

Walking with God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 March 2020

Preacher: Robin Gray

[0 : 0 0] Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.

Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. We also read in Hebrews chapter 11, that great hall of faith.

In verse 5, the writer tells us, By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him.

Now before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. This chapter that we read there in its totality, and I think it did help us see how interesting those few verses are in it about Enoch, because this chapter is marked by the refrain, And he died, and he died, and he died, and he died.

It's a reminder of what has happened in the garden. If you eat of the fruit of that tree, you will surely die. And so death has come into the world.

[1 : 2 4] There was a far greater longevity in those days of life, but still it ended in death. It's a reminder of the curse that's fallen.

This is now life in a fallen world. But then, as we hear, and he died, and he died, and he died, to hear a break in this relentless reminder of death, that awakens and arouses our interest, doesn't it?

This one did not die in this list of the patriarchs. Something is said about this man twice.

He walked with God. And this appears to be linked to the fact that he did not die.

Rather, he simply was not, or as the writer to the Hebrews puts it, was not found, because God took him.

[2 : 3 8] It's the only instance, along with Elijah, in the Old Testament of somebody not dying, of being translated, as it's sometimes called, simply being taken in to glory without dying.

And so it's a really remarkable thing that we're looking at here. This one who walked with God, and then simply was not, because God took him.

Enoch's story, this short account that's given to us in Genesis chapter 5, can help us in two main ways, I think.

Firstly, it's an early example of an undivided heart. How do you walk with God in the way that Enoch did?

You have an undivided heart. John Calvin's motto, the great reformer, he had a picture, and it was a hand, two hands, holding a heart that was on fire.

[3 : 5 4] And the motto was, promptly and sincerely, I give you my heart. Yet no reservations. I dedicate my life to you.

Here is my heart, and it's on fire for you. And I offer it to you promptly and sincerely. As Jesus taught us and teaches us, you cannot serve two masters.

Your heart cannot be divided in its loyalties. Because Jesus says, either you will hate the one and love the other, or you'll be devoted to the one and despise the other.

And in this case, he's talking about one which really does often divide our loyalties. You cannot serve both God and money. That is often what drags away our loyalty from being focused singularly on the Lord and the pursuit of him, is the pursuit of feathering our own nest beyond what is necessary for us.

And looking out for money. But it can be other things as well. What else can cause us to have a divided heart?

[5 : 11] It can be our own desire for comfort. Ultimately, our own selfishness in one way or another. Or it may be the attractions of this world that can so easily lure us in and lead us astray and can, if we're not careful, be a snare for us.

Such that we're going after other things apart from God. And the Bible calls that idolatry. We're going after the idols of our heart rather than the one to who we owe our heart, the Lord himself.

Psalm 89 has much to teach us about this. And in a strange way, these verses from Psalm 89, verses 11 to 13, they evoke Enoch.

To me at least. They sound as if this could be Enoch speaking. It's not, but it has a flavour of Enoch's life to it.

Verse 11 onwards reads, Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness. Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

[6 : 23] I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart. I will glorify your name forever. For great is your love towards me.

You have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead. Now, this idea of the undivided heart as the cure for what ails us in terms of our failure to commit fully to the Lord is something that the prophet Ezekiel speaks of.

The Lord, speaking through Ezekiel, in chapter 11 and verse 19 to 20, says, I will give them, that is my people, an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them.

I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

They will be my people and I will be their God. If we've been born again, if we've been born again, our heart of stone has been taken away and we've been given a heart of flesh and God's spirit has been put in us, causing us to walk with him, enabling us to walk with him, meaning that we are his people and he is our God.

[7 : 54] Therefore, we have fellowship with God. But so often our fellowship is in fits and starts, isn't it? Ups and downs, moments of sweet communion and then maybe seasons even of great dryness and feeling far from God.

We need the single-mindedness of the one who's portrayed in Psalm 1. This is a single-minded man or woman who walks with God.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. But his delight, his delight, his joy, is in the law of the Lord and on his law, he meditates day and night.

God is priority one for this person and he meets with God in God's law, in his word. He's like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

[9 : 13] For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. And we see that single-mindedness that we see in Psalm 1, the undivided heart in Jesus himself.

Luke chapter 9 and verse 51, and it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

No divided heart, undivided loyalty to go to the cross, to shed his blood, to procure our pardon and our release from the power of sin and its penalty and to set us free.

So, if we're feeling like I lack that undivided heart, I don't seem to have that. My heart feels divided.

So often, I go after other things. I want that closer walk with God. What do we do? Well, again, the Psalms provide something valuable for us here.

[10 : 39] David, King David, had walked with God. He was described as one after God's own heart.

But he had, at one point, a divided heart. He went after Bathsheba. and he found himself entangled in all kinds of sin.

Sin which greatly displeased the Lord. And when the sin was discovered to him through a parable given to him by the prophet Nathan, he was broken.

And his prayer was recorded for us as the 51st Psalm. And in verse 10 onwards in the 51st Psalm, this is David's petition.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

[11 : 53] Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. That is the plea for an undivided heart, for a pure heart and a renewed spirit, a willing spirit that will walk without division of loyalties with the Lord day after day.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us what motivated, what brought about Enoch's walk with the Lord. Well, really, it tells us what brought about his translation in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 5.

Faith. faith, faith, faith, faith, faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death and he was not found because God had taken him.

Now, before he was taken, he was commended as having pleased God. Faith, the writer to the Hebrews also tells us, is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

This is what the ancients were commended for, the ancients like Enoch. He couldn't see God. He had faith.

[13 : 26] Again, we were outside the garden at this point and so he's standing on a promise. He's taking God at his word and that is what is driving this walk.

But it is, of course, in Jesus the author and the perfecter of our faith, that we have someone upon which we can fix our eyes, that we may have this undivided heart and this unbroken walk, this fellowship with the Lord, as the author of Hebrews says, after that great chapter on faith.

therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, Enoch wasn't, was he? He was the seventh from Adam, but we have this great cloud of witnesses now of those who live by faith.

That's not the writer to the Hebrews saying that. He says, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

You've got to be ruthless. you've got to be single-minded and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer or the author and perfecter of our faith or simply of faith.

[14 : 56] And again the example of Christ. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. We must look ever more to him, Jesus, for the undivided heart that brings closer fellowship with God.

So that's the first thing. It's an early example of an undivided heart, but it's also an early pledge. It's an early pledge of the ultimate defeat of death.

And he died, and he died, and he died, and then Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death.

Enoch's story is placed there to bear witness, death. And Enoch's life was there to bear witness to those early humans that death would not have the last word.

[16 : 10] They were now surrounded by death. It happened all around them. But in Enoch, not dying, there was a very powerful pledge or testimony that death would not have the last word, that God had power over death, and that it would ultimately be defeated.

As the apostle writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, the last enemy to be destroyed is death. And that's a powerful pledge to us as well, isn't it?

Because we are surrounded by death. It stalks us still, and some of us are really facing death, the nearness of death at this time in our congregation and in our community.

And so we look to this as an early pledge of the defeat of death for the believer. We look forward to the promise in Revelation chapter 21 and verse 4 that he will wipe every tear from their eyes and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away.

And again this would be something that would be realized, would be accomplished, would be fulfilled through Christ. Christ. And it's amazing, isn't it, that death was conquered through a death.

[17 : 56] Jesus' death was the death that conquered death. And in his glorious resurrection we see that to be true. Death could not hold him.

Again, the writer to the Hebrews tells us, since the children have flesh and blood, he too, that's Jesus, shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Held in slavery by their fear of death. So what the writer is saying is that in Jesus' death and resurrection we are liberated even from the fear of death, which is very real to us a lot of the time.

But if we look to the fact that Jesus is going to ultimately destroy death, he's already defeated it, and he will ultimately destroy death, death is even described as being thrown into hell, into the lake of fire, then we have this pledge, this assurance that death is not the end.

Such that we can say with Paul, when he looks forward to this, he says, when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true, death has been swallowed up in victory.

[19 : 56] Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God.

He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, when we think about death, we remember the one who said this.

This is a very powerful encounter after the death of Lazarus. Martha, Lazarus' sister, approached Jesus, and Jesus said this to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

Martha said, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world. So, in Enoch, we see an early promise of immortality, an early realization of that promise, which we see fulfilled in Christ.

[21 : 23] In Christ is the promise of immortality, of eternal life. So, is the confession of Martha yours?

Do you say, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world? Because if your confession is the same as Martha's, then you can say, where, oh, death, is your victory?

Where, oh, death, is your sting? So, the example of Enoch has much to teach us.

The one who walked with God and then was not. That's unlikely to happen to any of us, although if we are still here when the Lord returns, we will all be changed in an instant and enter straight into glory.

It could only really be said that we would die and that all the corruption goes all at once, but unless that happens, we will all be like the others in that account in Genesis chapter 5, and he died, and she died, and he died, and she died.

[22 : 53] And it brings us to the question, are you ready for that? What would have been written, had he had one, on Enoch's tombstone?

In memoriam, Enoch, he walked with God. What will it say on yours? He walked with God, she walked with God, or he chose not to walk with God, he did it his way.

It's a very popular song, tragically, at funerals. He walked with money, he walked with ambition, he walked with a succession of women, he walked with whatever his heart was going after that day, or that month, or that year, she walked with an obsession with how she looked, or she walked with the need for a partner, or for children.

That was the all-consuming aspect of her life. oh, that it would be said of you, that you walked with God.

What is it really to walk with God? Really, actually, to walk with him? I hardly know. But I pray that as we continue all together as a congregation, we would all know what it is to have a closer walk with God.

[24 : 41] If you're already a believer, that's my prayer for you and for me, for all of us. And if you're not a believer, it's time to take a stand tonight.

It really is time to choose because now is the favoured time.

This is the opportunity, this is the day of grace. Yes, this is the year of the Lord's favour. Now is the appointed time to choose to walk with God and not walk your own way.

In that psalm I read before, Psalm 1, there are two ways. There's walking with God, which leads to eternal life, and there's walking without God, which leads to destruction.

There are only two ways and it's time to choose. Who are you going to walk with? God's love. And if you put your trust in Christ for your salvation, the one who never wavered in his walk with God, he will ensure that you are with him on the great day when God judges the living and the dead.

[26 : 00] And you will be secure not only on that day, but therefore in eternity. and you can say to Enoch, what was it like?

Amen.