

## Encounter “Walking with God”

Genesis 5:24

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on July 25, 2021

### INTRODUCTION

- **(SHOW SLIDE 01)** This summer we are doing a series I am calling “Encounter.” It’s about encountering God. There are so many ways that we encounter God and that God encounters us.
  - We could talk about those dramatic one-time encounters with God that people like Moses had when he encountered God at the burning bush, or Isaiah had when he saw the vision of God in all his holiness.
    - Those are amazing, but they are rare events.
- Today I want to look at the opposite of this. I want to look at encountering God as the ordinary and normal part of everyday life.
  - To do this I want to look at the life of this man named Enoch. We find his name in the middle this long genealogy of names in Genesis 5. Let’s be honest, genealogies are pretty dry reading.
    - It makes me think of the old Scottish pastor who was reading the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 that says, **“Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah.”** He looked on and saw the list to follow and said, **“and they kept on begetting one another all the way down this page and halfway through the next.”**
- But don’t skim by this too quickly. Genesis 5 is an incredibly powerful chapter. One reason for this is that amidst all this dry reading about people living and dying, we suddenly encounter this man named Enoch.
  - And we are given a very brief summary of his life. It is like reading a tombstone that describes the person’s life in very short form. Here’s the extremely brief summary of Enoch’s life.
    - **(SHOW SLIDE 02)** <sup>21</sup> When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.
- Can you hear the language of encounter? He walked with God.
  - That’s not a one-time encounter like Moses had at the burning bush. It’s an ongoing encounter because he walks with God for most of his life.
  - It’s not a sensational or dramatic encounter. To walk with someone is the most ordinary type of encounter there is.
    - To walk with someone implies friendship, conversation, and intimacy. Enoch walked with God.
- This morning I want to ask three questions about Enoch’s life. I am praying that God would use his little biography to inspire us to encounter God by walking with him each day of our life.

- Perhaps you need to begin that walk today, or maybe you've walked away from God and need to come back, or maybe you just need to grow deeper in your relationship with him as you keep walking the long path of life.
  - So, three questions.

## HOW DID PEOPLE KNOW?

- So, the first question I want to ask is this: **(SHOW SLIDE 03) How did people know that Enoch walked with God?**
  - It was obvious to everyone in his day. This is how they described his life. Genesis 5 was written centuries after Enoch's life and yet this is still how he was remembered. How did people know that Enoch walked with God?
    - I don't think Enoch went around telling people this. The greatest saints don't go around boasting like that. Clearly, it must have been obvious to anyone who knew Enoch that his life was different. He stood out from the generation in which he lived. And people easily traced his unique life to his ongoing relationship with God.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 04)** I wonder what it was that made his walk with God so obvious. Was it the way he used his time?
  - In our day this is one obvious way to spot someone who is walking with God. "Don't bother asking her to do something on Sunday morning because she's always in church."
- Was it the way that Enoch used his money?
  - Although he wouldn't broadcast it, it was obvious that he was always giving away money to help those in need. In our day, you can see those who walk with God – they love to give their money to the causes of Christ, to do things like sponsor children with Compassion, or give money to see Christ's church grow, or to support missionaries. That all seems like a foolish waste of money to the world, but it clearly marks out those who walk with God.
- Was it obvious that Enoch walked with God by how he talked?
  - He had a family and I'm sure he talked about his family. He had some sort of job and probably some type of interests or hobbies. But you can always see someone who walks with God because they love to talk about God, about the Bible, about what they are learning or how they are growing. Everything just seems to come back to Christ and how we should live for him in our culture.
    - Or maybe it was what Enoch didn't say. I'm always amazed by how much Christians stand out just by the mere fact that they don't swear every other sentence.
- It was obvious to others that Enoch walked with God because he lived differently than those around him. If you read on into Genesis 6 you discover that by Noah's day culture had disintegrated so far that we read **(SHOW SLIDE 05) "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence." (Gen 6:5, 11)**

- Enoch was Noah's great-grandfather so it is likely that during his life he watched as the culture around him grew further and further away from God, celebrated all kinds of lifestyles that God did not approved of, and violence increased.
  - People could tell Enoch walked with God because his life was so different from those around him.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 06)** This was true for the early Christian Church as well. The early Christian church grew from Jesus and his 12 disciples to over 50% of the Roman Empire by the mid 300's AD. There were many factors behind this, but one of the greatest was how differently Christians lived. Historian Rodney Stark identifies a few areas.
  - The ancient world was not kind to women and children. Married men could have as many affairs as they wanted, but their wives could not.
  - Abortion was a regular practice as was infanticide. Abortion of course means to end a baby's life in the womb. Infanticide is allowing the baby to be born but to then leave it by itself to die of exposure.
    - Christians spoke against all of this and lived differently. They called men to be faithful to their wives and treated women as equals to men. They spoke against abortion and infanticide. They collected unwanted babies and raised them as their own. The early Christians also stood out for their beliefs about sex being only for a man and woman within marriage and for their beliefs that Jesus is the only way to God.
- To walk with God in our day means that our lives, like Enoch and the early Christians, will stand out from those in our culture.
  - We do not abort our babies, though we show great compassion and care to those who do and tell them of Christ forgiveness. We adopt babies, foster children, and treat women as having equal value to men.
  - We do not embrace MAiD, which is both committing suicide and asking a doctor to perform murder, but we trust God's timing on our own deaths and we care for those who are suffering.
  - We teach and embrace God's design that there are only two genders, while coming alongside and caring for those who struggle with their gender identity in a posture of compassion and showing them God's good design.
  - We do not think we are better than anyone else, but we believe that God exists, that we are sinners in need of grace, and that God sent Jesus Christ to save us from sin, from death, and from hell. And so we submit our minds, our ideas, and our lives to him.
- We don't claim to be perfect. When we sin—and we all sin—we come before Jesus and say,
  - ***I am weak but Thou art strong  
Jesus keep me from all wrong  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee***
- So how did people know that Enoch walked with God? Everything about his life revealed that he walked with God.

## WHEN DID ENOCH'S WALK BEGIN?

- That brings us to a second question that I want to ask about Enoch's life. It is this:  
**(SHOW SLIDE 07) When did Enoch start walking with God?** The answer is clearly stated for us in this short summary of his life. Look at verse 21.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 08)** <sup>21</sup> **When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah.**  
<sup>22</sup> **Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters.**
- So, Enoch did not walk with God the first 65 years of his life. But then his first child was born. He had a son who was named Methuselah. Up to that point he did not really care about God, but something changed when he held his first child in his arms.
  - I've seen the same thing so many times today. Some young people—though certainly not all—often care so little for God. They can live to have fun and build their lives.
    - But then they get married and have their first child and suddenly something changes. They see the responsibility of raising their children and they start reflecting on what life is all about, what is right and wrong, and what it means to be human. They start going to church and commit themselves to Christ and to walking with God.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 09)** In Enoch's case, it was the birth of his first child that caused him to turn to God and to start walking with him. But it could be many things.
  - For some it is a crisis in their life. Think of Jacob. He was making a big mess of his life until one night he wrestled with the angel of the Lord. After that he walked with God.
    - So also, many make a mess of their lives through drugs, crime, alcoholism, and broken relationships until a moment when they wrestle with God and they submit their lives to him.
  - For others it is a childhood encounter with God. Think of Samuel. He was just a child when God called his name.
    - Samuel began his walk with God very early in his life and so do many today when they receive Christ at a summer kid's camp, Sunday school, or their Christian parents lead them to Christ.
  - For still others it is recovering from a sickness that could have killed them. King Hezekiah in the Old Testament came very close to death, but then God enabled him to recover. Then Hezekiah walked with God.
    - So also, many people live for themselves until suddenly their health is shattered. They come face to face with their own mortality and realize their need for Christ, for his forgiveness, and their need to start walking with him.
- In Genesis 5 it says, **(SHOW SLIDE 10) "Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah."** (Gen 5:22) Take out Enoch's name and put in your own. How would you fill in that sentence? **(SHOW SLIDE 11) "I walked with God after . . ."**
  - After my parents led me to Christ
  - After the car accident that nearly killed me
  - After the divorce blew up my life

- After I attended summer camp
- After one sermon I heard that pierced my heart
  - How would you fill in that sentence? Whatever that thing was, it is the most important time of your life. It showed your need for Christ. It drew you to Christ. It was the beginning of walking with God.

#### WHEN DID ENOCH'S WALK WITH GOD END?

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 12)** So we have now answered how people knew that Enoch walked with God and we have answered when Enoch began to walk with God. There is one last question I want to ask and it is this: **(SHOW SLIDE 13) When did Enoch's walk with God end?**
  - The answer is that it didn't end. Look again at verse 24. **(SHOW SLIDE 14) Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. (Gen 5:24)**
- Now this is little verse jumps out of the page when you read the genealogy of Genesis 5 in its entirety. Did you notice the pattern that ran throughout the entire genealogy? It is a fairly simple pattern.
  - Person A lives so many years and then father's person B. Then Person A lives so many years after fathering B, and fathers more sons and daughters. Person A's life lasts so many years and then he died.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 15)** You may not be aware of this but this pattern is distinctly unique to all the other genealogies in the Bible. No other genealogy follows this pattern and there are many genealogies in the Bible. Every other genealogy names the person, says how long they lived, names their children, but it never says, "And he died."
  - Yet, here in Genesis 5 that phrase "and he died" appears over and over again.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 16)**
    - "Adam . . . and he died." (v. 5)
    - "Seth . . . and he died." (v. 8)
    - "Enosh . . . and he died." (v. 11)
    - "Kenan . . . and he died." (v. 14)
    - "Mahalalel . . . and he died." (v. 17)
    - "Jared . . . and he died." (v. 20)
    - "Methuselah . . . and he died." (v. 27)
    - "Lamech . . . and he died." (v. 31)
    - That little phrase is like an ax that cuts down the life of every single person in this chapter. And he died! And he died! And he died!
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 17)** What is the purpose of this? Well, Genesis 1-2 describe life with God in the garden. We read that in the evening God would walk with Adam and Eve and speak with them. Everything about walking with God speaks of life, of wholeness, and of joy.
  - But in Genesis 3 Adam and Eve disobey God and the consequence of human sin is death. Genesis 4 shows what happens when human beings no longer walk with their Creator. Adam and Eve's son Cain, murders his brother Abel.
- So, Genesis 5 then vividly emphasizes the truth that **(SHOW SLIDE 18) "the soul that sins will die" (Ez 18:2)** It shows clearly the truth of Romans 6:23 that **(SHOW SLIDE 19)**

**“the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) and of James 1:15 that (SHOW SLIDE 20) “sin gives birth to death.” (James 1:15)**

- All of humanity stands under the judgement of death. Genesis 5 is meant to make us feel the weight of sin and of its consequences.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 21)** But then suddenly in the middle of the chapter that emphasizes death, we read about Enoch. And we read that **“and he was no more because God took him away.”** What exactly happened to him? We don’t really know. All that we know is that he did not die a normal death.
  - Hebrews 11 puts it like this: **(SHOW SLIDE 22)** <sup>5</sup> **By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.**
- The only other person who had some sort of experience like this was Elijah of whom we read in II Kings 2:11, **(SHOW SLIDE 23) “As Elijah and Elisha were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire, and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind”.**
  - Is that what happened to Enoch? We do not know. All we know is that he never experienced death.
    - Now here is the million-dollar question: why did God take him away and not allow him to experience death? We are told the answer to that two times in two verses. The answer is because Enoch “walked with God.”
- The great Scottish pastor Alexander Whyte has said, **(SHOW SLIDE 24) “Enoch so entered and so dwelt with God in his own heart, that God could not endure to loan him to this world any longer.”<sup>1</sup>**
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 25)** Or in the words of a little girl who told this story to her mother.
  - She said, **“Mamma, one day Enoch and God took a walk together. They walked and they talked, and they talked, and they walked, until Enoch finally said, “My Lord, it’s getting late. I’d better go home.” And the Lord said, “Enoch, we’ve been walking so long together, I believe we’re closer to my home than yours. Why don’t you come home with me tonight”? So Enoch went home with God.**
    - It is almost like Enoch had such an intimate relationship with God that God would not allow him to live in this sin sick world any longer.
- There is a lot of mystery around Enoch’s life, but none of this is a mystery now. The good news is that you too can get through death. Not in the same way as Enoch, but even better.
  - Jesus died on the cross to remove your sins. It is your sin that will lead you to death and to eternal death. But Jesus can remove that sin. Not only that Jesus conquered death by rising from the dead. The good news is that all who given their lives to Jesus Christ will also pass through death.
    - Death will not have the final say in our lives. For God will raise us from the dead just like he raised Jesus and give us immortal bodies. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. That life is offered to you. The life that was in the garden. The life that will be for all eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Whyte, *Bible Characters – The Old Testament*, 40.

- But like Enoch, you must come to a moment in your life where you stop walking your own path and turn to walk with God. Have you done that?

### DAVID BRAINERD'S WALK WITH GOD

- And to those of you who know Christ and have walked with God for a long time – are you growing in your relationship with him? I love to read Christian biographies because they show how believers have walked with God. They show the struggles and the joys and we can learn from them. I long for a deeper walk with Christ.
- David Brainerd was a missionary in the middle of the 1700's. Although he was a very young man his intimacy in walking with God far surpassed most others. Listen to some of the things he wrote in his diary.
  - On Apr 28, 1740 he writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 26)** "God was so precious to my soul, that the world with all its enjoyments was infinitely vile. I had no more value for the favour of men, than for pebbles."<sup>2</sup>
  - On other days he wrote of his failings in walking with God. **(SHOW SLIDE 27)** "Oh, if I ever get to heaven, it will be because God wills . . . for I never did anything of myself, but get away from God . . . no poor creature stands in need of divine grace more than I, and none abuse it more than I have done, and still do."<sup>3</sup>
  - But listen to his heart's yearning. **(SHOW SLIDE 28)** "My soul longed with vehement desire to live to God . . . Oh for holiness! Oh for more of God in my soul!"<sup>4</sup>
    - Brainerd died at the age of 29. I wonder if he like Enoch got so close to the heart of God that God did not want to loan him to the world any longer.

### A CALL TO WALK WITH GOD IN INTIMACY

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 29)** Brothers and sisters, does that strike a chord in your heart like it does in mine? I am so grateful to God for saving me through Christ. I have walked with him many years and have enjoyed many sweet moments of worship. Oh but in other moments I realize how much my heart strays. How easily I forget him. How much the world seems to captivate my heart more than him. I grieve over how little I love him.
  - I want to give you a chance to do one of two things: either to start this walk with God by giving your life to Christ, or to recommit yourself to him.

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<sup>2</sup> "Life and Diary of David Brainerd", in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Vol 2*, 324.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 321, 322.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 327, 329.