

Walking With God Like Enoch

Genesis 5:17-24¹⁷ *So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.* ¹⁸ *Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch.* ¹⁹ *After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters.* ²⁰ *So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.* ²¹ *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.*

Some might think of it as a morbid thought, but I think it is a very helpful thought: what do you want written on your tombstone? Some lines are very revealing, especially as the people left behind try to summarise that person's life in a sentence small enough to fit on a stone. Alexander the Great's tombstone was said to read, "A tomb now suffices him for whom the world was not enough" The gangster Al Capone's tombstone reads, "Jesus, have mercy."

Some of my favourite writers and teachers have some interesting things on their tombstones. C.S. Lewis' epitaph simply reads, "Man must endure his going hence." In a small cemetery near Akron in Ohio is buried a Christian who has influenced many of us here: A.W. Tozer. A.W. Tozer's tombstone simply reads, "A Man of God". What would summarise your life, if you died today, and someone was tasked to say who you were in a short phrase or sentence? More importantly, what would you want it to say, if you could choose this day? "His car was shiny" "Men thought she was beautiful." "Her children sat really well in church." "He had a lot of bucks." "She dressed really well." "His body was super-fit for a really long time." "He saw a lot of places." "Her home was immaculate." Are these the things we want to summarise our lives?

It is always good to think about what we believe our priorities really are as Christians, and what we would really want said about us. And here in Genesis we have a man whose whole life is summarised in a few words. Enoch's tombstone could simply read, "He walked with God." And yet, what a thing to be said of you! What if your tombstone read, "He walked with God"?

Of course, Enoch didn't have a tombstone because Enoch, along with Elijah is one of two men who never faced death, but was translated straight to Heaven. His unusual life, combined with this statement summarising his life, is supposed to get our attention.

Genealogies are not usually the most interesting reading. A list of names, this one begetting this one, living to this age, and dying. Someone said that Genesis 5 sounds like the tolling of funeral bells, a monotonous refrain of so-and-so lived, begat, and he died. And he died, and he died, and he died. Genesis 5 is proof of God's words – in the day you eat of this, you shall surely die. Here is the truth of God's words played out in repetitive cycle.

That's why when verse 22 suddenly breaks the cycle, we sit up and notice. Here we find something new added. Here was a man who did not merely live, beget children and die, but the account says

*After he begot Methuselah, **Enoch walked with God** three hundred years, and had sons and daughters.*

Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. And then, verse 24 makes this man even more outstanding: ²⁴ *And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.*

And once this little gem of information is given to us, the cycle begins again – birth, life, begetting and death. We wish the writer would stop and tell us all about Enoch. Instead we are left with just a few phrases about Enoch, and two New Testament Scriptures which tell us a little more.

Enoch walked with God. Without even studying that in-depth, we all have a sense that that is

something we would want said of us. To consider Enoch is to consider a short but powerful example of what the Christian can be. To read about Enoch is to gain encouragement and challenge for the year ahead of what we should be about, what we should be building, what we should be aiming to so characterise us that people would put it on our tombstone.

So, what was Enoch's secret? Did he have it easier than we do? Did he have more resources? As we gather up the evidence, we'll see Enoch's world, Enoch's walk, and Enoch's welcome.

I. Enoch's World

You might be tempted to think that Enoch lived in a purer, more innocent world than you do, and that it was easier for him to walk with God.

This much we can put together from the book of Genesis. Enoch was the seventh from Adam. He was born 622 years after the Fall, and 1034 years before the Flood. He lived at a time when human lifespans were enormous by today's standards, most of those mentioned in this genealogy averaged around 800 years. And if you work it out, Adam was still alive for the first 300 years of Enoch's life.

From what we can tell, human civilisation during this time became very advanced. It's possible that some of the enormous ziggurats, stonehenges, man-made mounds and other monoliths were being built during this time, or shortly after this time using methods and technologies we still don't understand. Some of the blocks that were lifted into place were so heavy that in the 21st century, we don't possess a crane strong enough to lift them. Many of the blocks and the masonry was cut so precisely that modern engineers have said one would need a high-speed diamond drill. There seems to have been great advances in astronomy, mathematics, cartography and map-making, travel. When people are living for 800 years, they can learn a lot. And in the 1656 years between Adam and the Flood, there was no doubt enormous development, innovation and development. During Enoch's life, some of the great cities in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Northern and Western Europe and India were beginning.

But they were not only becoming advanced in technology, they were becoming advanced in evil. False worship, idolatry, and possibly even demonic intervention in the world was part of life.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,

2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

5 Then the LORD¹ saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

Genesis 6:11-12 ¹¹ *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.*

We don't know all that means, whether it is a reference to what Jude calls the angels who left their proper place, or whether it refers to something else. But we do know that God regarded the very created order as polluted. Paul is no doubt referring to this period of time when he writes in Romans

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23

and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-- and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality¹, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving¹, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

(Rom 1:26-32)

This was no clean and welcoming world. This was no conservative culture. This was a society which God was prepared to wipe off the face of the Earth with a Flood.

It was in this world that Enoch lived. It was in this society that Enoch stood out like a diamond in the rough. Like us, he lived in a world given over to evil, in rejection of God. Enoch lived an outstanding life.

II. Enoch's Walk

Twice the writer of Genesis, Moses, tells us that Enoch walked with God. That is a beautiful but still general statement. In the book of Hebrews we find some verses which become like an inspired commentary on these verses in Genesis, explaining them for us.

Hebrews 11:5-6 *By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. ⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

The secret of Enoch's life was that his walk with God was a walk of faith.

Enoch pleased God, but not because he possessed some extraordinary gifts or abilities or talents. No, Enoch pleased God because he exercised something which is open to all – faith. That should encourage us. If Enoch had been pleasing to God because of some extraordinary gifts and talents, we might be discouraged or despair; but if he was pleasing to God through faith, that same faith which saved Abraham, and Isaac, and David, that same faith which has been wrought in you and in me, then the way is open to us too! If we have faith we may also walk with God.

What does that mean? Well, the first kind of faith was the faith that began his walk.

Enoch, like all Old Testament saints, was made pleasing to God by his faith in God. They believed God's Word, trusted in what He had revealed to them, and God justified them. God declared them to be righteous through the future death of His Son on the cross. That was the first kind of faith – saving faith.

That's what begins this walk. A walk assumes there is an established relationship. If you have ever walked where there are crowds of people walking, perhaps in a mall, or in a busy street, if you find yourself walking right next to a complete stranger, what do you do? Do you keep pace with that person? No, you typically slow down or speed up, because the only person that you will keep

walking with, side-by-side is with someone you know.

Enoch was one of the few in his world that had believed on God, and God had counted it to him for righteousness. He was one of God's children, one of God's people. Nobody walks with the triune God who does not know God through His Son by the Spirit.

But there is more to a walk than an established relationship. If two people walk side-by-side, it's usually because they know each other. But when two people like that walk together, what do we expect will happen while they walk together? We expect that there will be continual conversation. We expect that two people who walk together will talk together. There will be communion. This is the second kind of faith – sanctifying faith.

The writer of Hebrews says that faith believes that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. If you only believe that God is, your faith is incomplete. Your faith must believe not just in the reality of God, but also in the responsiveness of God. That's what Enoch did. He believed God is, and He believed that to speak with God, and commune with God and live in God's presence would be rewarded with more experience of God.

This is walking with God- choosing to by faith share all of life with God. To live it before Him and with him and in front of Him, because you believe He is, and He rewards the diligent effort to seek Him. This is communing with God.

If we take the teaching of Scripture as a whole, we can see this walk of communion happening in three stages, made up of two movements in each. Communion and conviction, confession and consecration, cleansing and conformity.

Communion is simply sharing life with God and in God. As you would with a physical person who lived with you, it means communicating – observing, thanking, praising, asking. Jesus used the word 'abide' to describe this. What does it mean to abide? It simply means to dwell, to live together. When you walk with someone or live in the same house with someone that you love – there is free, easy, natural, and ongoing. Sometimes you simply do activities together without talking. But they are shared in each other's presence, done with each other, with the easy comfort of being with one you love.

And like us, he sinned. How then did he keep walking with God?

Amos 3:3 says, can two walk together except they be agreed? Once we start walking with God, we soon find that it is not always easy to keep in step with Him.

As we live with God in communion, something happens. His holy nature begins to identify ways that we displease Him. We do things, think things, or desire things that are offensive to our heavenly Indweller. So, He does the work of conviction. Conviction is where God identifies something He wants us to confess to Him so that we can keep enjoying the joy of communion.

One of the strange experiences that Christians have to understand and get used to is that the more you commune with God, the more painfully aware you become of your sin. It is as if the clearer the light becomes, the more we notice even the smaller specks of dirt. The closer you draw to God, the more his holiness highlights the contrast between you and him.

Now when God convicts us, He does not convict us of all sin in our lives. To do so would utterly

crush and discourage us. We are only faintly aware of how many ways we offend God, and it is through the complete work of Christ that He dwells with us and we remain acceptable to Him. But since He is committed to progressively growing us, He puts His finger on a particular area of sin that needs to be dealt with. This conviction is not God identifying the *only* sin in our lives, but it is the sin God wants you to become aware of and confess at that time. Given your growth and level of maturity, God decides it is no longer tolerable, and He makes you aware of it.

After all, we put up with crying for food in our one-year-old children, but we would not accept it in our eleven-year-olds. We put up with some immature desires in our four-year-olds, that we do not tolerate in our seventeen-year-olds. As our children grow, we expect them to put away certain ways, and grow up. So it is with living with God. As we commune with Him, He makes us aware of something which has now become a sticking point in the abiding relationship.

That then leads to the second stage, which is confession and consecration. Confession is where we own up to our wrongdoing. What God wants here is not some kind of work from us which will appease Him. Our tears or sorrow cannot atone for sin. We step up to more maturity, and claim ownership for our sins. We call sin sin, we agree with God, we identify something in our lives as offensive to God, as unfitting for one in whom God dwells and bring it to God as sin. Confession involves an attitude of forsaking. If we agree with God that it is wrong and evil, then we agree it must go.

Now sometimes, God convicts us not about a sin, but about something good and lawful that we have turned into an idol. Something good, such as family, or health, or work, or education, or marriage, or hobbies has turned into something evil, because we are not loving it for God's sake, or doing it in God's strength. So we not only confess what is evil, we also consecrate what is lawful. We put things back on the altar. We tell God that this good thing is ultimately for Him, and to Him, and by Him. We find all the little streams that want to go independently, and we channel them back to the one river of loving God. *Galatians 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Gal 5:25)* Confession and consecration is all about getting back in step with God.

That leads to the third stage which is cleansing and conformity. 1 John 1:9 tells us that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son has done and is always doing its cleansing work. We are no less or more justified when we confess our sins.

But what does happen is that our consciences, that part of us which senses and experiences our closeness to God is cleansed. Our consciences sense the Fatherly displeasure at our sin, and when we confess it, we know that the ongoing cleansing power of Christ's blood is true of us, and that God is pleased that we have recognised and owned up to our sin. Boldness to commune with God is restored. We are cleansed in conscience, but we are also cleansed in practice.

That's conforming. As we forsake our sin in confessing, we are replacing it with a new set of behaviours, attitudes, thoughts, desires, we are coming to love what God loves and hate what God hates. These new ways of living conform to the character of God. The more like Him we become in practice, the more we know and experience and enjoy Him in practice. Just like a child who becomes much like his father, becomes more like his friend as he grows up, so our conformity to Christ makes the communion with God closer, sweeter and deeper. We are now even more in step with God. Our walk has strengthened.

You see, when we are walking with someone, we are making progress. We are going forward. The longer we walk with God, the further along we are in knowing and loving God.

Question: when can we do this? What special circumstance, what set of tools, what atmosphere do

you need to commune, confess, consecrate? Answer: you can do this when you drive, when you exercise, when you garden, when you work. Yes sometimes, you adore God directly, and sometimes, of necessity, you must do your work or love that person or discipline that child, but you can still do it in God's presence. You can commune with God not only by directly loving Him, but also by indirectly doing your work well for Him.

Oswald Chambers said, "The test of a man's religious life and character is not what he does in the exceptional moments of life, but what he does in the ordinary times, when there is nothing tremendous or exciting on."

Think of how long Enoch did this for – our text in Genesis says for three hundred years. When the company is none other than the Lord, it is understandable that he would not want any other company.

But maybe someone says – only a hermit could walk with God for three hundred years. My life is far too busy with family concerns to ever walk with God. Well, notice what the text says about Enoch in Genesis 5.

Genesis 5:22 ²² *After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters.*

Enoch was a family man. Enoch conducted this walk surrounded by the noise of sons and daughters. He raised a son, Methuselah, who would go on to be the longest living human being in history. And if his long life was partly a reward for honouring father and mother, then we can infer that Enoch was not simply a begetter, but a good father.

Enoch lived in this communion with God for three hundred years. But make no mistake, Enoch was a sinner like we are.

For Enoch that meant a testimony of pleasing God. It meant being a bold prophet who exposed the lies and ungodliness of His age. In the book of Jude, we read, "**Jude 1:14-15** ¹⁴ *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,' ¹⁵ 'to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.*

It meant raising a godly family, and a son whose own name was perhaps a warning to all. Methuselah possibly means, "When he is dead it shall be sent" or "When he dies, judgement". Quite possibly, Enoch was told of the coming judgement of the Flood and testified to the world in the very name of his son- a son who lived for 969 years.

Enoch walked with God, for at least three hundred years of communion & conviction, confession & consecration, cleansing and more conformity to the God he loved. Walking, adjusting, and getting more in step with God.

This kind of life led to Enoch's welcome.

III. Enoch's Welcome

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Hebrews 11:5-6 *By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found,*

because God had taken him

Enoch did not only walk with God, but God chose to extend a special welcome to Him. He took Enoch to glory personally. When you consider how long people were living at that time, it seems that Enoch was taken while still relatively young. Three hundred and sixty five would be comparable to someone in his early thirties today – like the age of our Lord when He died.

And it seems that Enoch lived such a life of communion with God, such a life of abiding in God, that there came a point when God chose to favour him with a gift that Christians living when the Lord returns will experience – direct catching up into God's presence, without seeing death.

Spurgeon said of Enoch, “But this man did his work so well, and kept so close to God that his day’s work was done at noon, and the Lord said, “Come home, Enoch, there is no need for you to be out of heaven any longer; you have borne your testimony, you have lived your life; through all the ages men will look upon you as a model man, and therefore you may come home.” God never keeps his wheat out in the fields longer than is necessary, when it is ripe he reaps it at once: when his people are ready to go home he will take them home.”

Notice something in verse 5 of Hebrews 11. It says that Enoch was not found. Now if Enoch was not found, what does that imply? People were looking for him. There came a day when Mrs Enoch waited and waited, and he did not come home. There came a day when Methuselah heard the news that father was nowhere to be found. There came a day when all the other sons and daughters wept for their father who had now gone from them. There came a day when the people Enoch had taught, and those who had heard his preaching, searched for him, but he could not be found. Enoch had lived a life that had profoundly affected others, and when he was gone, people knew it. John Wesley said, live so as to be missed. He was missed. But Earth's loss was heaven's gain. The one who had gotten so used to walking with God,

Again, Spurgeon: “To walk with God for three centuries was so sweet that the patriarch kept on with his walk until he walked beyond time and space, and walked into paradise, Where he is still marching on in the same divine society. He had heaven on earth, and it was therefore not so wonderful that he glided away from earth to heaven so easily.”

The writer of the book of Hebrews holds up these heroes of faith like Enoch not to overawe us, but to encourage us to do the same.