

## Heb 11:5-6 The Faith of Abel: Walking with God

Let me remind us of the context of Hebrews. This is a pastoral letter written to Hebrew Christians with great warnings not to “shrink back,” not to “fall away,” not to “drift away,” from Christ, who is the fulfillment of the old covenant. And in 10:39 he encourages these believers by saying, **“We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.”** And then in cp. 11 we find maybe the greatest exposition and defense of faith in the Bible. God’s people live by faith, faith in his promise to save and fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And this truth runs through the Bible. If anyone will be saved, it will be by faith in the Son of God. In this chapter we see the greatest examples of what faith looks like. It is interesting that the author begins with 3 men of faith who lived before the flood. Last week, we considered Abel and his sacrifice as an example of true worship. Faith worships God in an acceptable way. Today, in vv. 5-6 we will consider Enoch and his “walking with God.” True faith is displayed in as a person who loves God and serves him in godliness. In v. 7, next week, we will consider Noah and his witness before an ungodly world. Worship, Walk, and Witness are always the fruits of faith. And how brilliant is the testimony of Scripture in this regard! And I believe these stories are ordered for us not because of chronology, but because of importance. Faith is based in acceptable worship. We cannot live by faith, we cannot “walk with God” if we do not know what God requires of us. And, we have not witness if we do not KNOW what God desires and if we do not live in godliness before God.

Today, our focus is on the faith of Enoch, particularly how he “WALKED” with God. I get this from the genealogy of Gen. 5: 21-24. **“When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.”** Twice we see the phrase “Enoch walked with God.” Now, when we hear about Enoch we may say, *“He’s one of the two men (Elijah) who did not die.”* I believe this is certainly true. After listing every man in the list (except Enoch), we read the words **“and he died.”** But with Enoch, we read the words **“he was not, for God took him.”** And even in Hebrews we read in v. 5, **“By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him.”** However, this is not the point of the author of Hebrews. These words were written for those Hebrew Christians and US to highlight the faith of Enoch. And how do we know he had faith? Because he WALKED WITH GOD. To have faith is to walk with God. To walk with God is to have faith. With this in mind, I want to preach a sermon on what it means to “walk with God,” which is . . . to have faith. I have 3 truths: 1) To walk with God is to make God your chief end; 2) To walk with God is to follow his revealed will; and 3) To walk with God is to expect your reward to come from God alone.

1. To Walk with God is to make God Your Chief End. To walk with God is to make God the GOAL of your life. This means that of all the things you aspire to do in this life, your most important end is God Himself. I think of a field goal kicker. What is his goal? It is to kick the ball between the posts. If he kicks to the left or to the right, he misses the goal. Well, our goal is God Himself. What is the greatest commandment ever given in this world? It is to love the Lord God with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength, with all of your soul, all of your being. I

think of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as he tells the story of Christian who leaves the City of Destruction on his way to the City of Heaven where He will see his God. And this is his ONE goal: to arrive and to be with Him. And on the way, he endures ALL dangers, ALL evils, ALL persecutions, ALL weaknesses of the flesh. God is his goal! Now, this is a big task which can be vague. So, I want to narrow what this looks like down to 3 things. (All commentators I read highlight these truths. See especially J. Owen on Hebrews.)

i. Do all things to the glory of God. I think of the words of Paul who says: **“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”** (1 Cor. 10:31). This means that the glory of God is the motivating factor to ALL your actions. This means you want God more than you want all other things in life. Now, we can have other goals. For example, I want to be a good husband. I want to be a good father. I want to be a good employee. Etc. And I order my life according to these goals. These are good goals. But, all of them fall under the greater goal of God, particularly to love him with all the soul. This is to walk with God. This is what it means to have faith. In this way God is our goal.

God is our master. And we serve our master in everything we do. And He is not just our master. He is our creator. He is our provider. He is our sustainer. He is the one who loves us and does all things for our good.

Application: This includes all your thoughts, as well as all your motives behind your thoughts and actions. This means if you want to make progress in your walk of faith, always be aware of your own heart, knowing that if your heart changes so will your thoughts and actions. We can never stress this enough. I think as a person and as a church, to be taking our hearts before God, who knows it better than we do, and asking Him to help is always a good place to be.

ii. Enjoy Him Always. Only people of faith know this to be true. To make God our goal is to enjoy Him. If you've read John Piper, you know this is one of his great themes in preaching. His books resound with this truth: God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him. And this isn't something new with Piper, who was heavily influenced by Johnathon Edwards, who was influenced greatly by John Owen. Owen is still my favorite theologian, and this theme resounds with him as well. And it should! Because the Bible is full of people of faith who find all their satisfaction in God. Verses and examples abound. But, let me read one Psalm of David. Ps. 16: **“Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”**

Application: My happiest times, my times of greatest joy are when I am in the word, reading, praying, meditating, thinking. What joy to be preacher of the gospel! To be able to prepare weekly before you is such a blessing to me, WAY beyond what you can imagine! God is good to me! I so enjoy Him in these times! For you, it will be found in the same kind of way. No, not preparing to preach from a pulpit, but with your private times in the word and prayer. Only in these ways do you enjoy Him, and enjoy enjoying Him! (I've heard from some of you this week as you testify to this truth!)

iii. Do all this through the way He has appointed: Christ. Make no mistake! To do all things to the glory of God and to find your joy in God is only found in Jesus Christ. ALL God's blessings come to us in Him. Now, as we consider our context, you might say, "*Jon, Genesis says nothing about Christ or that Enoch believed in Christ.*" If this is so, you are gravely mistaken. Our text says that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (11:1). And Enoch, who lived in arguably the most evil times in recorded history, looked forward to the salvation to come. He did not SEE with his eyes the specific Jesus, but his FAITH did KNOW that God existed, and that He was faithful to reward Him (11:6). And his FAITH was united to God's promise of salvation which is found in whom: CHRIST! He looked forward. We look back; but to the same object!

Do you remember Simeon from Luke 2? We read: **"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:25-32).** This is faith (supernatural), the SAME faith of Enoch. Though he did not see or hold Jesus in his arms, his faith was united to the same promise, the same person. **"For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life"** (John 3:16). Heb. 1:1: **"Long ago, at many times and in many ways (Enoch), God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son . . ."** Our dispensational friends are mistaken when they say there was a time in the OT where sinners were saved by the works of the law! This has never been the case. We are saved by faith . . . in the Son of God! This has ALWAYS been God's means to salvation! And FAITH is the means through which we are united to Christ. Whether Enoch or Abel or Noah or Abraham or Peter or the Apostle Paul or me and you, it is always through Christ. For **"there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12). In this way, Enoch walked with God. And in this way, so must any person!

2. To Walk with God Is to Follow His Revealed Will. This was the case with both Enoch and Abel. Look with me to Jude 11-14. Speaking about false teachers (those who do not walk with God, but according to the world we read: **"Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's**

rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones . . .”

The Bible is clear: We either “walk with God” by following his commands. Or we “walk” according to “Cain” and the world. As we’ve seen, Hebrews emphasizes greatly those who “listen to” and “obey” the Word of the God. And those who make God their aim, listen to his commands. People who walk with God, those who have faith, know the truth of Psalm 119:9 which says, **“How can a young man keep his way pure, but by “heeding” the word of God”** (KJV). The revealed will of God gives clear direction to our actions. And only in obedience to we “walk” with God. (Examples abound.)

Application: If you know you are sinning and must change, what should you do. Well, acknowledge your sin, confess to God and to others with a heart that wants to change. This is repentance. Then, look to the WORD of God. And begin to replace the old with the new. As Christians, we “put off” the old man and we put on “Christ.” Look with me to Eph. 4:17-24: **“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”** (Eph. 4:17–24 [ESV](#))

3. To Walk with God Is to Expect Our Reward to Come from God Alone. I will be very brief on this point. But, look at v. 6: **“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.”** Enoch, and all the men and women of faith in this chapter believed, not only that God would reward them, but more importantly that their only reward that matters is the One that God would surely give. I will mention two truths:

i. To those who have faith, God himself is their reward. And there is no greater reward than God. I think of God’s words to Abraham in Gen. 15:1: “the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: *I am* your shield, *and* your exceeding great reward” (KJV). This means that God Himself awaits the faith of the one who walks with God. We’ve see this earlier as the one who walks with God enjoys God. And there is no greater enjoyment! We always seek the giver of the gift over the gifts themselves (though they are immense).

ii. Those who receive the reward are those who diligently seek Him. The word for “seek” is much deeper than to casually “look for” something. If you lose one of your favorite pens, what do you do? You look for a few minutes and when you can’t find it, you ask for another one. But,

what if you lose your wallet (with a few hundred dollars, credit cards, license)? What do you do. You stop everything and search diligently! This is how the Bible speaks as to how we seek God. I think of the verse: **“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you”** (Matt. 6:33). And we have assurance as Jesus tells us: **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened”** (Matt. 7:7–8).

Let me end with some truths with applications pictured in the story of Enoch.

1. By faith the power of death over the Christian has been annulled. The very next saint mentioned after Abel was taken to heaven without dying (Enoch). Brothers and sisters, Christ is risen from the dead. He has overcome death. And if by faith, we are found in him, we also will be raised with him.
2. To live by faith is a supernatural thing. The word used in v. 5 is “translated.” What happened to Enoch was not normal. It was supernatural. So is the Christian life. Think of the new birth. Jesus tells Nicodemus that if he wants to see heaven, he must be born “again,” or “from above.” I think of Eph. 2. As sinners, ALL OF US are dead spiritually. And v. 4-6 says, **“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . .”** This means that “by the Spirit” our living is different from the world, our “walk,” our “faith” is supernatural.
3. To live by faith is always war. You might say Enoch had it better, or other Christians have it easier. But Enoch lived in probably the worst time in history: before the flood. And we have no evidence of great righteousness on the earth. We are only told of Enoch and Noah. With sin and death all around us, we are told to fight the good fight of faith. Paul tells us to daily put on the armor. And until we die, or Christ comes back, this war will not stop.
4. Walking with God is the basis for our witness. If we walk like the world, this is not faith. If we walk like the world, what power do we have as we talk and share the gospel? This is one of the reasons Enoch . . . and Abel are mentioned in Jude 11-14.
5. To have faith is to walk in Christ. Let me end with Col. 2:6-10: **“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”**

Conclusion: To have faith is to walk with God. And we do this through the Son. In this way God is our chief aim. We have his revealed will (the Bible). And we know that God, in Christ is our chief reward. So we walk!