

Walking with God

Gen. 5: 24; 6: 9.

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OCT 1958

These two men, Enoch and Noah, are linked together in that they desired to walk with God, and I would like, the Lord helping me, to point out the way in which it has been made possible for us to walk with God I am hoping that this word may awaken in every heart a deeper desire for the company of God. I am convinced, dear brethren, that what matters above all else is our history with God; and if ministry does not awaken in hearts a deeper desire for the company of the blessed God, then it fails in its objective. The great end surely of ministry is to make the God from Whom all blessing proceeds more blessed, more precious to our affections. And so we find that the God of glory calls men out in order that they might be found responsive to Him; the Lord of glory comes into this scene and dies in order that a righteous basis might be made for men to respond to the voice of glory, and the Spirit of glory rests upon those who are prepared to take up the reproach that a walk with God entails in a world that is diametrically opposed to Him. Such is the interest of Divine Persons; the call of the God of glory; the wonderful movements of the Lord of glory in compassion and love; and the Spirit of glory resting upon those prepared to endure the reproach that is entailed in a walk with God in a world lying in the lap of the evil one.

In the first utterance of the Lord Jesus in each of the four gospels I think you will see a corresponding line of thought. In Matthew His first utterance was, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." It was necessary that a way should be made in righteousness so that there might be a movement on the part of His people from that which was dishonouring to God, into a sphere which was responsive to Him. In Mark's gospel He begins to show the power of the glad tidings as that which would affect hearts and bring them into living touch with God. In Luke's gospel He says that He was here for His Father's business. The blessed God, the source of all, desiring men to be in nearness to Him; the compassion of God made known in that blessed Person in order that, responsive to those compassions, there might be found a people in the temple continually blessing and praising God. Finally in John's gospel that blessed Person stands before us in His Personal greatness as the One Who would invite us into His own abode that, in communion with Himself, we might be at home in the Father's love.

The glorious Christ of God is making the way out of all that is dishonouring to God through His precious death, announcing the wonderful news that comes from God's heart, attracting our hearts to Himself, and showing that in it all He is glorifying the Father. Then, beloved brethren, in the glory of His Person He is drawing us to Himself, that He might carry us with Him into the realm of responsive affection to the Father. How blessed He is, dear brethren. Do we not desire to walk with such a God? We are soon going to be in the glory. Some of us have learned a little of the emptiness and estrangement from God that marks everything here, and yet standing in all its brilliance before us there is the glorious possibility of communion with God and the blessedness of a walk with God Himself.

Dear brethren, this is an urgent exercise and calls for responsive movement of heart. God wants your company and He wants mine, and blessed be His name the ground has been cleared in righteousness in order that we might be free to walk with a God Who, though seeking our company, yet surrenders not one iota of His glory or holiness.

Enoch walked with God. Enoch did not live in an easy day; we have noted that Jude tells us there was universal ungodliness in Enoch's day. Four is the numeral of universality and in verse 15 of Jude's short epistle the word ungodly appears four times, showing to us the universal ungodliness of the day in which Enoch lived. But, beloved brethren, he walked with God — He walked with God! He had the sense in his affections that God desired his company, and God so worked in those affections that Enoch responded to God's own desires as he walked with God. He didn't walk with God casually; he didn't walk with God intermittently; he didn't walk with God for a few moments; he walked with God for hundreds of years. He didn't go into a monastery to do it, for we read in Gen. 5: 22 that "Enoch walked with God . . . and begat sons and daughters."

In the carrying out of the ordinary responsibilities of life here in the midst of ungodliness, he walked with God and, beloved brethren, it is open to you and to me; in the midst of all the ungodliness that is around us, and as following the responsible pathway that is our lot, it is our inestimable privilege to walk with God.

Now what are the features of a walk with God? Time will permit me to speak of them but briefly. There are two outstanding features marking those who walk with God — they will be pleasing to God, and they will have a right judgment in relation to everything that is opposed to God, and those are two wonderful things. I cannot conceive of anything more blessed than that I should be here day by day conscious that I am pleasing to God. Dear brethren, this is not a doctrinal matter only; it is an appeal to my heart and to yours that we may each be concerned as to being pleasing to God. What have we got worth while that didn't come from God? He is the Father of lights from Whom every good and perfect gift comes down. In Him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning," (James 1: 17). Blessed be His Name, He is constantly looking upon us in goodness and showering us with blessings. Why should we not desire to be here pleasing to Himself? It says of Enoch "before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God," (Heb. 11: 5).

Dear brethren, we may be translated soon! Let us bestir ourselves as to the moments that may be left to us, having a deepening desire to be pleasing to God as walking with Him. The Scripture says "Enoch . . . was not; for God took him." A child once said, "I suppose, mother, they went so far one day that God said, You're tired, you need not go back." Yes, that's it. Let us walk right on to the end of the journey. He walked with God and God took him. "He was not" — they looked for him and they did not find him. The spiritual man is "discerned of no one," (1 Cor. 2: 15 N.T.), a walk devoted to fellowship with God is unknown to the world, but every step is pleasurable to the heart of God. As Enoch walked with God he was able to see that the whole scene lay under the judgment of God, that it lay in ungodliness away from God, and that judgment was coming upon it. His eyes were open to the true condition of things around, but in his heart he had the sense of God's approbation of the course he had chosen, a walk with God. A walk with God involves separation in heart and desire from the principles of a world away from God and under judgment, but there are blessed and present compensations.

In Jude 14 (N.T.) we read that "Enoch . . . prophesied . . . saying, Behold, [the] Lord has come amidst His holy myriads." He had the sense in his soul that, as walking with God, he was surrounded by holy myriads. Dear brethren, there is nothing lonely in a walk with God; it is a walk of fullest fellowship with that which is holy, precious, blessed and victorious.

Noah walked with God, and to him there was committed in smallness and restriction, much that was to be for the pleasure of God in the earth after the flood. You will remember what was in that ark — potentially everything that was to be used in the service of God was carried over in that ark. There came a day when thousands of sacrifices were made; potentially they were all carried forward in that

ark. There came a moment when the mercy of God in its sovereignty reached out to the Ethiopian eunuch, opening the door to those that have come into blessing from the sons of Ham. Then in the case of Cornelius we see the door opened for blessing to the vast number of the Gentiles. And again Saul of Tarsus was brought in, showing that God was calling out from His earthly people who had turned from him, those who should be responsive to His thoughts of Christ. Beloved brethren, those three men were the descendants of Ham and of Japheth and Shem, and potentially were all carried through as committed to the man who was prepared to walk with God.

I sometimes wonder, dear brethren, whether we recognize the wonderful favours and privileges God has conferred upon us. We find ourselves in conditions marked by restriction and smallness, but think of the choiceness of the things which are ours, not the least of which is the knowledge that God will eventually bring about the heading up of all things in Christ. Think of the wonderful truth of the mystery that has been recovered and which is ours to enjoy as having the desire to walk with God; to be withdrawn from pathways dishonouring to God and to be found here seeking His company and appreciating the blessedness of His own thoughts of Christ. How He would flood our souls with the wealth of the ages, filling our hearts with the truth and glory of that which He intends to bring in for the satisfying of His own heart. I like to think of Noah as bringing before us the thought that, in smallness and restriction, God would entrust him with the carrying forward of the most precious thoughts that were upon the heart of God at that time, the bringing through of material that would fill the earth eventually with His praise and glory.

Dear brethren, as content (if we are so content) to walk this pathway of nearness to Himself, God would give to us the present enjoyment of the choicest of His thoughts.

A walk with God involves a path of righteousness; a walk with God involves a path in which the truth is known; a walk with God involves a present sense of victory; a walk with God involves an appreciation of what is holy; a walk with God involves the enjoyment of the blessedness of Divine love. How much more could be said! Think of a meeting, a conference, in which every brother and sister was committed in simplicity but in reality to a walk with God; our relations one with another marked by the transparency which such a walk would ensure; every action and every thought controlled by the revelation of the truth; our affections filled to overflowing with a sense of present victory, the blessedness of the love of God so filling our hearts that it manifests itself in every action and every thought and every word one towards the other.

Such is the blessedness of a walk with God. How often have we said that the Spirit of God will never produce in us any feature of the truth without first showing it to us in its blessed perfection in Christ. Look at that blessed Man here, walking with God. "I do always those things that please Him." "Even Christ pleased not Himself." Whether on the mount of glory or in all the sorrows of Gethsemane, that blessed Man is taking every step in full and absolute communion with His God.

Dear brethren, He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps; in His steps. Did He walk with God? Indeed He did. How long did He walk with God. The whole way. Listen: "Let us go hence."

Has the blessedness of that remark ever entered into your hearts? It revolutionized my thoughts when some years ago a little of the import of that sentence flooded my soul. That blessed Person was reaching the extremity of His walk with God, culminating in Calvary's cross. There came a moment, I know, beyond which no affection could accompany Him, but He would carry us with Him as far as our affections could go. Beloved brethren, while we recognize the uniqueness of His pathway, and as we have said, there came a point beyond which no other affection could go, yet He would say to you and to

me tonight, "Let us go hence." He would take us with Him, in affection for Himself, just as far in communion with His God as it is possible for us to go.

One would desire that this word may touch all our hearts. We are going to be in the presence of God soon. We know something of His presence now, but (and I feel that I need this word as much as anyone) how much of our time now do we spend consciously walking with God. James says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you," James 4: 8. I am convinced that the moment the blessed God recognizes the reality of our desire for His company, He will not withhold it from us. We may be assured of this (I say it with profound reverence), that God is infinitely more anxious for our company than we are for His. May every one of our hearts be deeply exercised that the rest of our time may not only be lived to the will of God; but as in the company of God our pathway might be illumined in the power of the Spirit with the preciousness of Christ, and the thoughts of the blessed God concerning Him.