

Walking with God

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Preacher: Alasdair I Macleod

[0 : 00] Now for our text tonight, I'd like you to turn to the book of Genesis, chapter 5, verse 24. Genesis 5, 24.

Famous words in the middle of a genealogy. Enoch walked with God, and he was not for God. To come. The message of scripture for you tonight is that you can walk with God in this world, and then walk with your Savior forever.

We can, like Enoch, walk with God. The important thing is not how long we live.

That's the first thing that many people will ask about when they read a passage like this, and they read about all these long-lived people. And they'll say, how could people live so long?

[1 : 16] Or they'll say, are we understanding the numbers correctly? And so on and so on. I don't want to get into that discussion at all. Because the message tonight is that the crucial thing is not how long you live, but how you live.

Better to live a short life and walk with God than live a long life walking away from God and then being away from God forever.

Now, when we come to this man, Enoch, we're coming to somebody about whom we know very little, according to the Bible.

But somebody that Jewish people, centuries ago, thought about a lot and wrote about a lot and believed that he had written a lot.

Enoch was a very, very popular figure in Jewish literature, especially between the time from the end of the Old Testament being written to New Testament days.

[2 : 31] Maybe it's inevitable that this mysterious figure would be somebody that people talked about. And a great deal of legend and lore clustered around this man.

So in book after book of Jewish literature, outside the Bible, we find things about Enoch. And we're told that he was important in being given revelation about writing.

And then he wrote various books that bear his name, we are told. So they were written long after his time. Or we're told about him travelling the heavens and being given revelation about astronomy and these kinds of things.

We're told about him prophesying the future history of Israel and the coming of the Messiah. So there was a vast literature about Enoch or claiming to be by Enoch.

But actually, in the Old Testament, we have the briefest of all possible biographies. We just have these few verses from verse 21 to verse 24.

[3 : 48] That's all we know about him in the Old Testament. And then we know a little about him. As Hebrews, we read it, reflects on him.

And the important thing to notice about his biography here is that it's set between the darkness of chapters 3 and 4 and the darkness of chapters 6 to 8.

Chapter 3 is the fall. Chapter 4 is about Cain. Chapters 6 to 8 are about the gathering darkness and the flood. But this chapter and this biography shows how God maintained the thread of salvation through this period of time.

From Adam to Noah, God maintained his own people. And in that line of descent, Enoch shines and shines brilliantly.

We'll come back to see that later on. But however great the darkness around, God has his people. And God can keep his people.

[5 : 02] And his people can shine as they walk with him. Now I want to think about three things as we look at Enoch and this passage. First of all, walking with the real God.

Then secondly, walking in the real world. And then thirdly, walking to his real home. So first, walking with the real God.

Now we're given this image of walking here. It's a very popular image in the Bible for the Christian life or for an alternative life.

Very often in the Bible, and we saw it in our singing of Psalm 1 actually, the Bible pictures the alternatives of walking God's road or walking another way.

Sometimes it's walking God's narrow way or not walking the broad way that takes you away from God. So walking in the Bible is a very important picture of the life that we live.

[6 : 17] The road that we're on. Now in terms of walking with God, I want you also to think just for a second about two other pictures of walking.

Sometimes we're told about walking before God and sometimes walking after God. Now, walking before God suggests the idea of God watching us and us knowing that he's watching.

So being careful to walk how we should. God says that to Abram, walk before me and be blameless. Then walking after God suggests the idea of following, of course.

Following God's lead and God's example. And Jesus often uses that picture. People are called to come after him, to follow him, and to be led by him.

But it seems to me that walking with is much more to do with the idea of fellowship. Of staying close beside God.

[7 : 34] Of intimacy. Of sharing life with God. Side by side. All the way. So these three pictures are important. And all of you as parents or grandparents or brothers or sisters or whatever, know what it is to have young children do each of these three things.

You'll sometimes say to a child, walk in front of me. I want to keep an eye on you. Or you'll say to them, maybe trudging through snow, walk behind me and put your feet in my footsteps.

And then other times you'll say, walk beside me. And you'll hold their hand and they're with you step by step. Each of them is an important picture.

But I think the one we have here tonight has much more to do with the idea of fellowship than anything else. So again, we'll come back to that. So let's think about this walking with God here.

And what this picture might mean for us and for our lives. I want to suggest five things about this walk.

[8 : 50] I'm just going to mention five words and not say much about any of them. And let you think about the pictures for yourselves. They're faith.

Communion. Obedience. Penitence. And progress. Anybody looking at the word in English could come up with these points.

They're not difficult. They're not complex. They're simple ideas. The first of them is faith. Walking with God means a life of faith.

Now this is clear for one thing because in Hebrews chapter 11, Enoch is one of the heroes of faith. And immediately after the verse that tells us about Enoch, we're told that without faith it's impossible to please God because you need to believe that God is.

[9 : 47] That God exists. You need faith to walk with God because God is unseen. So here is God. So here is God who is invisible.

And Enoch walks with God whom he can't see. So clearly Enoch was a man of faith. He believed in God.

And he was also a man of faith at another level where he trusted this God. He wanted to know this God and to love this God and be with this God.

So clearly grace had come into Enoch's life. The grace that gave him faith in an unseen God. And the grace that made him want to walk with this God.

And of course that's where it all begins, doesn't it, for any one of us. How do we begin walking with God? We begin by grace enabling us to see God by faith.

[10 : 52] To see Jesus as the one we need. And to put our trust in the unseen Jesus. And to start walking the road of life with Jesus.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. And those who walk with Jesus walk the way they follow Jesus. So it was a life of faith, very obviously.

Then it was also a life of communion. I've hinted at this already. Walking with somebody suggests spending time with somebody.

Talking with somebody. We don't know in what way God communicated with this man so that he learned about him. But it's surely true that Enoch was a man of prayer.

Who talked with God as he walked with God. Now here's a picture then of friendship or companionship.

[11:57] Here's this person who keeps close to God. I mean walking with God implies that. Any of you know that walking with somebody implies that kind of thing.

That you're keeping in step together. And you're talking. You're listening. You're sharing life. You're side by side. And how do we do that in the Christian life?

Today we do it by reading God's word. And by praying. So we live a life of communion with God. As his spirit enables us to listen to his voice in scripture.

And to speak to him in prayer. So we have communion with God. There's this two way communication. As we live life listening to God.

And talking with God. Having communion with the living God. Then also this means a life of obedience.

[13:01] Obedience. Enoch couldn't have walked with God. If he wasn't a person who sought to obey God. In fact we're told in Hebrews 11.

In verse 5. The verse that talks especially about Enoch. That Enoch pleased God. He lived a life. That pleased God.

Sin displeases God. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. But Enoch lived a life. That pleased almighty God. God. If you think again of this picture of walking in terms of obedience. There's a very nice translation in the NIV.

Of something at the end of Galatians chapter 5. Which speaks of walk in the spirit. Or walk by the spirit.

[14:00] What does that mean? Well the NIV translates it. Keep in step with the spirit. That's exactly the idea. Keep in step with the spirit.

Here's the spirit. Telling you what you should know. And telling you how you should live. And guiding you. And you seek. By God's grace. To keep in step with the spirit.

Or another text about walking and obedience. Is in 1st John chapter 1. 6 to 7. Where it compares walking in darkness.

With walking in light. And it says if we walk in darkness. We don't have fellowship with him. Can't walk with him as you're walking in the darkness. Because he's in the light.

But if we walk in the light. Because he's in the light. Then we have fellowship. Obviously with him.

And we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus goes on cleansing us from all our sins.

[15:03] Another lovely picture. Of walking with God. Meaning walking in the light. Walking a life of obedience. And then it's also a life of penitence.

Again we know this from the picture of walking. You fall out with somebody. And you don't want to walk with them. And you want to sort things out.

And come back. I saw an illustration with it recently. In Edinburgh. Two young people were walking along. A young man. And a young woman. And the young man.

Had clearly annoyed the woman. And he wasn't clear. What he had done to annoy her. And I shouldn't have been listening. But she was saying.

Well if you're that stupid. That you don't know what you did to annoy me. You know. What's the point? And eventually. They went their separate ways. For a wee while.

[16:05] And then a little while later. I saw them coming back down the road. Hand in hand. Smiling and talking. So clearly. Everything had been sorted out.

They were finding it hard to walk together. When there was a problem between them. But they sorted out the problem in some way. Maybe both of them said sorry. And then they were reconciled.

And they're back down the road. Hand in hand. Same in our relationship with God. We spoil that relationship. With our sins. And we find it hard to walk with God.

And there's something between us and God. As a barrier. And we feel away from God. And we move further away from God. And then we realize what we've done.

And we acknowledge our sin. And we repent. And we come back to God. And we plead for his forgiveness. And we plead for communion again with God. And he forgives us.

[17:05] And he cleanses us. And he restores us to his side. And we're back walking with him. Keeping in step with the spirit. And then the last thing here.

In terms of these words. As a life of progress. Again this is implied in this walking with God through his life. That he was making progress. He was walking with God. Going somewhere. They were on a journey. And every step. Moving on. Moving on. With God. And he was enjoying God's presence. He was enjoying God's guidance. He was going where God led him. And he was persevering with God. And he walked with God. With such progress. That he kept walking with God. For at least 300 years we're told. He kept. Kept. Kept. Moving on. Moving on. Moving on. He kept walking with God. Now these are just some simple ideas.

[18:04] For you to think about. In terms of this picture of walking. I think it means a life of faith. In this God. A life of communion. Beside this God.

A life of obedience. Keeping in step with this God. A life of penitence. Wanting things sorted out. When they go wrong with God. And then a life of progress.

A life of perseverance. That moves on with God. Learning new things. And going to new places. And enjoying new experiences. With God.

Now this is a life of real significance. You can see that the achievements of others. At the end of chapter 4. And nothing wrong with what these people were achieving.

From verses 20. There's Jabel. These are people who dwell in tents and have livestock. And Jubal. Verse 21. The father of those who play the lyre and the pipe.

[19:08] And Tubal-Cain. Verse 22. The forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. And so on. Now the achievements of these people are just these.

Now these are not good people. Many of them. But it's not saying that these things they did were wrong. There's nothing wrong with livestock. Or tents.

Or music. Or metal work. All the things they were involved in. The point is. That's all you can say about these people.

Their significance was limited to just these kinds of things. In this world. So they had livestock. In this world.

Not going to take that with them. They played music in this world. But they didn't sing to God. Didn't take that with them. They forged things in metal in this world.

[20:08] But that's the limit of their achievements. But you see. Enoch's achievement. Is of eternal significance.

He walked with God. That meant that he would walk with God forever. And that's what we're invited to do tonight. One of the great verses in the Old Testament.

In Micah. Is to do justice and to love mercy. And to walk humbly with your God. That's what we're invited to do. To walk humbly.

With the real God. This God. The God of the Bible. The only God. Not to give ourselves to any other God. With a small g. Or to live life in the worship of idols.

Which will give us nothing at the end. But to see the real God. And to come to know the real God. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And then to walk with the real God.

[21:09] All our days. So he walked with the real God. And secondly. He walked in the real world. He walked in the real world.

I want to just say a couple of things here. First of all. The life of Enoch shows. That it's possible to walk with God.

Even in the ordinary cares of life. To live a life of intimate communion. And fellowship with God. Even in the ordinary busyness.

And messiness. Of daily life. You can see in verse 22 says. Enoch walked with God. After he fathered Methuselah for 300 years.

And had other sons and daughters. Now. Some people think that that's saying. That Enoch's piety. Began. With the birth of Methuselah.

[22:10] That there was something about. Having this child. That changed his life. And. That's possible. But we don't know that. But I have known of people. Who had no interest in God.

And. I knew of somebody in particular. No interest at all. And. They got married. And they had their first child. And that changed.

That woman's outlook. Immediately. She suddenly thought to herself. This child is in my care. I want the best for this baby.

I want this baby growing up. Living the best kind of life that they can. I want this baby. To know how to live. And if there's a life beyond this one.

I want this baby to go to that life. Someday. To go to whatever good part. There might be in that world beyond.

[23 : 10] You can see how vague her. Her theology was. But. What started her thinking. About how to live. And what started her thinking.

About a life even beyond this one. Was the birth of a little baby. That was now. Under her care. And it may be that Enoch's life of faith.

Began with. Methuselah. And focusing on this. On this baby. It's hard to think. Methuselah was ever a baby. He was so old. But. He must have been. But.

It's certain that Enoch's life of piety. Continued. In a normal family life. Because not only did he have Methuselah. But he had other sons.

And daughters. So he lived. In a home. With a wife. And with children. And he had a normal working life. And all the rest of it.

[24 : 08] He wasn't some kind of. Of. Ascetic. Who withdrew from life. To be holy. There have been people like that.

People who would. Withdraw to a desert. And say. Well I'm going to be really holy. I'm not going to bother with. Family. Or children. Or work. Or citizenship.

Or politics. Or anything else. I want to be holy. So I'm going to get away from everybody else. And try and be holy. By focusing on myself. And God.

And trying to be holy. It's the instinct of all kinds of people. Actually in all kinds of religions. Over many, many years. But Enoch wasn't like that.

He was just an ordinary man. In the ordinary workaday world. With an ordinary family. A big family. With lots of sons and daughters.

[25 : 03] And Enoch. And Enoch is simply saying to us. I live this life. Of walking with God. In an ordinary life. In the midst of all the cares.

And concerns. And busyness. And all the rest of it. Of everyday experience. That's where the life of faith. Has to be lived.

In the home. In the workplace. In the community. In my hobbies. In my leisure. In my interest in politics.

Or unions. Or whatever it might be. That anybody here is involved in. Enoch is saying. The life of faith. Must be lived. And can be lived. In all the ordinary.

Duties and cares. Of normal. Everyday. Existence. In the real world. So Enoch. Walked with God. Even in the ordinary.

[26 : 01] Cares of life. But this as well. And here you might. I might ask you to. Do some of your own. Homework. He also walked with God.

In the darkest times. And he shows. It's possible. To walk with God. In the darkest times. I said already. That he lived.

In the. In the. Gathering darkness. As it were. Of the civilization. Of the Cainites. You know. We read about Cain. Before this. And those who followed Cain.

And of course. Chapter 6. Is headed here. In the ESV. Increasing. Corruption. On earth. It was a time. Of tremendous. Wickedness.

In the world. Prior to the judgment. Of the flood. Godlessness. And corruption. Were increasing.

[26 : 57] On the earth. The Bible says. And yet. Enoch. Walked with God. Even in the wickedest times. Now.

I'm going to ask you. To do this for yourself. If. If. All you need to be able to do. Is count up to seven. So. But I think this is. An important point. Just. It's just a literary point.

In the Bible. Seven is often. A very significant number. And I think. It's significant. Here. You're meant. In the story. Here. to contrast Enoch and Lamech.

You read about Lamech in the end of the previous chapter in verses 23 and 24. Lamech said to his wives, hear my voice, you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say.

I've killed a man. I've killed a young man. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's revenge is 77-fold.

[27 : 58] So he's boasting to his wives in the plural that he is a man of violence, that he is a murderer, and that he's taken revenge.

Now, Lamech is the seventh noted in Adam's line. These genealogies might be selective, but in terms of who they note, Lamech is number seven in Adam's line through Cain.

If you look at chapter four from verse 17 on, and if you remember that Adam obviously is number one, then Cain is number two, well, the line of Cain, if you count up the other names that are mentioned, when you come to Lamech, you will come to number seven in the line, the evil line of Cain.

And then Enoch is seventh in the believing line of Seth. So if you go to chapter four from verse 25, and if Adam is number one, and Seth is number two, then Enoch is number seven.

Now, Jewish literature are very keen on these kinds of things and seeing these details. And here's the wicked line of Cain, and Lamech is the epitome of that line in terms of evil.

[29 : 33] He's their number one example of murderous fury and vengeance, and he celebrates it in a song. He's number seven. But in the line of the godly, Enoch is the seventh mentioned in that line.

And what this is saying is that the supreme example of evil is more than matched by the supreme example of walking with God.

And they live in the same kind of culture, in the same kind of darkness, darkness. And Lamech is part of that darkness and celebrates the darkness.

But Enoch, Enoch living in the same kind of darkness, walks with God and is happy to do so.

We sometimes say, I said it myself, life is tough in our present age for whatever reason. If only I'd lived in such and such a time, it would have been so easy.

[30 : 43] Well, I'm not sure it would have been. But whether it would have been or not, we're called to live where we are, however difficult it is. And Enoch is saying, it can be done.

It can be done. Even in the darkest of times, you can walk with God by God's grace. So, he walked in the real world then.

Even in the ordinary cares of life, and even in the darkest times, we can, by grace, walk with God. And then thirdly this, not just walking with the real God, or walking in the real world, but walking to his real home.

Throughout the chapter here, in chapter 5, you have this refrain, and he died. There's a genealogy here, and one after another, and he died.

It ends every biography, except this one and Noah's. But of course, two or three chapters later, it ends Noah's story as well. Everybody else, and he died, except Enoch.

[31 : 57] Death has entered the world, and has swayed over everyone. But Enoch, for some reason, is going to be an exception. A little girl, once at Sunday school, it's a true story, many years ago, she had been told this story, and she thought about it for a wee while, and then she said, I know what happened.

She says, Enoch used to walk with God every day. And then one day, Enoch and God walked much further than usual, because they were enjoying talking so much, and it was getting dark. Then God said to Enoch, well, you walked so far today, and you're so far away from home. Why don't you just come home with me? And that was her explanation for why Enoch was taken.

Well, we don't know exactly why God chose to take this man among all the others he could have taken. But we do know that the language here is implying that he took him to himself.

He did take him to heaven. The language is saying that there's something over there, and somebody here takes that and takes it to themselves, takes it to be with them in a special way.

[33 : 28] In Hebrews, in this translation, it says he took him up. So Enoch is taken from where he was on this earth, and he's taken to God's special place in a special way.

he is taken to heaven. And as I said, Hebrews 11 is very specific that Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death.

We're told he could not be found. For many people, Enoch was simply a missing person. But the Bible is telling us that Enoch was translated, like Elijah, translated from this world and taken bodily, I believe.

Of course, without tasting death, he was taken like Elijah from this world and glorified, changed in a moment, and taken to heaven, taken to be with God.

Now, why did God do this? Well, let me suggest just briefly a couple of things. one reason, surely, is that God was doing this to demonstrate his sovereignty.

[34 : 46] He can do as he pleases. As I said, this chapter has a sort of a funeral drumbeat of a rhythm.

It's just inexorable. The beat goes on, and he died, and he died, and he died. And we know that everybody dies.

Well, Enoch didn't. God breaks this rhythm. In a sense, God is simply saying, I can do what I want to do when I want to do it.

And Enoch will not have to die. Everybody has to die, yes, but I will take Enoch to be with me. But I think he also does it to point to another world.

people didn't know so much in these earlier days. Not so much as we know about another world as the whole Bible unfolds, and especially as we have the New Testament and the clarity of revelation about a world to come.

[35 : 53] But God is saying here, I think he's saying to these people, there is a world beyond this one, there is life beyond this life, and there's a place.

Because you see, Enoch is taken bodily somewhere else. So there must be a place where Enoch went in the body, to be in a place in the body with God.

We have it so much more clearly, of course, in the Lord Jesus Christ, who's raised bodily from the dead, who's translated in the ascension bodily to heaven.

And we're told that he will return from that place in the same way that his disciples saw him go into heaven. So I'm suggesting to you that Enoch then was just a glimpse of hope, of a place beyond. But Christ is the pledge of that place beyond. Enoch hints at it in a very mysterious way, doesn't he?

[37 : 06] They wouldn't have known much about him, but they would have said, as the Bible says, God took him. They would have wondered, where did God take him? God took him to be with himself.

There must be a place where Enoch has gone. And then they would have the hope that they would go there too. Not in the same way as Enoch, but there's a place where God's people go to be with God.

And as the Bible unfolds, more and more and more has told us about what it means to leave this world and for our spirit to go to be with God. And then one day we're told that we'll be raised in the body and our bodies in the new heavens and the new earth will be with God forever.

forever. So here is Enoch, a ray of hope of the future as Christ is the pledge, the blazing light of that future in his resurrection and ascension and return.

So Enoch walked with the real God. He walked in the real world and he walked to his real home all because of the grace of God.

[38 : 19] God. It's an amazing thing to reflect on the possibility that you and I can walk with God. For some of you, it hasn't happened yet but you're invited to put your trust in Jesus and to begin to walk with God.

And that's the only way of living so that you're ready to die. Living with God so that you walk through the valley of the shadow of death with God and continue to be with God beyond this world.

God walks with us here so that we can walk with him there. There's that lovely picture in Revelation 7 of the Lamb of God we thought about briefly this morning.

And the Lamb of God in heaven is the shepherd of his people and he leads them to springs of living water and God wipes away all tears from their eyes.

It's a picture of those who walked with Jesus in this world and they leave this world. Their body is buried not like Enoch but their spirit goes to heaven and they waken up in heaven in the presence of Jesus.

[39 : 34] Then one day of course the body will be raised and they will walk always with Jesus. I think that picture in Revelation 7 is reminding us of that glorious truth that those who walk with Jesus here will walk with Jesus there.

That we will always be with Jesus and he will be leading us and he will be feeding us. He will be guiding us. He will be talking to us. He will be listening to us.

The kind of life that Enoch had and the kind of life we have by faith we will have there by sight as we walk with Jesus and as Jesus walks with us.

So come to Jesus. Begin to walk with Jesus and Jesus will enable you to walk with him throughout your life here. Then Jesus will walk with you forever in a life to come.

Amen. Let's bow in prayer. Amen.