

Enoch the God-pleaser

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: 17 January 2016

Preacher: Rev. James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] Let's turn now to the epistle to the Hebrews chapter 11 and looking at verses 5 and 6 this evening. That's the letter to the Hebrews chapter 11 and we can read at verse 4 through to verse 6.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous. God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

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.

And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Or who seek him diligently is the meaning of that word. It's very interesting, isn't it, that the two, the first two examples of faith that are given there in Abel and Enoch have such a contrast spoken about them.

[1 : 2 0] Because faith in the case of Abel led to his death. Faith in the case of Enoch led to him being taken away without seeing death.

And it's a reminder to us that there may be very distinct differences in the experiences of those who live by faith. And yet they have exactly the same commendation from God himself that he found them pleasing to him.

They both there are commended as righteous. And it says of Enoch, he was commended as having pleased God, which comes to very much the same thing.

And really the words commended there, we better, I think, translating it as in the older translation, had this testimony. Because it has to do with testimony.

And in fact the word that's used there is very appropriate of Abel particularly because he was commended. He had this testimony as righteous. And the word in Greek actually means what you have with a martyr.

[2 : 3 3] It developed into the word that is used for martyr. It's the word in Greek from which we get the word martyr or martyrdom as we use it in English.

And that of course is what Abel was. He became a martyr. He lived by faith. And it led to his death at the hand of his evil brother Cain.

In the case of Enoch, he by faith was taken up so that he should not see death. And he was not found because God had taken him.

For a few moments tonight we're going to look at this second example of Enoch and some of the details specified about him there. Which we'll first of all look at under the facts that are mentioned or stated about Enoch in verse 5.

By faith he was taken up so that he should not see death. And was not found because God had taken him. And he had this testimony before he was taken that he pleased God.

- [3 : 38] And then in verse 6 we'll look at the fact that the faith Enoch had is the very faith that we need to have also. That's what you find by way of application.
- Because verse 6 is really an application from what's said in verse 5. He says, Without faith it is impossible to please God. For whoever would draw near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
- In other words, the faith that you read about in Enoch's case is precisely the faith that you and I require to have. If we are going to be right with God. And if we're going to receive what is promised as his reward.
- As he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. So here are the facts first of all about Enoch stated. The first one is that he was taken by God.
- And that really means what it says. God took him. God actually removed him from this world. He took him away so that he did not see death.
- [4 : 43] He didn't die in the way that we normally die. He was taken away without seeing death. That's the outcome of the taking of God. God took him.
- And the outcome of that or the result of that is that he did not actually die. He did not die in the way that human beings usually die. But that does not mean that Enoch.
- Merely avoided death. It means a lot more than the fact that God took him away in such a manner bodily. He took him out of this world.
- He lifted him to heaven. You find a similar thing in 2 Kings 2 about Elijah. Where there's more detail about Elijah. And this chariot of fire. And the angels coming to take him to heaven bodily.
- He didn't see death. Neither did Enoch. It just simply says that God took him. And as he was translated as the word here into another realm.
- [5 : 43] He was translated. He was taken by God bodily. But that doesn't mean that he simply avoided death. What it really means is that Enoch actually was taken in a way that showed victory over death.
- He was taken away victoriously. His translation into heaven directly was itself for those who had faith and were looking to God at that time or after him.
- It was actually no mere avoidance of death. It was actually a victory over death. And that's why the word translated is also a good word in translation as it happens.
- When you find there by faith Enoch was translated. It does mean he was taken. But it really means he was transported or translated or transferred.
- It's that idea that's in the word. So it means that from the state he was in in this world he was transferred. He was translated. He was transported into an entirely different state.
- [6 : 46] A different state in the sense that he was taken beyond death and above death. He was taken victoriously over death. The life that Enoch came to live after being taken by God was a life into which death could not enter.
- A life victorious over death. And in fact that was an indicator for these Old Testament saints and for the church of the time.
- That was actually an indicator for them of what came to be revealed much more fully. Especially in the New Testament and especially after Christ's resurrection.
- As resurrection life. Life beyond death. Life above death. Life and victory over death. Life after death.
- Could be used by those who had faith to actually see that there was something not just beyond death. Not just something hazy but something very definite and something very pronounced.

- [8 : 08] An actual victory over death. You'll have noticed I'm sure in reading through that chapter in Genesis that we read. Genesis 5. The list of people there.
- What's quite remarkable is not just the length of years that they lived. Not that that's not remarkable. But when you look at that you could easily miss one really remarkable thing.
- A bright light that really shines out of that list. Because every single individual there that we read through to the end of the chapter. Apart from one.
- Had these words said about them. He lived for so many years. And he died. Every single one of them.
- And he died. Except this one. Enoch walked with God. And he was not. For God took him. You see what a wonderful bright light that is.
- [9 : 10] In the face of death. In the face of that repeated emphasis on death. In the face of that reference to how people's lives in this world come to an end.
- He died. And yet here is one that brings us beyond death. And into the realms of victory over death. He was not.
- For God took him. God took him into life above death. And he was not found indicates.
- We feel that there was a search made for him. You remember in the case of Elijah as well. That some of the followers of his.
- The prophets. Insisted. That they would be allowed to search for Elijah. He was bound to be somewhere. And so a search was made for him.
- [10 : 08] But he couldn't be found. Because God had transported him. Beyond death bodily. To heaven itself. And that's really.
- What it says. About Enoch as well. You cannot imagine. A person. As prominently holy. And godly. And faithful to God.
- As Enoch was. And known. As we'll see in a minute. As a man who pleased God. And was known publicly for that. You cannot imagine. That on the day. That Enoch was missing.
- They wouldn't have looked for him. But having looked for him. And not found him. There was only one. Right conclusion. They could come to. And that was. That God.
- Must have taken him. He was so close to God anyway. He walked with God. He was in friendship with God. And therefore.
- [11 : 04] This is the conclusion. God took him. And we know it's true. Of course. Because that's what scripture says. Whether people concluded it or not. This is the fact of the matter. That's stated about Enoch.
- That he was taken up. So that he should not see death. Second fact about him is. That before this happened. He had this testimony.
- That he pleased. God. God. Literally it says. This had been testified. Of him. That he pleased God.
- Language. Very precise. And it's important. That we note the precision. Of these words. Because they're telling us. Something important. In terms of Enoch's public life.
- Telling us something important. About what people thought of Enoch. And what people saw in Enoch. It doesn't at all say. Simply that Enoch. Was a godly man. That he walked with God.
- [12 : 00] That he pleased God. What it really amounts to is. This is how people. This is how people knew him. This is the public profile. That he had. When you mentioned.

The name of Enoch. People. Whether they agreed with him or not. Would instantly say. Oh that's the God pleaser. That's the man who lives. To please God. That's the man who carries.

About this testimony. That he has the friendship of God. That he is. A God pleasing individual. And if you go back to. Genesis 5.

24. You have. An additional. Phrase there. Which sits alongside this one. And it's important too. And that's that. Enoch. Walked. With. God.

Enoch. Walked. With. God. God. It's a wonderful phrase. It's absolutely. Packed. Full of meaning. And it's important.

[12 : 57] That we have. Some experience of it. For ourselves. When you go to the. Court of session. Not that I'm. Saying that's something. You really want to do.

But if you're involved in. Something in the court of session. As I was some years ago. As you know. When the church had the problems. And the main court case. Took place. When we were there. For nearly a month.

One of the things we noticed there. And took part in at times. Was when the QC. In. In between sessions. In the courtroom itself. When he wanted to actually.

Speak with you. Or give some advice. Or receive some information. He would lead you into. This large hall. And as you went into that.

Large and high hall. It's a big massive hall. With wooden flooring. He would ask you. Walk with me. And you would walk with him. All the way up to the end of the hall. And he would just smartly turn around.

[13 : 51] And walk back again. And all the time. Speaking to you. And asking you to speak to him. And asking you certain things. Or giving you whatever advice it was. For the benefit of the case.

And that would go on for a few minutes. As you walked together. Now. You would have to keep up with him. You have to walk with him. You have to be by his side. If you really want to engage.

Meaningfully. In that sort of conversation. Whether he's asking you for information. Or whether. Or she's asking you for information. Or whether it's in fact. Some advice they're giving you. It's only as you walk with them.

That that's passed between you. That's really. A picture. Something. Of an illustration. Of what is said here. About Enoch. Because he lived.

With this relationship. With God. In this relationship. With God. So that they walked. Together. Wherever Enoch went. He took God with him.

[14 : 48] He walked with God. He took God. Into his counsel. And he. Wanted God. To take him. Into his counsel. They walked together.

They were in agreement. They shared information. Enoch received. All his advice. From walking with God. God took delight.

In walking with Enoch. In fellowship with Enoch. What a wonderful phrase that is. Is that how we are tonight. Is it the case. Is it a fact. In my life. Is it a fact.

In your life. Can it be stated. Can it be written down. As something. That you know something of. Maybe not as much as Enoch did. But are you walking with God.

Are you living in fellowship with God. Is that the basis of your life. Is it central to your life. Is it the most crucial thing.

[15 : 43] In your experience. Because that's. What it's saying here. In relation to pleasing God. We're not going to be able. To please God. Unless we're walking with him.

By faith. We'll see in a minute. What. The words. By faith. Mean. But that's. These are the facts. Spoken about. Stated about. Enoch. He was taken by God.

He was translated by God. God came for him. God took him. And in that. He became. An indicator. Or. A representation. Of life.

Above death. Of victory. Over death. Of resurrection life. At least. The early stages. Of seeing it. And. He pleased God.

He lived. So as to please God. So as to have God's approval. And in doing that. And for doing that. And in order to do that.

[16 : 39] He walked with God. He lived in fellowship. With him. It's a remarkable thing. That.

The human beings. That God drove out of Eden. Are then spoken of as living in fellowship with him. Man was driven out of Eden.

He wasn't told politely to get out. He was driven out. That's how the Bible puts it. God. Drove out the man that he had made. Why? Because he had become a fallen.

Disrespectful. Disobedient. Rebellious sinner. That now attracted the wrath of God. And that same God. For these same sinners. That came under his curse.

That same God. Provided an access back to himself. In Jesus Christ. And Enoch. Is a representation of that for us.

[17 : 37] By faith. Enoch lived. In fellowship with God. He lived under God's favor. He walked with God. And it shows us that that's what grace does.

That's what God's love has provided. For all of us. As sinners. If we live by faith. That's what it brings us into.

This trust. And dependence. On God. God. But then. The faith that Enoch had. Is the faith. That we all need. From verse 6 onwards.

Because. It says here that. By faith. Enoch was taken up. And then without faith. It is impossible. To please God.

For whoever would draw near to God. Must believe. That he is. Now then. How does it mean? What does it mean? And how is it. That Enoch was translated. By faith.

[18 : 37] That's what it says. At the beginning of. Verse 5. By faith. Enoch was taken up. Enoch was translated. That doesn't mean that he was translated. Because of his faith.

It doesn't mean that God owed him something. And that Enoch had actually earned. The favor of God. Due to the quality of his faith. Or something like that. But it does.

Actually indicate. That it wasn't without faith. That Enoch was translated. And in fact. That it was. By faith. That this came about. And when you look at it.

It's fairly logical. Really. Isn't it? Because. By faith. He had come into fellowship with God. And therefore. In fellowship with God. He walked with God.

He had such a relationship with God. As then led to God. Taking him to be with himself. That's how it operates. That's. Where it begins.

[19 : 31] If you like. Is with faith. By faith. He lived. And that faith brought him into union with God. Into fellowship with God. And under the approval of God. And that's what led.

Then to him being received. Into God's presence. And it's the same really. Essentially. Except that it's. Different for. For us. Unless God sees otherwise. We will not be translated.

Bodily. Without seeing death. But it's the same. Logical progression. From faith. To glory. By faith. You live. In. In communion with God.

In fellowship with God. It brings you into the approval of God. It brings you. Christ's righteousness. To be. Attributed to you. By God. And the outcome of that.

Is that God will take you. And that's why. The word is used in Psalm 73. Which we'll sing in conclusion. Where. This. This whole conception.

[20 : 32] This understanding. As far as it went. In the Old Testament. That this was what God was taking his people into. Is why the psalmist. In that verse says.

You will guide me. By your counsel. And afterward. You will take me. That's the word that's used. The Lord's receive. In many translations.

It's actually the word take. Same as here for Enoch. Same as in the Old Testament. For Enoch. You will take me. Into your glory. By faith.

Faith. And then it goes on. In applying it to say. That without faith. It is impossible. To please. God. And that again.

Means exactly. What it says. It is impossible. To please God. Without faith. Like we said.

[21 : 27] We don't come to please God. Because of our faith. But we don't please God. We don't come into the position. Of being. God pleaser. Without faith. The faith. That trusts in God.

The faith. That bows the knee. To God's authority. The faith. That receives Christ. The faith. That reaches out in dependence. And hangs on to God. There's no pleasing God.

Without faith. Faith. That includes. Obedience. It is impossible. Now. Hebrews itself. Tells us. That people tried that.

Tried to please God. Without faith. And it just. Cannot work. It's impossible. Look at what it says. About Cain and Abel. By faith. Abel offered to God.

A more acceptable. Sacrifice. Than Cain. Through which he was commended. Or had testimony. As righteous. God. Accepting.

[22 : 23] Of his gifts. Commending him. And testifying to. His approval. By receiving his gifts. Now. Cain. Also brought gifts. To God. As a sacrifice. But God.

Didn't receive them. It wasn't. The kind of thing. That he brought. That made it. Unacceptable. It was the fact. That he brought it.

Without any trust. In God. Without any love. For God. Without faith. And he was rejected. As was his offering.

And if you go forward. In the same chapter. You'll find. The people of God. The people of Israel. Verse 29. By faith. The people crossed. The Red Sea. As if on dry land.

Or. As on dry land. Because it was. Dry land. That God provided for them. Through the Red Sea. But the Egyptians. When they attempted. To do the same.

[23 : 20] Were drowned. And you see. What that's saying. Here are one set of people. And by faith. They accomplish. This. Journey.

Across the Red Sea. On dry land. As God has provided. For them. And here come. The Egyptians. These armies of Pharaoh. Pursuing them. With all their might. And they try.

To do the same. And what happens. The sea closes in on them. You cannot. Be successful. Spiritually. Without faith.

You can try. And copy it. But it doesn't work. And for me. And for you. Tonight. It's so. So. Important.

That what you have. In your life. Is genuine. Faith. Not a limitation. Not a copy. Not your own version of it. Not what somebody else. Suggested should be.

[24 : 18] But this faith. The faith. That unites you to Christ. The faith that obeys Christ. The faith that wants Christ's will. Above your own. The faith that realizes.

Without him you die. And you're lost forever. Don't try. Don't try. And copy. Being a Christian. Don't try.

And live the life. Of a Christian. Without faith. Without this faith. Make sure. That what you have. In your life. Is genuine faith. Now notice. We're not saying.

Make sure. It's great faith. There's nothing wrong. Of course. With seeking. Great faith. But what brings you into. Union with God. First and foremost. Is genuine faith.

If it comes eventually. To be great faith. If it comes to be as great. As Abraham's faith. Or Enoch's faith. Good and well. But it doesn't have to be. Great faith.

[25 : 15] In order to unite you. Savingly to Christ. But it has to be genuine faith. Real faith. This trusting. Believing. Dependence.

Upon God. Because that's what. Enoch. Had. And by faith. He walked. With God. The first thing.

Then about. This is. That this is the faith. We need. That Enoch. Is spoken about. As having lived. By faith. And without. This faith. It is impossible.

To please. Him. For he says. Then it goes on to say. Whoever draws near. Or comes to God. Must believe. That he is.

Or he exists. And that he rewards. Those who. Seek him. Or seek him. Diligently. You see where that's leading us. It's bringing us.

[26 : 12] To see something. Of faith. At work. This faith. That's genuine. Is a faith. That works. In particular ways. And the first thing. It says. It says. Whoever would draw near.

To God. And that's the language. Of worship. You cannot. Please. God. And not be a worshiper. You cannot. Be a believer.

In this sense of it. And not be. A worshiper. You cannot. Detach. Pleasing God. And walking. With God. From the worship. Of God. Enoch.

Was a God pleaser. But at the same time. He was a worshiper. Of God. He could not have been. A God pleasing man. Without being a worshiper. Of God.

A worshipping man. You see. Faith. Doesn't just take you. To think of things. Intellectually. As believing. In God. And believing. That God exists.

[27 : 07] In a kind of vague. General. Sort of way. This faith. That's spoken about. Is the faith. That loves. To worship God. That realizes. The centrality. Of worship.

In a person's life. As a believer. And that realizes. That. Without. Faith. And without worship. We cannot.

Seek to please. God. At all. Because faith. Has that purpose. In it. And drawing near. To God. Has this purpose.

In it. Your purpose. In being here. Tonight. Is not just. To occupy. A pew. It's not just. To hear. A sermon. From a pulpit. It's not just. To sing.

Some psalms. Your purpose. In being here. Tonight. Is surely. This one. The purpose. Of pleasing. God. The purpose. Of worshiping. God. And worshiping.

[28 : 00] God. In a way. That pleases. God. That's the whole. Purpose. Of life. Isn't it? That's why. God created us. And. The words. Of the. First.

Catechism. That we learned. As children. Most of us. What is man's. Chief end. Why were we created? It's. Man's. Chief end. To glorify. God.

And to enjoy him. Forever. And.

It's. It's. It's. Drawing near. To God. but it says that we believe whoever draws near must believe that God exists.

I will see in a minute when we come to the word reward or reward that is more than just believing he exists in a bare sort of way. But when it says here that those who come to God or draw near to God must do so in faith and that faith involves believing that God exists.

[29 : 08] But it means believing that he exists as he has revealed himself to be. Many people would say, oh, I believe in God, but I don't believe in going to church.

I believe in God, but I don't believe in that worship thing. Many people would say, I believe in God, but I don't believe much of what's in the Bible. Many people would say, I believe in God, but I don't believe in the God.

Christians mention as being angry or having condemnation for sin and all that sort of stuff. Well, what this is saying is we believe that God exists as he has revealed himself to be.

In other words, if you believe in God with this believing, with this faith, if you believe in God's existence, you believe in his existence as he is. Not as people imagine he is.

Not as people wish or prefer he was. But as he is, this holy God, this glorious God, this righteous God, this powerful God, this all-seeing God, this God of grace, this God of love, this God of mercy, this God of judgment.

[30 : 25] Indeed, every single thing that God has revealed of himself, you believe if this is your faith.

Because that's really what it's saying to us. Whoever draws near to God must believe that he is as he has said he is, as he has spoken of himself, as he has revealed himself.

Who is your God this evening? And when you meet people who say they believe in God, what's your response? What do you say to them?

Do you ask them, well, yes, but what is God to you? What kind of God? What is God like this God you believe in? And for many people, it will become apparent that the God they believe in is just really, in some ways, a figment of their own imagination or even of their best wishes or desires.

And they hope it's this kind of God that they themselves imagine is the God that they need. But here's the scripture telling you, this is God.

[31 : 33] There's no other God. There's no other kind of God. God is not different in any way to what he has said of himself. And for us tonight, it's a precious, precious thing to be given the heart and mind that says, Lord, I believe, and I want to believe more certainly in all that you are.

Because all my hopes are in what you are, not what I would want you to be. Whoever comes to him must believe.

Without faith, it is impossible to please him. And pleasing him involving worship must believe that he exists and he exists as he is and that he is the rewarder.

Because, again, it's the word that's describing God himself rather than the way it's translated there. You must believe that he is the rewarder or a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

Again, it's what's true of God and not merely what he does. Yes, he rewards. But he rewards because it's his nature to be the rewarder. And actually what that really means is God is true to his covenant promises to his people.

[33 : 00] To everyone who has come to believe in him, to put their trust in him, to move away from their own ideas of what God should be like and what they should be like, to accept the God of the Bible and to bow before him and to receive him.

They can rightly expect, they have the warrant to expect, that God will be true to his promises for everyone who believes. Every covenant promise.

The promise that he will look after you. The promise that he will protect you. The promise that he will, as you saw this morning, something of even blessing your sufferings to you. The promise that he will actually bring you to glory at last.

The promise that when he comes in his judgment, you in that judgment by faith in him will be accounted righteous. You will not be rejected with the wicked.

Every single aspect of that and everything else besides that God has promised, God will do. He is a rewarder of all those who seek him.

[34 : 07] And the interesting thing there too is that it uses the word seeking him, or seeking him diligently is the meaning of it. And in fact, it's more or less the equivalent in the way that the verse puts it, it's more or less the equivalent of drawing near to God.

Because, you see, sometimes, in fact, quite often, we use the word seeking with respect to people seeking God as something people do who are not yet Christians.

And I wouldn't say that using the word is entirely wrong to use the word in that way, but that's not the way the Bible usually uses the word seek. And it's not the way it's used here.

Because the seeking that's mentioned here is not a searching for God that eventually results in faith. It's actually the working of faith itself.

Faith seeking God in the sense of drawing near to him, and worshipping him, and living in fellowship with him. That's what's meant. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

[35 : 18] Those who live in a life of walking with him, and in fellowship with him, and whose purpose in life is to please God.

They're the seekers. They're the ones who know what it is to seek after God, to yearn for more of God, to have a hunger and thirst for God, and who want that increased as the days go by.

It's faith at work. In other words, you can say about Enoch that his whole life was about seeking God, living in the kind of life that knew God, and sought him in fellowship day by day.

Is that how we live tonight? Are we seeking God meaningfully?

Is it more than just a wish in our hearts? Is our seeking of God one that already knows him, in fellowship with him?

[36 : 36] Well, you may have come here tonight seeking God in that other sense of not yet knowing him as your own God, as your own Savior.

All we can say of that is to encourage you, to go on with that seeking, not to give up on it, to continue until he brings you to know him and to seek him in the way of faith.

But make sure tonight that these facts are facts, if they're not already in your life, that you want to be in your life before you die, and indeed, as soon as you possibly can.

The facts that are mentioned about Enoch, that he lived to please God, that he walked with God, that he knew fellowship with God, that he valued being in the friendship of God, that he was known publicly as a friend of God, as one who pleased God.

And make sure that this is the faith that you have too and I have. This faith that unites you to Christ. This faith that brings you into friendship with God.

[38 : 03] This faith that worships him, by which you worship him, through which you expect to be rewarded by him in the sense in which we've mentioned it in the text.

The faith that goes on seeking him and being more and more satisfied with him. Let's pray. Lord, our gracious God, we thank you for faith.

We know that we have not created it ourselves. It is your gift of grace to us. We thank you for the way in which you produced it and created by your spirit in our hearts.

we bless you for the grace of regeneration that brings us to life spiritually, enabling us to believe. We pray that you would strengthen our faith.

We pray that our faith may increase, O Lord, on a daily basis. We pray that our faith will meaningfully unite us in our own experience to these great issues that were in the life of Enoch.

[39 : 16] and we pray, Lord, that we too will have that faith that will eagerly expect to be taken by you at last into your glory. We ask that you would bless to us your word to that end.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.