

Walking Heavenward

by H.J. Vine

The heavenward walk is a life of obedience to God's Word, living in the light of His love, and walking in the Spirit.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Ephesians 5:15, Colossians 2:6, Hebrews 11:5, 1 John 2:6, 1 John 2:9

Topics: "Walking In Faith", "Pleasing God"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches about the exemplary walk of Enoch, who pleased God and was taken by Him without experiencing death, highlighting the importance of walking in wisdom's ways well-pleasing to God. The sermon draws parallels between Enoch's walk with God and the heavenly walk of believers today, contrasting those who walk in darkness and those who walk in the light of Christ's atoning blood. The message emphasizes the need for consistency in our walk with God, relying on His strength to overcome difficulties and trials, and the joy of walking in truth and love as children of God.

Transcript

Enoch had a family of sons and daughters, but these earthly relationships and responsibilities did not hinder him walking in wisdom's ways well-pleasing to God! He was the father of Methuselah, and we are told that Enoch walked with God (after the boy's birth) until "he was not, for God took him." This is recorded in the earliest pages of the inspired Volume, and in Hebrews 11:5 the Holy Spirit explains that Enoch did not see death for he was transplanted. He was not found. Elijah at a later date was carried up into heaven by a whirlwind. A cloud received the Lord Jesus from sight when He ascended. Later still, we are told of others, who "shall be caught up" in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air at His return (1 Thess. 4). In the last epistle of the Bible we are informed that during his earthly walk Enoch testified of the coming of the Lord (Jude 14). Twice the Word of God says he walked with God. It is not surprising, therefore, that before he disappeared from the earth he received testimony that He pleased God.

Is it not the same also with those who walk happily heavenward at the present time? Those who are unsaved,--those who are still in the flesh,--walk in darkness, and they know not whither they go. They are kept ignorant of the fact that the blackness of darkness awaits them. Their walk is not heavenward but hellward. On the other hand, those who are "saved by grace" are "in the Spirit," and they "walk in the light" on the ground of the atoning blood of Christ. It is as possible, however, for a hard-hearted religionist, to deceive himself in this, for we read, "He that says: he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (1 John 2:9). His profession is the same as that of the true children of God, but he has not

passed from death into life. It is said, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." Everyone that loves Him that begat loves those who are begotten of Him, and love to the children of God is evidenced by our keeping His commandments, which secures for us a happy walk heavenward on this homeward way that our "JOY MAY BE FULL."

No gloom surrounds us here, nor is the road

Made dark, but radiant shines, while God's abode

Awaits our coming, and we hasten on

To see Thy face, O Lord, where Thou hast gone.

There may be difficulties, trials, weariness and dangers, and dependence upon the Lord with prayerfulness will be needed every day, but Isaiah 40:31 cheers us on: "They, that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." None need be discouraged! Beginning with mounting above the trials, we may grow stronger still and run through them; and, finally, so learn of Him who "fainteth not, neither is weary" (v. 28), that we, too, may walk and not faint, as we tread the heavenly road with steady steps!

We need to guard the fact that no walk of ours down here can add one jot or tittle to the acceptance which is ours in God's favour up there where Christ is. No walk, however godly in this world, can add to the nearness which is given to us in Christ in the heavenlies, and nothing which we may be enabled to do for Him here can increase the love wherewith we are loved in the Beloved there, although our reward in His kingdom may be bestowed accordingly. Our acceptance in everlasting favour results from what our Lord Jesus Christ did, from what He is to God, and from what was counselled in divine love. Our present joy of communion results from present consistency in the heavenward walk according to God's Word.

There are two men whose walk in Old Testament days the Holy Spirit places in striking contrast. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, is one, and David is the other. Of the first it is said, he was a mighty man of valour, and, being industrious, Solomon entrusted him with special authority. Of the latter, notwithstanding personal weakness and failure, we are often told, He walked in the ways of the Lord, keeping His statutes and commandments. Jeroboam, although valorous and diligent, turned the people from God's appointed centre, and of those who followed him it is solemnly repeated, they "walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." Of David's successors, however, who walked after his example, it is said, they walked in the ways of David and turned neither to the right hand nor to the left." These Spirit-given illustrations speak eloquently of the importance of heeding what is according to the Word of God. The one who did not, sinned himself and turned others out of the way, whilst the one who walked himself in God's statutes turned none from the established Centre, the place of Jehovah's name. David's greater Son is the perfect Pattern for faith today, and He could say, "I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love"; and to the believer it is written, "He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). No standard short of Himself is set before God's dear children now.

In writing to the Colossian saints, Paul exhorted them thus, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (2:6). This gives us the normal walk for the subjects of heavenly grace. We will, however, mention some contrasts and details which are so abundant in the writings of the Spirit, given for those who share "the hope which is laid up for them in heaven" (1:5). They will show how the

heavenward walk is guarded, and yet made plain before us.

Of the unsaved,--the Word of God shows us,--they are still travelling on the broad road that leads to eternal ruin;--they "walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in understanding, estranged from the life of God;"--they walk "according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience";--they "walk after the flesh";--they walk "according to their own lusts";--they "walk in darkness."

Of those who are saved by grace we are told, theirs is the narrow road which leads heavenward;--they are not in the flesh, they are to "walk in the Spirit," also "by the Spirit"; they are not of the world even as the Son of the Father is not of the world, and they are to "walk in newness of life";--they may "not walk as other Gentiles walk";--they do not walk in darkness, but "in the light," on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth from every sin;--and 2 John 4 says, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father";--finally, 3 John 4 says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Exhortations, warnings and detailed instructions are also plentifully given, with great care, because of the besetting dangers which surround our heavenward path. We are told to see that we "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" and, in view of this, to "walk in wisdom towards them that are without", moreover--because of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is said, "work with your own hands, that ye may walk honestly (or becomingly) towards them that are without, and that ye may lack nothing"; again, when some had become carnally minded, instead of being spiritual, it is written, "Are ye not carnal and walk as men?" but to some who were progressing, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing"; and again (warning them), "many walk,"--enemies of the cross of Christ,--who mind earthly things--whose end is destruction, therefore the real are "to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing", and "walk worthy of God," who has called us unto His kingdom and glory; also to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; we were sometimes darkness, but being now light in the Lord, we are to "walk as children of light"; and, in regard to earthly callings and relationships, "as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord has called every, one, so let him walk", when true prosperity marked the brethren collectively, we read, "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost" they were multiplied. We are to "walk in the Spirit" as we have seen,--to walk "in the truth,"--to "walk in the light,"--and to "walk in love, as Christ also has loved us." Truly the Standard is very high,--the highest, but no lower standard could be given to those who are loved with such a great and unchanging love, nor would the children of God desire a lower standard, for none lower could be worthy of the One they worship as their God and Father.

To the elect lady John wrote, "I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love that we walk after His commandments This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ, is come in the flesh,"--or, "coming in flesh." The new commandment was given,--not simply for us to admire, certainly not for us to avoid, but that we "might walk in it" practically. How happily, then, may we understand the word of our God and Father, in regard to His own gracious walking at the present time,--"I will dwell in them and walk in them." He has saved us by grace through faith, and "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained (or prepared) that we should walk in them," as therefore we respond to divine love practically and walk in that, He finds present pleasure in us; "GOD IS LOVE, HE THAT ABIDES IN LOVE ABIDES IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM." We are told that faith works by

love. The truth of this is seen in the practice of those who are truly of the faith of the Son of God,--not of faith in men, or in self, but in Him. It was this which made one poet sing,

"O keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know,
And ever to Thy glory be
Walking in faith while here below."

In this way faith rejoices to walk dependently in the heavenly way.

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