days there arose the figure of Enoch, towering like a spiritual giant above the men of his generation, and impressing the imagination of people in all generation. When we ask what is known of him, the reply is: "Nothing, except that he walked with God and pleased Him." That is the highest praise that can be bestowed on any man. He, of whom this can be said, has learned the secret of life and mastered it.

Enoch was an unusual man. His life was very distinctive. His gentle spirit swept through this world like a passing perfume and left a lingering aroma in the air. His brief biography, contained in only eight verses is short, eloquent, fascinating and impressive. Enoch's greatness did not consist of military renown, political power, profound scholarship, successful statesmanship, splendid genius or magnificent philanthropic achievement. What made Enoch great was the fact that he "walked with God." Isn't that a wonderful description of a truly devout life?

We have been told nothing about Enoch's life in the home, or what business he pursued, or how he spent his evenings when his labors of the day were ended. Of the first sixty-five years of his life, it is merely said that Enoch lived. All the days of his infancy, boyhood and early manhood were covered by the one word "lived". There was nothing in those years that was of enough significance to record.

For Enoch life actually began at sixty-five. When Enoch arrived at sixty-five, which is what multitudes of people today call old age, Enoch began to live. The best of his life was still ahead of him.

It was immediately after the birth of his first child when Enoch began to walk with God. The responsibility of parenthood caused him to start walking with God. He realized that what his son was to be would be determined largely by the father. A father who can look into the face of his child and not want to be a better man is strangely lacking in his make-up. Many parents have been made better because they have been brought to God on behalf of their children.

What does it mean to walk with God? It presupposes faith in Him. It means there is mutual trust. Enoch trusted God and God trusted him. He had the most intimate spiritual companionship with God. Walking with God implies trust, friendship, congeniality, fellowship, intimacy, companionship, unity of thought and affection, purity, obedience and power. It involves a constant realization of His presence and an absolute dependence upon God. It produces a life regulated by His will, inspired by His Spirit and devoted to His purpose. It involves a higher type of living than is exemplified by the average Christian.

There are three things about Enoch's remarkable life that are worthy of our prayerful consideration.

I. His Path.

He "walked with God." What is meant by walking with God?

Walking with God implies that the choice of the path does not rest with us, but with Him. We may want to have God walk with us in a path of our own choosing. To desire that our wills should always prevail is natural. But this desire is not what is meant by walking with God. When Enoch "walked with God", he went God's way, and not his own.

The children of God learn to trust their heavenly Father to choose the path, and, if they are wise, they will walk in the path of His choosing. Part of their trial and discipline is to wait upon Him in order to know the way. They can afford not to see their way so long as they see their Guide and Friend. At one point in his early career, Charles Kingsley was asked by a lady, "But do you see your way through this?" He replied, "No, madam, I do not see my way. But God sees the way, and I see Him." And so it is with us: if we see our Guide ahead of us, we know the way will be the right one.

"So I go on not knowing,
I would not if I might,
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than go alone in the light;
I'd rather walk by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

Walking with God implies that God sets the pace. Children are apt to run ahead of their parents, and so are the children of God apt to run ahead of Him. God is the Master of time as well as our Guide in the way, and we must await His time, even for the things He means to do for us. We must beware of knocking at doors which He has not yet opened. We may be serving self-will under the guise of zeal for the Lord. When the time is ripe the door will open, like the door to the prison in which Peter was incarcerated, which, when he came to it "opened of its own accord." Our safety as Christians depends on our following our Guide. We must never run beyond His care.

Walking with God insures our deliverance from fear. God knows all that we shall meet on the road, whether of trial or sorrow, or of comfort and joy. We cannot possibly know what is coming to us. Only God, Who knows the end from the beginning, can know that. We need a Guide to whom we can look at every new turn in the road.

Enoch enjoyed an unbroken fellowship with God because he walked with Him seven days in the week. Unbroken fellowship begets an intimacy that becomes increasingly tender, beautiful, delightful and alluring. Good company makes the road short.

Enoch was not in any danger while he was walking with God. If we walk with God, we, too, are safe. He not only takes care of our souls, but He takes care of our bodies too.

Perhaps you have read the story of the Scotch Covenanters. When bloody Claverhouse was seeking to kill those Covenanters they were driven to the hills and mountains to worship. There was one old minister whom Claverhouse had for two years been longing to seize and kill. But God took care of His servant. One Lord's Day morning in one of the highland glens of Scotland, John Brown was preaching to his faithful flock. Claverhouse and his troops were approaching and they were much nearer than anticipated. John Brown, the faithful minister of Jesus Christ, rushed into the cave and said Claverhouse, "We have him at last." There were at least thirteen caves in that glen, and they started to search the caves one after the other, but there was no John Brown there. They were about to enter the last cave where Brown was. It was about two hours after he had entered and Claverhouse said to his troops, "No use to go in there, he is not there. He has escaped once more." "Why?" they asked. "Don't you see that spider's web over the mouth of the cave? He could not get in there without breaking it." God sent the spider after John Brown entered. Once more John Brown was free. Oh, there is safety always, if you walk with God as Enoch did!

In speaking to an aged Christian in London, someone said, "You live an even kind of life; if you get brushed up the wrong way, it never disturbs you. How is it that you seem to get the victory?" He replied, "Every morning ere I go out into the hall, to put on my hat before going down to my office in the city, I simply pray, 'Oh, Lord, make me master of all beneath my hat today,' and He gives me the victory." Don't you think it would help you to pray that prayer? How much better it would be for you, if you would!

II. His Purpose.

It was Enoch's purpose to please God, and he accomplished it. The Spirit-directed and Spirit-controlled writer penned this statement about Enoch: "He had this testimony, that he pleased God." Only those can please God who walk with Him. The son pleases his earthly father best who walks with him, that is, when the father's interests are the son's, the father's joys are the son's joys, the father's burdens are the son's burdens, and the father's sorrows are the son's sorrows. A child of God can please his heavenly Father by trusting Him fully and walking with Him faithfully.

It is proper that we walk with God. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). God planned for us to walk with Him. It is only when we walk with Him that we discharge our duties to ourselves, to others, and to God. Only thus can we render our best service. Walking with God is the pathway of patience and not of pride, of courage and not of compromise, of humility and not of human honor.

Enoch's walking with God was displeasing to many. It is never popular to walk with God. Like us, Enoch lived in a godless age, when the majority did not have any thought of or interest in God and the higher things. Nevertheless, Enoch walked with God as he went about his daily work. Being a daily companion with God was a lifetime business for Enoch and not just a spasmodic impulse.

Enoch's walk with God was exceedingly pleasant. He rejoiced greatly in his relationship with God even though it alienated him from the age in which he lived.

The fact that Enoch walked with Him pleased God. What an arresting thought! A man actually pleased God and caused Him to rejoice. Imagine a creature actually creating joy in the heart of the Creator. Yet, here it is in God's Word, "He had this testimony, that he pleased God." It is easier to please God than it is to please men, and especially professing Christians. God takes into account your limitations and your circumstances. It is thrilling to know that you can please God. The highest, holiest and noblest ambition you can have is to please God. God is highly pleased when you walk with Him and serve Him faithfully. When you do that, your fellow Christians, who are in fellowship with God, will be pleased too.

Enoch found it quite profitable to walk with God. It paid him well in blessings to himself and to his family. The longer Enoch walked with God, the more he grew in His likeness. As we walk with God, He directs our steps, protects us from danger, and comforts us in our distresses.

There is no joy or satisfaction like that which comes from the knowledge that one has been able to please God. Pleasing Him is the greatest purpose that one can have in life. If you really want to be happy and useful, be sure that you walk with God. God calls us to walk with Him. Various objections to walking with God are offered by different people. Youth says, "There are not many going that way, and it will be a lonesome journey." The truth is, it will never be lonesome walking with God. Business says, "It is an unprofitable proposition." Age says, "It takes too much effort." But God makes it worthwhile in time and in eternity for all who walk with Him. I cannot think of any higher tribute being given to any man than "He walked with God."

III. His Prophecy.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14 and 15).

After Enoch had lived a wonderfully inspirational and useful life, walking with God, he was raptured and did not have to experience death. At the end of his journey, God simply took him home with Him.

When Enoch's prophecy of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ was fulfilled, as it most assuredly will be, all of the deceased children of God will be raised from the dead, and all of the Christians who will be living will be transformed into the likeness of Christ and raptured or caught up to be with the Lord. All of them who have been faithful to the Lord in their respective spheres will receive an appropriate crown. Christian, above everything else strive to live in such a way that you can please God.