

(Hebrews - Part 33): By Faith Enoch

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer's sermon on Enoch emphasizes the importance of faith and walking with God amidst a corrupt world, illustrating the rewards of such a life through Enoch's example.

Duration: 24:15

Scripture: Genesis 4:4, Genesis 5:22, Genesis 5:24, Genesis 6:5-8, Matthew 7:7, Romans 3:23, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Enoch from the Bible and highlights five key lessons that can be learned from his life. The first lesson is that without faith, it is impossible to please God. Enoch's faith allowed him to find water in the desert when no one else could. The second lesson is the importance of the Church as a new brotherhood of the redeemed. The speaker emphasizes the significance of connecting the past with the present and allowing those who have knowledge to teach those who do not. Lastly, the speaker encourages the audience to be willing to detach themselves from their generation and seek God's approval rather than the approval of others. The example of John Wesley is given as someone who faced opposition but ultimately triumphed by staying true to his message.

Transcript

...the 11th chapter, and I want to turn to the 5th chapter of Genesis, and note that it says in the 22nd chapter, verses 23 and 4, "...and all the days of Enoch, the 365 years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Now thus saith the Holy Ghost several hundred years before Christ." Now, a little while after Christ's coming, dying and rising again, and his ascension to the right hand of the Father, the Spirit speaks again and comments on what he had said so many hundreds of years before.

In the 11th chapter of Hebrews, "...by faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God.

For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is pleased with God." "...and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Many of you wonder why I'm not preaching on Abel, since he came next after the 3rd verse. The answer is that I dealt with Abel in an evangelistic sermon some months ago, and don't want to repeat. Now, we're learning about Enoch this morning, and God here takes us back to what they call Antediluvian times, which is a nice, smooth way of saying before Noah's flood.

And in doing this, in quoting the telling of a man who lived before Noah's flood, and then many hundreds of years later, when the race had been prolonged and things renewed, and Israel called out, and Christ come, and his death and resurrection having been accomplished, now the Holy Ghost speaks again of this man, Enoch. And I say, in doing so, he binds in one bundle of life all the yesterdays of the race, with the todays and the tomorrows of the race, and shows the organic oneness of all human beings. Now, I believe in the brotherhood of man.

By that I believe that all men born of Adam are of one blood on the face of the earth. But I do not by any means believe that that saves all of them, for there is another brotherhood and a new brotherhood which is the result of the regeneration. And I believe in the brotherhood of the redeemed man, as well as the brotherhood of man.

I believe that human beings are the same the world over, and that they are bound up in a natural brotherhood. And that brotherhood is a lost brotherhood. It is the brotherhood of the universally lost.

Then there is the new brotherhood of the redeemed, which we know as the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this that God does here, in taking us back to the days before the flood, to talk about a man and to point to him and say, here is a man that is to be an example to you, he does something here that we feel is very important, particularly in this day, and that is he makes our yesterdays lecture to our todays. He makes the past speak to the present.

And he lets the person who knows talk to the one who doesn't yet know. He lets the one of experience talk to the one who hasn't had the experience. But we have reversed that in the time in which we live.

This is the age of youth, you know, and we old greybeards are having to sit respectfully with our hands folded in our laps and listen to youth. And that creates the ludicrous situation of inexperienced setting out to teach inexperienced, men who haven't been there showing other people how to get there, and men who haven't done it trying to teach other people to do it. No, yesterday has a lot to say to us yet, and age has a lot to say to youth, and Enoch has a lot to say to our day.

Let's notice what he's saying. Enoch lived in a period we might well call the Dark Ages, when the sons of God saw the daughters of men, and they took whomsoever they would, and giants were born to them, and were in the earth. And the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination and thought of their hearts were only corrupt continually.

And yet in the middle of all that, Enoch found God and walked with him. He found God without a Bible, without an evangelist, without anybody with a tract, without anybody with a book on five ways to win souls, and without anyone at all to win them. He found God in the Dark Ages before the flood, without a Bible to read, and without a church to attend, and without a book of any kind, and without any help at all.

He found God, and he lived by faith, and found faith in God in a rotting, fast-decaying world. Now that says to me, boy, how much you'll have to answer for, that with surrounded by Bibles, and hymn books, and churches, and with evangelists roaming the world, and pastors everywhere, and Sunday school teachers, and tracts, and radio, and all other means of communication, carrying the gospel, what I've got to answer for, when in this period of the world's light, when this man of God found God in the period of the world's darkness without any help at all. Now, it couldn't have been easy.

It's never easy to be clean in a dirty world, and it's never easy to be good in a bad world. It's never easy to be godly in a godless world, but somehow or other, Enoch managed it and did it, and so is it any wonder that God says, go to Enoch and learn from the expert how to walk with me. Now, I want you to note five things here that this story says, that this story of Enoch, this very brief little story, not 500 pages, but just two or three verses from in the scriptures.

But we can learn from Enoch, and one thing we can learn is told us here. It's interpreted for us. We are told that without faith it's impossible to please God.

An expert tells us here, this is not a theorist who has read a book by another man who read a book, written by another man who read a book, but this is an expert telling us here, without faith it's impossible to please God. Here is a man who found water in the desert where nobody else could find it. Here was a man who made the long journey through the desert safely.

This was the man, and so this man is telling us, without faith it's impossible to please God. He's telling us that we must put all unbelief under our feet. He's telling us that we must rest our faith on the holy character of God, not on the promises only, but on the holy character of God.

I've said, I suppose, 20 times since I've been here, that properly faith does not rest upon promises. Properly faith rests upon character, and a promise is only worth the character of the one who made it. So we've got to get past the promises to God himself and see that in the character of God we have our hope.

It's the character of God that matters and that counts, and if God's character is right, and it is right, then everything that God says is true. Enoch had no promises that I know of, or if they were, they were not written promises, but he had faith. Somewhere in some mysterious way there came to him the visitation of faith, and he knew that he must believe, and he did believe, and so he walked with God, and walked with God so successfully that he was not for God took him.

Secondly, we notice also that we learn from Enoch that it's possible to walk with God. Now, that's taken for granted. Even in an age of complete corruption, it's possible to walk with God.

We needn't wait for a revival. Some would say, I wish that there might be a revival such as was in the days of Fini or Edwards or some of the other great revivalists. Well, it would certainly be worthy of our praying for earnestly, and we could all wish that it might be so.

But Enoch tells us out of the past, rising up, being dead and yet speaking, he tells us that there isn't any reason why we should wait for a revival before we individually and personally get right with God. We can walk with God in this hour of universal worldliness and fleshliness and arrogance and religious pride and religious insincerity. We can walk with God.

Anybody can that wants to. If Enoch could do it without a Bible, without a church, without a prayer meeting, without an evangelist or a pastor to help him, without a book to read about God, if Enoch could do it, then it can be done. Enoch was no superman.

Enoch was no genius. Enoch was no superior person with an I.Q. that blew the roof. Enoch was simply another man, but he was a man to whom faith had come, and God had given him the gift of faith, and so with the gift of faith he lived a pure life in a putrid and corrupt age.

He lived a holy life in the midst of universal unholiness, and he walked with God when other men were walking with Satan. So that's what he's telling us. It's possible to walk with God, and you don't have to wait for more favorable circumstances.

This is one of the devil's most useful tricks, to say, we'll wait until the situation eases, then you become a Christian. You can say, I'm not ready to be saved yet because I feel things are not ready. If you put things off until they're ready, you will never come, because those who are converted and who walk with God are not those who find a favorable moment, they're those who come to God right now and let the favorable moment take care of itself, because now is the accepted time.

But you say, if you knew my husband, he's a brute and he wouldn't allow me to go to church. You get your heart right with God, receive Christ Jesus into your heart, and he that will be in you is more than all that can be outside of you, and he that will be with you is more than all that can be against you. And you know what a brutal husband will do for a wife? A brutal husband will drive that wife to the bosom of Jesus, and she's likely to become a better Christian.

Now, I don't recommend that any of you men decide thus to make your wives better Christians by being brutal to them. I only say that you wives who may be so unfortunate as to be married to a gorilla, don't you worry about the gorilla. You look to Jesus Christ, your Lord, and God will make every growl from that man a hymn and a benediction.

I have known it to be so, I have known it. You say, you don't know my husband, and the way you're describing him, I don't want to. But the point is, my brother and sister, that there isn't any situation where you can't live for the Lord, because there isn't any place where the Lord can't help you.

If he could help in up back there, he can help you out here. Some say, I want a better job and then I'll accept Christ. It never works out that way.

Somebody says, I want a better, more conducive circumstances. Circumstances never conduce. This world is not a friend of God, a friend of grace to lead us unto God.

Never. Third, it is better to walk with God than to walk with our own generation. When a flock of sheep is going over a cliff, they always have people or other sheep who say, come along, don't be a dissenter, don't be an oddball, come along with the rest of us, all going over the cliff together.

But this man Enoch knew that if they were all going over the cliff, there was one man who wouldn't go. So he detached himself from his generation and he lived above all generations, and the result is, he's been a benediction to all generations. If you settle down and become a weak, victim of your generation, you will die with your generation.

But if you rise above your generation, you will be the benediction to the next generation. So with all the men of God who walk with God back there, it's better to walk with God than to have the favor of men, far and away better. It is an unconscious tribute, or proof at least, of our love for humanity, that we want them to love us so much.

It is a proof that we respect human beings because we want them to respect us. And so we fall into the trap of wanting to be popular. I want people to like me and I want people to respect me and look up to me.

I tell you, it is better to walk with God than to have the favor of men. And if for a little time you must detach yourself from your generation and lose their favor, go ahead and do it. Lose it, because God will give it back to you, filled up to the brim, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

The first part of John Wesley's ministry was carried on amid a constant barrage of rocks, sticks, stones, ripe tomatoes and rotten eggs. And the last part of his ministry was carried on amid band parades and crowds and honors of every kind. If he had fled from the rotten eggs and the tomatoes and had said, I can't take this, I want them to love me, and had tempered his message in order to get the approval of his generation, he would have gone down with his generation.

But he chose rather to walk with God and let his generation go the way it would, though he sought every minute of the time to try to win them all he could to the Lord and won thousands. But when his generation saw finally that he was triumphing and that God was on his side, they came to him as they came to Israel back in olden days. And they said, Let's go along with you, because we perceive that God is with you.

And then we notice this also, that it is better to walk alone and walk with God than to go with a crowd and find you haven't got God with you. There isn't anything quite so hollow as a crowd. There isn't anything quite so meaningless as the shout of a crowd.

Nothing so meaningless. Because nobody knows quite why they're shouting. Nobody.

And they'll be shouting for Franklin Delano Roosevelt today, and John Diefenbaker tomorrow, and Castro the next day, and Hitler the next, and Godstone the next, and whether they're good or bad, whether they're mighty and good men, as some of these men are that I've named, or whether they are bad men, as some are that I've named, the foolish crowd shouts after them. Brother, it is better to walk alone and walk with God than to walk with the crowd and find that God isn't with you after all. Undoubtedly, Enoch's life must have been a lonely life.

I wrote for Eternity Magazine once an article called, The Saint Must Walk Alone. I still believe it. I still believe that there is a detachment from all my generation, even at the same time that I am serving my generation by the will of God.

There must be a lonely detachment from them if I am going to help them. The physician must be well, or he can't help the sick man. The man, the leader, must see, or he can't help the blind man.

And the physician who gives up and gets as sick as the patients cannot help any of them. So the Christian must be, in a sense, morally detached from the generation that he is serving. He must be separated from the very people that he is winning.

Just as Dr. Viette, who has now been captured by the Communists out of Danmatut, just as she, the Christian doctor, served the lepers but was detached from them, and her service could be powerful because it was a detached service. Her attachment was to God and her service was to people, but she never allowed and couldn't allow the psychology of the leper to enter her mind. She was healthy and she had to stay healthy, and so it is with all Christian leaders everywhere.

And again and lastly, if we walk with the conqueror of death, we shall never be conquered by death. Enoch went for a walk with God, somebody said, and every night he went for a walk with God, and then one night God said to him, Enoch, we're nearer to my house than we are to yours, why don't you just come with me? And so Enoch went with God, and when his friends looked for him, what few friends he might

have had, his family, he had a family all right, because he was begetting a lot of people here, it tells us, he'd beget this and he'd beget that, and so I suppose they were around, wondering what had happened to Grandpa or Grandfather, and he didn't come back, and it just says he was not, he was not. That odd, quaint, little, vivid way of saying it, he was not.

He said, where's your grandfather? He is not. Where's your husband? He is not. They didn't know where he was, because he was with God, and he'd walked with God so long that he was familiar with God, he was at home with God.

Some of us hope to accept Christ and go zooming off to heaven like a rocket, but if you did that, we'd be embarrassed when we got there. You've got to walk with the King of heaven if you're going to be at peace when you get to heaven. You've got to know the one who runs heaven, the High King of heaven, as the hymn has it, if you are going to be at peace and at home with the King.

Enoch walked with God, so when he got there, wherever he went, I am not at all sure about my eschatology, but somewhere God took him to be with him. And when he got there, he wasn't ashamed, and he wasn't embarrassed, because he knew the God who made heaven and earth. So it isn't only getting saved from hell that matters, my brother and sister.

It is getting to know and walk with the God who made heaven and made you for heaven. Now, is Enoch a type? I don't know. Teachers say he is, but I am shy of types as a rule.

But Jesus did say, as it was in the days of Noah, Enoch lived just before the judgment of Noah and was translated to escape death. I wonder if Enoch doesn't stand for the overcoming saints who shall be in the earth just before that last great calamity, and who shall be translated. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all rise.

And they that are alive shall be changed by the twinkling of an eye, and they that sleep shall rise and join them glorified. I wonder if Enoch doesn't stand. Enoch just went away suddenly.

He was gone. Friends said, Where is he? He's gone. He is not.

There was one man they never had a funeral for. Nobody ever brought flowers and with crocodile tears tossed them at grandpa's feet. Nobody did it here for the one-man funeral.

He just went. I know the second coming of Christ isn't as popular as it used to be, and the doctrine of the Lord's coming isn't preached very much scarcely anymore. But I've had no reason to change my mind about it.

I still believe that Jesus Christ is coming for his people, and he's going to translate the living and resurrect the dead and change them and transform them all into his image and lead them to the Father's right hand and present them without spot. I wonder if the story of Enoch might not be trying to tell us in a sort of story form that it's possible to live right just before judgment falls upon people who don't live right. There's no reason in the wide world why you couldn't be among those who, like Enoch, walked with God.

For it couldn't be any worse than it was then. And even if it is, it's still possible for God to do everything for you that he did for Enoch. Everything.

So let's keep this good man in focus this morning. But let's not look exclusively upon him, but let's look upon the one with whom he walked, the one who took him, and the one who's coming back to take us. All this is a part of our thinking and meditating during the communion service.

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