

Series: Greater Things

“Demonstrating Faith by Walking with God”

Hebrews 11:5-6; Genesis 5:21-24

This morning we continue in our study “Greater Things” where we are being called out to live by faith. Throughout our study we are going through Hebrews chapter 11 and we are learning lessons from the people who make up this Great Hall of Faith. As we read the names and learn of what they did, we are reminded that they were each imperfect, ordinary people. However, God accomplished incredible, extraordinary things through them because they were willing to trust God, believe His Word and step forward in obedience. I am convinced that God has greater things in store for us today, but we must be willing to do the same. We must come to the place where we trust God, believe His Word and walk forward in obedience to what He calls us to do.

In order for us to experience the “Greater Things” that God has in store, we must be a people of faith. In its basic description “faith” is a trust that leads to action. I said last week that we demonstrate faith all the time in a million different ways. For example, you have already practiced faith that your car would get you here this morning, faith that you would be allowed into the building, faith that the building would remain standing, and faith that the chair would hold you up. Now you are practicing faith that I will dismiss you from the service before the end of the day. However, faith in these types of things is unsatisfactory because the object of our faith is imperfect. Sometimes the car doesn’t start, the chair doesn’t hold our weight, and the preacher goes too long. ****ILL:** I experienced this again this week while staying at a hotel for a ministry meeting in Richmond. On Tuesday morning I was up early so I went to the lobby to get some breakfast. I fixed myself a cup of coffee and walked over to the hot food to browse my options. When suddenly I realized that something wet was hitting the bottom of my dress pants. I looked down to find that there was coffee dripping out of the bottom of my cup. Why? Because I happened to get the only cup in the entire stack that had a hole in it. I had faith that it would be good, but it was not so. The point is that faith in any imperfect object or imperfect fallen being is sure to disappoint because it isn’t perfect.

What makes faith in Jesus so powerful is that He is the object of our faith. Our faith is not in a religion with a list of do’s and don’ts. Our faith is not in the church itself or its pastors and programs. Our faith isn’t in our abilities, skills, experiences or expertise. Our faith is in Jesus Christ the perfect Son of God who gave His life, died on the cross for our sins, was buried in the tomb, and three days later arose from the grave. Our faith is focused and based on Him. **Hebrews 12:2** reminds us that only Jesus is the Author (originator) and Perfecter (Fulfiller) of FAITH. He is the only One who will not disappoint. The Good News is that every single one of us can experience this saving faith. In fact, the Bible says that it is offered as a gift to all. **Ephesians 2:8-9** says it simply, “For by grace you have been saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” God invites and pleads with us to put our faith in Jesus. He offers us this opportunity like a gift that we must receive. But, I want to focus in on the next verse for a moment. **Ephesians 2:10** says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared

beforehand so that we would walk in them.” In other words, we are not saved by doing good works. We are saved only by faith in Jesus Christ. However, if that faith is genuine and real, it will continue to be lived out in our lives today through works of obedience.

Hebrews 11 gives us a powerful picture of individuals who believed in God and His Word. And because their faith was real, they continued to demonstrate it in how they lived. We see this today in the life of a man named Enoch. At first glance, it may seem strange to see Enoch listed in this chapter. He doesn't seem to have near the credentials as some of the others. His resume, to most, isn't quite as impressive. He didn't build a big boat, lead millions of people, command a great army, or shut the mouths of lions. There wasn't a statue built in his honor, a building named after him, or even a pat on the back from his contemporaries. However, Enoch did something even more powerful that honored and pleased God. In doing so, he provides a wonderful example for every single one of us to follow.

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When you think of “walking with God” I wonder what comes to mind. There are several people in Scripture who are mentioned as those who walked with God. We see clearly in Scripture that this is something that God desires for all mankind. **Micah 6:6-7** tells us what God desires from His people. The people in that day were at a place of confusion about what would be pleasing to God. Micah explains, “With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Then he answers in **verse 8**, “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to WALK humbly with your God?” This is God's desire for every single one of us. He wants us to walk with Him faithfully in our lives. I believe that Enoch's example still challenges us today to demonstrate our faith by walking with God. As we study his example we will see four key truths.

I. **The Challenge of Walking with God**

I think it is important to point out, honestly, that it can be challenging to walk with God. It is not challenging because God Himself is difficult or because He has made it difficult. In fact, He has done everything possible to enable us to walk with Him and He invites us to do so. However, we face challenges, and I believe that Enoch faced challenges. There are at least two clear challenges, and we can each relate to both of them.

The first challenge is that Enoch couldn't see God. It is likely that Enoch first found it difficult to walk with God in relationship because He couldn't see Him. The same is true for us in our own lives. For some it is simply hard to believe what they can't see. To be clear, however, we can see the evidence of God. We can sense His presence. We can discern His Word and His voice. We can see how He is working. We can see the evidence of His existence. We can identify how He has moved, but we can't see Him physically as we see one another. Enoch was seventh in the line of Adam's lineage. Perhaps he had heard things about God. Perhaps he had heard about how God had fellowship with his great-great-great-great-great grandfather. We aren't sure, but we do

know for certain that when he is introduced to us in Scripture he is already 65 years old and up to this point he is not walking with God. Up to this point he is likely following the footsteps and the example of everyone around him. Up to this point he likely has an understanding about the reality of God, but there has been no personal encounter. We don't know exactly how this changed. God doesn't tell us how He revealed Himself to Enoch, but here is what we do know. When his son Methusaleh was born, God did something in Enoch's heart. We aren't told every detail. We are simply told that from this point forward Enoch walked with God. Perhaps Enoch experienced God in a whole new way through the birth of his son. Perhaps Enoch recognized the amazing gift God had given. Perhaps Enoch considered the relationship that he hoped to have with his son and realized that God wanted that kind of relationship with him. We don't know the details, we simply know that he was changed, and he had such a faith in God that he began walking with God. This change didn't mean that Enoch could now see God physically. It simply meant that Enoch now understood God's presence and He related to Him as a close friend. Enoch had to walk by faith, and we must do the same. While we live in these flawed bodies we can't see God as we will one day. While we live on this earth, "We walk by faith, not by sight," (**2 Corinthians 5:7**). However, we can be assured that one day our faith will be made sight.

There was a second major challenge facing Enoch that we can relate to today. Walking with God wasn't the popular thing to do. Now the Bible tells us in **Genesis 4:26** that after the birth of Seth, "Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord." There was basically a revival of public worship. There were some who began to come together to pray and call upon the Lord. However, they were the far minority. The majority of the people of his day were living for themselves and doing their own thing. In fact, mankind had so deeply rejected their Creator, that they lived as if they were their own god. They lived for every pleasure that you could imagine. Whatever their depraved mind could conjure up, they pursued it. They had no filter or limitation. They did what they wanted. In fact, by the time Enoch's great-grandson, Noah was born, mankind was filled with all sorts of wickedness. **Genesis 6:5-7** tells us, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and the birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them'." The point that I am making is that God was calling Enoch to a personal relationship. God was calling Him to walk with Him and to fellowship with Him. Given the culture with its many pressures and temptations, this would have been a challenging thing. Not only that, but who was Enoch to look to for an example? Where was he to turn? He didn't have an amazing legacy to follow. In fact, when you read through **Genesis 5** we read about his family tree. Over and over again we read "So-and-so had kids, lived so long and died." There is nothing else noted about any of them. But when speaking of Enoch, God goes way out of His way to emphasize the fact that Enoch didn't just live, have kids, and then die. He lived, believed in God and walked with God. Maybe you feel the same way this morning. You've never had a good example of what it means to walk with God. It sounds good, and it's something you desire, but you have no idea of where to begin. Remember Enoch didn't start out walking with God, but at the age of 65 he began his walk with God by faith. If there was hope for Enoch, then certainly there is hope for us today as well.

II. The Conviction of Walking by Faith

The way that we overcome the various challenges to our faith is through deep conviction about what is right and what is wrong. Please understand that this conviction wasn't based on mere feelings, opinions, pressures, or ideas. Enoch had deep abiding convictions based upon the personal experiences he had with God.

A. Enoch Believed in the Person of God

It is interesting in Hebrews 11 to be reminded that Enoch demonstrated faith in God by walking with Him. But the next statement in **verse 6** explains the first step of this. The verse says, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is..." The first step to a vibrant walk with God is that we must believe that He is. We must believe that He exists and that He is present. Faith does not begin with good works, religious pursuits, or empty liturgy. John Phillips said it well, "Faith begins by grasping this one great, basic, essential fact: there is a true and living God. For this reason, the Bible does not begin seeking to prove that God *is* but simply states this incontrovertible fact: 'In the beginning God'." So, even when he couldn't see God, he believed in God and trusted that God's presence was with him. Enoch believed in the existence of God, but this was just the beginning. Friend, we must and can do the same thing. All creation points to the existence of God. Even within our own conscience we understand that there is a God. Through faith we can accept the reality of God and His willingness to relate to us.

B. Enoch Believed the Promise of God

After Adam and Eve had sinned against God, they experienced the consequences of their sin, but they weren't the only ones to suffer. In **Genesis 3:15** God told Satan that the time would come when he would be defeated. Yes, he had caused all sorts of chaos, confusion, and death. However, his influence would one day be removed. God was promising in this moment that one day He would send a Redeemer to rescue the people, save them from sin, and give victory over sin and Satan. Enoch believed this promise. There is no doubt that Adam had shared this promise with Seth who shared it with Enosh who shared it with Kenan who passed it on to Mahalalel who shared it with Jared who shared it with Enoch. In fact, this promise of God was so clear to Enoch that he even prophesied to the people of his day, foretelling the fact that the Savior would one day come to rule and reign. I'll explain that prophecy in a moment, but for now, just know that he believed in the promise of God all WHILE he was still living among a sinful, rebellious culture. So, even when he saw no evidence of salvation, because he knew God and trusted His promise he had complete assurance that it would be fulfilled. God would one day intervene in humanity by sending a Savior to rescue the people from their sins. We must remember one of the key descriptions of faith is that it is the "conviction of things not yet seen." Enoch wasn't consumed by what he did see or didn't see. He simply looked to God and trusted Him. Sometimes we allow ourselves to get so bent out of shape because we are walking by sight. We don't see something the way we thought we would or

should. Enoch had a conviction that God is God, that He was with him, that His promises were all true, and this led to a third conviction.

C. Enoch Believed in the Pursuit of God

This may sound very simple, but it is a powerful progression that we see here. Enoch believed in the existence of God. Enoch believed that God's Word was true that He would send a Savior. These truths though didn't just cause Enoch to say, "Wow! That's really cool." These convictions didn't lead him to sit by complacently doing nothing. Because he knew all these things to be true about God, Enoch wanted to know God. He wanted to know Him closely. **Hebrews 11:6** says it clearly, "For he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." What would you be willing to do if you knew there was a reward in store? ****ILL:** If I said to you that the first person on stage right now would receive a check for \$50,000, what would you do? I imagine that some of you would break your neck trying to get on the stage. If you deny it, I want you to remember that the next time you go to a basketball or football game and you act like a fool just to get a t-shirt. 😊 When we know there is a reward, we are quick to seek. Enoch understood that there is an eternal reward for all who seek God. So, Enoch made it his wholehearted ambition to seek God, to know God, to follow God, to walk with God. Can you picture the image for just a moment? ****ILL:** The idea of seeking Him is the idea of seeking to know God personally. I remember early on in my friendship with Heather I was seeking to know her better. I would show up where I knew she would be. I would talk to her. I would ask questions. I eventually asked for her phone number. I eventually asked her to go out on a date with me. What was I doing? I was seeking to know her while having the hope that she would want to spend time with me. I hoped that there would be a reward of knowing her and growing in a relationship with her. Now, there were times I doubted if she wanted to spend that time with me. There were times that I wondered if she felt the same about me as I did her. But, we never have to wonder that with God. If we seek to know Him, seek to follow Him, seek to please Him, we can be completely assured of His blessing and approval. Faith leads us to understand that God is a gracious, loving, rewarding God, who reaches out to encourage, help, and reward those who seek Him. Our faith in God grows as we fellowship with Him. We must have the desire to please Him and the diligence to seek Him and Enoch certainly had both.

III. The Confirmation of Walking with God

Now, what does one do with this information? We know that God's Word was never given merely for our information, but for our transformation. There were apparently at least some in Enoch's day who professed to have faith in God. However, once again we see in Enoch's life that his profession was backed up by his actions. He lived it out. Through his actions he proved that his faith was genuine. By the way, you are only deceiving yourself if you profess something that you aren't actually living out. How did he illustrate it? How did he confirm and prove his faith?

A. He was Committed in his Relationship

A relationship with God begins the very moment we trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. However, that is only the beginning of that relationship. Genuine faith is demonstrated through a faithful, committed, ongoing relationship. It is described in Genesis 5 simply as a “walk.” What happens when we walk with someone? Imagine that you and a close friend are enjoying a walk down a country road. You are close to each other. You talk, laugh, listen, and share your hearts. Your attention is focused on this person to the exclusion of almost everything and everyone else. You notice the beauty around you or an occasional distraction, but only to point it out to your friend. You share it together. You both enjoy the time together. ****ILL:** Back to my illustration with Heather, that is how our relationship began – with a walk. I walked with her to the biology lab. I walked with her to her dorm. We walked around campus. We walked to the cafeteria. We walked to the ministry office. We walked to class. We walked. We talked. We learned. We laughed. We shared. I looked forward to those walks more than anything else. “Walking” with God is much like this. When we enter into a relationship with God through faith in Jesus, He becomes our heart's greatest desire. Knowing Him, sharing our heart with Him, spending time with Him, and seeking to honor Him - all becomes our primary focus. He becomes everything to us. Meeting with Him is no longer just an event that happens on Sunday mornings. Spending time with Him, talking to Him in prayer, learning from Him through His Word, and even blessing Him by serving Him – all of this becomes a part of our commitment to our relationship with Him. I ask you this morning, how is your relationship with the Lord? Are you spending time with Him? Are you sharing, through prayer, what’s on your heart? Are you opening His Word regularly and learning from Him? How is your relationship?

B. He was Committed to Righteous Living

There is a second key evidence to Enoch’s faith. Yes, he walked with God and had a vibrant relationship, but this led to a second proof. Because Enoch knew God, he sought to honor God by living in a way that was pleasing to Him. ***ILL:** We understand this. When I said “Yes” to Heather that I wanted to go on a walk with her, I was also saying, “No,” to other things and other people. As we would walk, I wouldn’t bring things that would be a distraction or a hindrance. I would walk with her and focus on her. The same should be true as we walk with God. In our relationship with God we should want to remove any sin, any distraction or anything that could hinder us. Enoch did this. In fact, the unfamiliar book of Jude, the little letter right before Revelation, records one of the prophecies of Enoch. **Jude 1:14-15** says, “It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’” Do you notice what he is saying? He is saying, “One day Jesus will come again to bring judgment upon all those who are ungodly.” The word “ungodly” is used four times in this one prophecy. Most

scholars believe that Enoch's lifestyle was so devoted to God and his message was so opposed to ungodly living that he was severely persecuted as a result. For today, I simply want us to understand that one of the evidences of his own personal, genuine walk with God is that he willingly avoided those things that he knew were displeasing to God and committed Himself to living a life that was pleasing to God.

Anyone can profess to believe in God and have a relationship with Him, but the truth will be seen in our actions. One of the primary evidences of a life that has been changed by Christ is that there is a change in how we live. **1 John 3:2-3, 6, 8-9**, explains, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him PURIFIES himself, just as He is pure...No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him...The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." In other words, if you have truly experienced the love of God, you will have no desire to live in sin. He has made you a new creation and given you a new nature, His nature, so that you live for Him and like Him. It is speaking of the practice or lifestyle of deliberately disobeying God. John's argument is simply this: If you have been born again, it is impossible for you to live your life this way. He is saying, "If a man knows God, he will obey God; if he belongs to the devil, he will obey the devil." If you're a child of God there will be evidences of it. Just like a physical child bears the nature of his parents, so does God's children bear His nature. What this means is that as a believer, with the nature of God in me, I will pursue the things of God with total obedience. The old nature of our flesh still wars against the things of God, so we must daily die to self so that we live in the power of Christ. However, this will be a clear and intentional pursuit for all who walk with God. Like the Apostle Paul in **Galatians 2:20** we should be able to say, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

IV. The Celebration of Walking with God

What is the result of all of this? What is to be made of these passages of Scripture and the lessons we learn from Enoch's life? I think we are clearly encouraged to have faith and to live by faith, confidently trusting the Lord and walking in obedience. Why? I suggest three reasons:

A. It Blesses God

This is the primary goal of our faith and of our lives. To honor, exalt, and please the Lord. Hebrews 11:5 says that Enoch was pleasing to the Lord. In fact the very next statement of verse 6 is that "without faith it is impossible to please Him." The clear encouragement of Scripture is that we would live our lives by faith in order that we might

bless and please the Lord. **2 Corinthians 5:9** challenges us, “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

B. It Blesses Us

Please understand that we don't live by faith for our own glory and praise. However, it is important to point out that God is indeed a rewarder to those who seek Him. Every illustration that we read in Hebrews 11 describes how God worked in them and through them. In every single case God gave them a supernatural courage, confidence, and peace to be obedient. Several of them didn't experience any earthly rewards for their obedience. Several of them didn't experience first-hand the fulfillment of God's promises. But, even in those cases God assured them of the future reward that awaited them in heaven. Such was the case with Enoch. Enoch lived by faith and walked with God. He wasn't granted a mansion on the earth or some great title of respect. However, God still blessed Him. **Genesis 5:24** says it simply, “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” His walk was so pleasing to the Lord that the Lord went ahead and took him home. Enoch never had to experience the pain and fear of death. He's one of only two men in the Bible who never died. What a blessing! The greatest thing, however, is not that he avoided death, but that his faith was made sight. One day he was walking with God and suddenly God took him. Instantly his faith was made sight as he was in the very presence of God.

C. It Blesses Others

Hebrews 11:5 says, “He obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.” Even before he was carried to heaven he had obtained a witness, a testimony. His witness was that he was pleasing to God. IOW: Others in his life recognized him as a man whose life and testimony were Godly. Perhaps it was his family. Perhaps it was his neighbors. Perhaps it was the general consensus of the community. We don't know every detail, but we do know that others saw him and knew that his life was pleasing to God. That begs the question of us today, “Is your life pleasing to God? If your life was put on trial would you pass the test? What would your wife say about you? What about your kids? Is your life pleasing to God?”

I challenge you today to consider, “Are you walking with God?” This walk begins the very moment you trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, but it continues every day as we put Him first and draw close to Him. I pray that you will take your next step today!