

The Hall of Faith: Enoch

Hebrews 11:5-6

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, January 29, 2022

Good morning, everyone. Can you guys hear me okay? I don't know what your week was like, but mine was pretty interesting. I got a phone call on Monday from our guest speaker who was supposed to come this weekend, and he said he was having passport trouble. He actually had his passport in his hands, and it was legitimate, and it was not expired. But he was renewing it, and he found out from the US offices that if it's in process of being renewed, it's not valid. So he couldn't get into Canada. He said, "I hope I get that resolved in the next two or three days." I said, "Me too," and it did not; but that's okay. The Lord is sovereign, and we're talking about faith this morning, so we have faith that that's what God wanted. But we are postponing the conference; we're not canceling it, we're going to have it with Carl Hargrove from Grace Advance probably in the month of April. So we'll get you some more information. We're getting all of that sort of ironed out and put down on the calendar. But that's potentially going to be April 21-23rd. He told me he will be coming back from Ethiopia, but he can stay in Vancouver for a day or two and then come here. And I said that sounds wonderful. So it should be interesting time for Carl as well, but please be in prayer for that.

If you're joining us for the first time this morning, we are back in the book of Hebrews. We've been in it for about a year now going through it verse by verse. And as we've done that, we've come to one of the most famous parts of it. One of the most famous parts of the Bible, really. And that's the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. Because this is where the author goes through a list of people from the Old Testament to show you how they were saved, and that is by faith. And he gives you example after example of people who lived in the days of Israel and before in order to demonstrate how they came to know the Lord. And that was by trusting Him just like you. It's not like they were saved one way and you were saved another. And it's not like they went to Heaven down one road, and then you've gone down another path; it's just always been the same way, and that's by the grace of God. If you were saved in the Old Testament, it was by grace. If you're saved in the New Testament, it's by grace. If you were saved under the covenant with Israel, it's by grace. If you're saved under the covenant with the church, it's by grace, which is why this chapter means so much to us, because you can really relate to what it says here. I believe it was the theologian A.W. Pink who used to say anytime he was discouraged, all he had to do was pull out his Bible and read Hebrews 11, and it brought him out of it. Because how many times if you've been discouraged by something until you read the story of Noah, and you said, "Okay, I can do this, I don't have it that bad." Or you read the story of someone like David and you said the same thing. "God brought David through his trial, so He'll bring me through mine." That's one of the reasons this chapter is in the Bible.

And with that said, I want to introduce it in a different way this morning, because instead of reading Hebrews 11, and walking you through it like we've done before, I want you to turn to the book of Genesis. So if you have opened up your Bibles to Hebrews, just keep your finger there, and turn over to

the book of Genesis. So we can go right into the life of the next person in the list, and that's Enoch, the man who did not see death.

Last week, if you were with us, you know, we studied Abel, the man who saw death. He tasted it to the fullest because he died in the worst way imaginable at the hands of his brother who murdered him. I can't think of a worse way to die than that. That's about as despicable of a thing you can think of. But this week, we're going to look at the life of someone who experienced something very different. And you find him in Genesis chapter 5. If you just read in the opening verses of that, it says this, it says,

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth, Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were 800 years, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

Seth lived 105 years, and became the father of Enosh. Then Seth lived 807 years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.

Enosh lived 90 years, and became the father of Kenan. [And I'll just summarize some of this for the sake of time.] And all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died. [Then in verse 12] Keenan lived 70 years, and became the father of Mahalalel, and he died at the age of 910. [Then verse 15] Mahalalel lived 65 years, became the father of Jared, and then he died later on. [Then verse 18] Jared died. [and then verse 21 says,]

Enoch lived 65 years, and became the father of Methuselah. And he didn't. Because he walked with God; and he was not, for God took him, [which made him different from all the rest.]

And we'll stop the reading there for the sake of time, but just as you read this chapter, it doesn't take a lot of effort to figure out what the theme of it is, and that is death. All throughout Genesis 5, it says over and over again that so and so lived so many years, and then he died. And then so and so lived so many years, and then he died. And then the next guy lived so many years, and he died. That phrase is repeated eight times in here for the sake of emphasis to show you that this is what happened to Adam and Eve and their descendants. After they sinned in the garden, they died. They all passed away. Because the Lord told Adam and Eve that in the day you eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will die, and that's what happened. In the moment they ate of it, they died spiritually; and then years later, they died like this. As did everyone. Nobody was spared. It was a judgment that fell upon all but

this one man, Enoch. It started with Adam, went on down to Seth, went on to Enosh into Kenan then Mahalalel, then Jared, and so forth and so on, all the way through, because they all felt the effects of the curse. Adam's sin nature was imputed to them, and so was the judgment. For 2000 years, I might add. If you add up the lives of these people, you find that this is how much time is found in this one chapter of the Bible, it covers a period of two millennia. Now, just to put that in perspective, if you wind back the clock, 2000 years ago Jesus walked the earth. That's how long this was, in this one part of the Bible, because it was given to summarize everything that happened from the time of Adam, all the way down to the flood.

In fact, if you're wondering where we get this information, if you look back in your Bibles in chapter 5:1, it says, "this is the book of the generations of Adam." Now just think about this for a moment.

Moses says, when he wrote the book of Genesis, he copied the material down from a book. Can you just pause and let that sink in for a second? When he put together this list of Adam and his descendants, he didn't just make it up off the top of his head. He transferred it from a scroll that someone gave him. And the question is who? And we don't know. And the issue is, well where did he get it? I mean, who wrote this, and we have no idea. Moses doesn't say, but if you ponder this for a moment, have you ever played the game telephone before? You know the game where you whisper something into the person's ear next to you, and they whisper it to the next person, and they whisper to the next person until it comes back to you all garbled up, because you say "the cow is in the barn," and then it comes back to you as "the man sits by the gate" or something like that. Some people think that's the way Moses wrote Genesis. They believe someone whispered into someone's ear, who whispered into someone else's ear until it came back, all garbled up. But Moses says here in this first verse that he didn't. There was more to it than that, because he got his information from a book.

And if you take it one step further, if you look at the handouts that we gave you in your bulletins, you can see that Adam, this is the name of the men that are mentioned in Genesis 5, you have the year of their birth, the age of the birth of their son, the age they were at, when their son was born; and then the year of their death. And if you look at that, you can tell that Adam lived to see eight generations of his descendants because he lived to be 930 years old, which means that he could have known Lamech, who was Noah's Father. We have every reason to think he probably would have; grandparents love to see their kids. And this is your great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandparent; he would've loved to see this child. If you look at the age of Adam's death on the right-hand side of the column, and you compare it to Lamech's birth at the left-hand bottom of the column, there's about a 56 year overlap in there. Which means he had that much time to pass down the details of his life. So it's entirely possible that when Noah stepped onto the ark, he would have carried second or third hand information about these events. Now again, some of this is conjecture, we don't know exactly how it happened, but the point is that it wasn't done the way most people think. Men recorded history back then the way they do it today, and that was by writing it down in a book. Makes you wonder, doesn't it? It's not the way people typically look at the ancient world. And I tell you this because Enoch lived somewhere in the midst of all that. He existed somewhere in the timeline between Genesis 1 and Genesis 6.

I told you last time that the Hall of Faith is divided into four phases. First you have the antediluvian or diluvian period. This is the men who lived before or during the flood. Then you have the patriarchal period which covers the lives of Israel's fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then you have the time of Israel's formation as a nation. Then you have the period of the judges and kings, but it all starts with the antediluvian people. The men of Enoch's day.

And the main thing you learn about Enoch in Genesis 5 is that he did not see death. He was the only man in the chapter who had that distinction. Unlike his predecessors, the Lord allowed him to avoid the judgment that they experienced for their sin. Because if you look in verse 24, it says that "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." Now, that doesn't mean that Enoch didn't sin because He did. And it doesn't mean he was perfect; that's not the idea here. There's no indication here that he was a perfect man; he was normal like everybody else. It just means that the Lord delivered him from it. Because when you read this chapter, it says that so and so lived so many years, and then he died; and so and so lived so many years, and then he died; and so and so lived so many years, and then he died; and then it comes down to Enoch, and he didn't. He broke the chain of death. His life stopped the vicious cycle, and the reason it happened in this passage here is because he walked with God. If you look in verse 24 again, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." In other words, he had a relationship with Him. The two of them were close. That's something that wasn't said about anybody else in this passage. Apparently, it was very unusual because for 2000 years, a lot of these men did not walk with God. But Enoch did. I mean, the reason the flood happened is because people were not walking with the Lord. They were sinning. Enoch had a different type of life. Verse 22 actually says that he walked with Him for 300 years, can you believe that? He walked with God for three centuries; longer than people today, even live, way, way, way, way longer. Which is what made him so special. And with that in mind, if you would turn in your Bibles back to Hebrews 11. I tell you all that because this is the next man in the list of the Hall of Faith. And this is what the author of Hebrews says about him. If you look in Hebrews 11:5, it says this, it says,

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God.

Now, if you notice, the passage here starts off with that familiar phrase "by faith." Every time a new person is mentioned in the Hall of Faith, that's how it starts. "By faith Abel, by faith Enoch, by faith Noah." And Enoch is the second man here in the list. Just like it was with Abel, the author doesn't say much about him here. He just gives you a few general descriptions and then moves on to the next guy. But it says Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death. And that means Enoch escaped death because of his faith. He rose to meet the Lord in the air, as we'll talk about in a minute, instead of dying on account of his trust in Him; that's all. this wasn't done because Enoch was better than everybody else. It didn't happen because he was the perfect man, just because of faith.

And then it says, "For he obtained the witness that he was pleasing to God," which means this is what his faith did as well, it allowed him to please the Lord and bring Him glory. Which made him so unusual because it wouldn't be too long after this, that the Lord would flood the earth because nobody was acting this way, except Noah and his family. Which is why verse six says the Lord rewarded him as a result of this and didn't leave him empty handed, but it all went back to his walk. The reason the Lord did all this for him is because Enoch had a special relationship with Him, and that's why he was saved. His life is a reminder to us, that following the Lord is more than just doing things mechanically and going through the motions. It's about loving God and keeping His commandments and staying close to Him and having a relationship to.

When I was a young man growing up in church, we used to have a song that summed this up well, and it went like this. It said,

Oh God, You are my God
And I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning
And I will learn to
Walk in Your ways
And step by step You'll lead me
And I will follow You all of my days

That's what Enoch did. He followed God step by step all his days. And the point here is that you have to do the same thing if you want to be His disciple. I mean, it's not enough just to talk to God when you come to church. It's not okay just to think about Him when you enter this room on Sunday because it doesn't take any faith to do that. A hypocrite can do that. A fake can do that. The faith of Cain did that. You have to have something more. It's got to be a walk, it's got to be day by day, step by step, every hour, or else God doesn't want it.

And that's what we're going to talk about this morning by looking at three things you learn about Enoch's walk with God in this passage. So if you're taking notes, this is how we're going to address it today. This is our sermon outline; we're going to look at three things we learn about Enoch's walk with God. And after talking about this, I'm gonna give you some closing thoughts at the end. So we're gonna go through this passage together, and then take a few moments to review what it says.

The first one is this: by faith Enoch was taken up. The first thing you learn about Enoch's walk with God here is that by faith Enoch was taken up, which means that he was snatched away, because the Lord brought him into heaven without dying. That's interesting, isn't it? Anybody here want to experience that? I got my hand first up in the air. Forget the hospitals for a moment, forget all those doctors, no

offense to the doctors. Just take me Lord Jesus. And if you look in your Bibles here, you can see this is what Enoch experiences.

In fact, when we come to verse five, this is a few verses into the chapter, so it might be good to back up a little bit, and go over what he's talked about. Because to review this, earlier in verse one, it says that "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." And that means this is the definition of faith. It's a conviction in things that are invisible, because that's what God is, isn't He? He's invisible; you can't see God. You can't reach out and touch Him with your hands, but you know He's there because you have faith. That's the idea. Then in verse two it says, "For by it, the men of old gained approval." And that means that this is how the men from the Old Covenant were saved. They did it by faith, just like you. They trusted in the mercy of God. Then in verse three it says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God" because that's where faith begins. It starts with creation. Because if you don't believe in God at creation, when will you do it? And if you don't trust in the Lord in the opening verses of the Bible, when are you going to start? You have to do it there. And then after saying that, the author mentions the first two people in the list, the first one is Abel in verse four. He's one of the oldest men in the Bible. We talked about Abel last week, we did a whole sermon on him. Very, very godly man. Very interesting story. And the second one here is Enoch.

And if we could put a description on Enoch, you might call him one of the godliest, if you can say it that way. He walked with God longer than anybody did, and he did it in a generation when most people didn't. In fact, the name Enoch means dedicated or someone who is set apart for the Lord. And when you do a survey of the Bible, you find he really was like that because if you want to write this verse down, Jude 14 says Enoch was a prophet. Curiously enough, way back then in the early days of the Bible, the Lord set him apart to preach His Word. Jude 14 says he prophesied to his generation, saying, "Behold, the Lord will come with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly other ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way." That's interesting, because some people have wondered, well, what would that look like? How many people were on the earth when Enoch prophesied? And we don't know. But we do know that if men like Adam and Seth and Mahalalel lived to be over 900, and they kept having kids, there would have been a lot of people. That's a lot of birthday parties. Because it wouldn't take long for the earth to become populated, and it was Enoch's job to call on them to repent, which would have been difficult; he would have gotten resistance. A lot of this would have been him prophesying to his family, but he stayed with it because he was dedicated.

And other than that, that's really about all we know about him. His name only is only mentioned a few times in the Bible, which is why there's been several legends that have sprung up about Enoch throughout the years. One of them is found in an apocryphal story called *The Book of Enoch*. It was written just a few years before the New Testament, and it talks about his involvement with a group of people known as the Nephilim in Genesis 6. It was a race of half human, half angels is how the story goes. And he fought with them and argued with them and defeated them in the end. And another story

that's come down, I find this kind of comical, is that he was the first one to make shoes, because he walked with God so much that it wore the soles of his feet down and gave him blisters. So he made a pair of open-toed sandals to fix that. Now that's just silly. Another one says he made a deal with the Angel of Death to defeat death, and that's silly too because if you have God helping you defeat death, what do you need that for?

But I mentioned that because if you notice in Hebrews 11:5, the author doesn't go into all that here. He doesn't say anything silly about Enoch. He sticks very closely to what you read in Genesis, and he says this, "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death." The word "taken up" here, it's the Greek word, *metatithemi*. It's a compound word from *meta* or great and *tithemi* to put; it means to put something through a great change or give it a great do over. If you have the King James Version, it renders this word as translated. So it could go like this, "By faith Enoch was translated so that he would not see death." Because just like you would take something from one language and translate it into another, the Lord did that to Enoch. He took him from this world, transferred him to the next, both physically and spiritually, I might add. He did it both body and soul. The reason that's important to mention is because that's not what you experience as a believer when you die and go to heaven, because you don't take your bodies there. When you die, your body stays here, while your soul goes to heaven, in order to await the moment in the future when body and soul will be reunited through the resurrection. That's called the intermediate state. We actually studied that this week in our leadership training time. It's a time when humans who trusted in the Lord do not have their bodies. But apparently the Lord did something else for this man.

Which raises a lot of questions, doesn't it? I mean, it brings up issues like, why did he get to experience that and not somebody else? What did Enoch do in that 2000 year period of time that was so special, to have this privilege? And what does it mean to say God took his body to heaven? I mean, how does that work? I thought heaven was a spiritual place, and the Lord doesn't allow physical things there, so how does that work? Jesus' body is in heaven, but His body was resurrected. Or more importantly, you know, heaven's a holy place; the Lord does not allow sinful things there, so how did he get to go there with his fallen flesh? And the answer is that we don't know all those things. It's not been revealed to us. All we know is that apparently the Lord showed a special dispensation of grace that bypassed the ordinary way of doing things, and that's all. It's a mystery. In fact, if you're struggling to understand this because it sounds strange, you're not alone. People have wrestled with this for centuries.

But let me just remind you that Enoch was not the only one who had this experience. It happened to one other person in the Bible. Do you remember who it was? Elijah, right? The great champion for the Lord. Second Kings tells us that toward the end of his life, Elijah and Elijah, were going along and talking, and behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind to heaven. And there's been a lot of speculation as to what that refers to. Most have said, it's angels. The Lord sent His messengers to bring Elijah to Him. But it makes you wonder the same thing and that is, why? Why this man and not another? There have been some answers

or some speculations to that for Elijah. For instance, some have said that Elijah experienced that to prepare him for the day when he would return to the earth and serve as one of the two prophets that would appear in Revelation 11, to call the world to repentance; and that could be the case. Others have said that Elijah did that in light of the prophecy in Malachi 4 that, "Behold, I'm going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." In fact, even today, the Jews leave a chair open for Elijah at some of their feasts in the hope that he will come to fulfill that prophecy. Be eating at the dinner table, one chair open, that's for Elijah.

But the point here in Hebrews 11 is that whatever the case with those things, Enoch experienced this through faith. If you look in verse five again, it says, "For by faith Enoch was taken up, so he would not see death." Which means that the reason Enoch was able to undergo all of that is not because he was something special in his generation, in many regards. It just happened because of God's mercy. He was a work of His grace.

I don't know about you, but I find this one so fascinating because of all the people in the Hall of Faith, I would say Enoch had it the best. I know Noah, and Abraham, and Moses saw God do amazing things; they experienced wonderful blessings, but they never experienced anything like this. Enoch woke up one day and he was in heaven, amen? I mean, he blinked his eyes one minute, the next day he was with the Lord. One pastor said he went from glory to glory. He walked with God down here, and next thing you know, he's walking with Him up there. That's the way to leave this world. That's the way to choose to die, if you could choose.

In fact, if you want to make a comparison between his life and someone in the list, all you have to do is go back to Abel and compare him to what Abel went through. Because the verse right above this says that by faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain. And what happened to him? He died, didn't he? By faith Abel trusted in God too and what did he get out of it? He was murdered. Why? Because God doesn't work the same way with everyone. He doesn't give us all the same type of treatment. Some of us go to heaven one way; some of us go to heaven another. Some of us get to do it through a path of comfort to some degree anyway, some go through a path of pain. We don't always know why, but the idea here is that you have to trust Him either way. Whether the Lord takes you to heaven after being murdered, or just taken, you still trust Him. And whether He brings you there by being killed, or by being snatched, either way, you put your faith in His name.

In fact, if I can just say one more thing about this part of the passage, the New Testament actually says that this event of being taken away into heaven won't stop with Enoch or Elijah either. It's also something that will be experienced one day by the church. Now it won't be experienced in the same way, there'll be some differences, but the Lord will take us away as well if we're still alive when Christ returns. 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says this about that event, it says,

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep...For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not proceed those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

And that phrase, "caught up together," it's a Latin word *raptura* from which you get the word rapture. Some say that's not a biblical term. Well, it is biblical; it's just biblical in the Latin, but it means a snatching away. It refers to the moment in history when a generation of Christians will be caught up to heaven before they die. Because in that passage there's two groups of people that are mentioned; there are those who remain until His coming, or who are still alive when He comes, and those who have fallen asleep or died. And those who remain will be raptured, while the dead will be resurrected, because the rapture and resurrection happened together. That is different from what Enoch and Elijah went through. They do not have a resurrection, but one day it will happen for the church.

And it brings us to another thing we learned about Enoch's walk with God here. And that is that by his faith, he was pleasing to God. A second thing we learn about Enoch's walk with God here is that by his faith, or by his walk, he was pleasing to God. Which means that he was accepted by Him because the Lord looked at Enoch and approved of what He saw. And if you read on in the passage here, you find this is what it says in verse five, because it says,

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God.

Now, as you read this, there's a term here that really tells you a lot about the hall of faith. Because it's repeated a couple times in this section, and it's the word "witness" or testimony, which is the Greek word *martyreo* from which we get the word martyr. It refers to someone who speaks on behalf of God. In fact, you could translate verse four and five this way, it says, "By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the witness. And by faith Enoch was taken up, for he obtained the witness." In other words, Abel was a witness, and Enoch was a witness. Abel gave you a testimony, and Enoch gives you a testimony of the grace and mercy of God. That's why these men are mentioned in here, so that you can look at their lives and find hope, because they're testifying to the God's kindness. And with that in mind, verse five says, "For by faith Enoch obtained the witness that he was pleasing to the Lord." In other words, this is what Enoch testimony tells you. And that is that it's possible for a man to please God. It can be done through faith. I know a lot of people who don't think that way today, because they feel like no matter what they do, they could never please God. And there's some that think that no matter how hard they try, they could never be accepted by Him because they're sinners, and they fall short of His commands. And that's true. Nobody can deny that. But the story of

Enoch reminds you that even so, and even if you're a sinner, God will embrace you if you believe because that's what he did. Even though Enoch was a sinner, Genesis five says he walked with God.

I didn't get a chance to explain that much earlier, but when it says that Enoch walked with God, it doesn't mean he walked with Him physically, although he might have been walking while he was fellowshipping with Him. It means Enoch walked with him spiritually. He did it in his heart. He and the Lord had fellowship together, and they had a deep sense of communion. And it also means that he walked with Him in obedience because he showed a willingness to follow His word. It's not like God went this way, and Enoch walked that way. They both went the same way. That's what it means to walk with Him. It also means that He was patient as he did that because he walked with the Lord step by step. You all know this, when you walk somewhere, you can't get there quickly; it takes perseverance. He had that as well. But the idea in this part of the verse is that as Enoch did that, he pleased the Lord, and the Lord showed him favor. And He'll do the same thing for us. This is what God wants you to do at the end of the day. He wants you to believe His word and walk with Him. He wants you to trust in His gospel and spend time with him. He doesn't want you to earn it, that's not what it says here. He doesn't want you to work for it, that's not what the passage tells you. He wants you to call out to Him in faith.

In fact, when it says here that "For he obtained the witness, that before his being taken up, he was pleasing to God," a key word there is the word "before" because it means Enoch pleased God before he was taken; he found approval before the Lord snatched him away because of his faith. Charles Spurgeon said in one of his sermons, he said, "You can't please God unless you're like Enoch. And you can't be like Enoch, unless you trust in God." Because the two things go together. Because the principle here is that if you cannot be taken to heaven, right now, at least, you can follow Enoch's example, and put your faith in Him instead of doubting Him all the time. Because Spurgeon says that kind of attitude never saved anybody. In fact, that kind of attitude has damned more people to hell than probably any other sin. It's true, isn't it? And I mean, how many people are in hell today, simply because they doubted God? And how many people are lost just because they wouldn't believe because the Lord told them, "I can save you."? And they said, "I doubt that. I don't believe that." And the Lord said, "Well, I gave My son for people like you," and they said, "Well, I don't agree with that either God; it's not enough." The Lord said, "I nailed Him to the cross. I put Him on Calvary. I raised Him from the dead, so that all who looked to Him might not perish but have everlasting life." And they said, "No, I don't buy into that. I believe in something else." And as a result, they're lost. And the lesson behind Enoch's life is you don't want to do that. There's only one thing that pleases God at the end of the day, and that's the attitude that says to the Lord, "I will trust You because You deserve it. And I will believe in what You said because You are worthy."

It's been said the first sin ever committed in the Bible was the sin of doubt. It's kind of hard to pin down what that first sin really was, in my mind anyway, but that's where the fall began. It happened in the Garden of Eden when the serpent said to Eve, "Indeed. Has God really said?" She listened to it and the

whole universe plunged into sin. It's what doubt does; it makes you question the goodness of God. And that's a foolish thing to do.

And it brings us to another thing we learned from Enoch's walk here in this passage. And that is that by faith Enoch was rewarded. A third thing we learned about his walk with God in this passage is that by faith, Enoch was rewarded. Which means that on account of his faith, God did not leave him empty handed, but He did something special for him along with everyone else who believes. Because as you come to the next part of this chapter, you find the author takes the example of Enoch, and he makes an application to our lives when he says this in verse six, he says,

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Now, what does that mean? Why does the author say without faith, it's impossible to please God? He does that to remind you that without faith, no one can do what Enoch did. Without faith, it's impossible to be taken up or snatched away or please God or be accepted by Him, because you can't get there by works. The only way it's done is by trust.

Just to explain this, the word "impossible" here is a Greek word that means powerless. Because the author is saying that this is what a man is like who doesn't have faith in God, he's powerless. He has no strength to please the Lord. I've heard this described as a car without gas, or a ship without sails, because all the parts are there and all the pieces are in place, but you're just dead in the water. It's what a man is like who doesn't have faith. And this doesn't just remind you the story of Enoch, but in my mind, it reminds me of another story. And that was the story of Cain and Abel, because if you remember, this was Cain's problem, and that is that he was dead in the water. Because Cain worshipped, and Cain brought a sacrifice to the Lord, and Cain tried to give an offering, but the Lord had no regard for it because he didn't do it in faith. The author reminds you here, it's impossible to please God with that type of attitude. You could offer God a thousand sacrifices, like Cain did, and it won't please Him. And you can give him a million offerings, but it won't do any good if you don't do it with the right heart of faith. This passage doesn't say without faith it's hard to please God or difficult to please Him or tough to do it. It says it's impossible. It just can't be done.

And after saying that, the author goes on to give you the second part of the verse when he says, "For he who comes to God must believe that He is [or that He exists,] and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." And that last phrase is unusual because it could be translated, "He is *the* reward of those who seek Him." Which means this is what you get if you put your faith in God, the Lord rewards you with Himself, and He allows you to come into His presence. He doesn't give you something else primarily; primarily, He gives you His own person. Ties it into the story of Enoch, because this is what Enoch wanted, isn't it? This is the only thing he was focused on in the Bible. He didn't trust in God so he could

have some other thing. He just wanted God. He wanted to walk with Him and be close to Him and have fellowship.

You know, I think we understand, or I hope you understand that this is the greatest thing you get for being a Christian, and that is that you get to know God. And this is the greatest honour you receive for putting your faith in Him, and that is that you get to be close, that's your reward. It isn't that He makes things easier for you because He doesn't always. It's not that He gives you your best life now or something like that; that doesn't happen. He just allows you to be in His presence.

You know, as I was reflecting on this, I was reminded there's a lot of religions out there who don't think this way. Because they don't see God as their reward. They want something else. For example, the Muslims teach that if you do something special in their religion, you get to go to heaven where you spend eternity with virgins, because that's your reward. That's your treasure. They just want to please the flesh. They want to appease their carnal appetites because God has nothing to do with it. He's just a minor figure in the story. The Mormons have a similar teaching when they say that when you die, you get to rule your own planet as a god, because that's what they're interested in. They want power; they want to be worshipped. They don't want to worship God; they want to be God. Other groups like the health, wealth, and prosperity teachers believe that if you follow God, He'll make you rich, because that's what they want. They want money. Other ones say if you follow Him, He will heal you. That's what they're after; they want healing.

What the author of the book of Hebrews is saying here is that we follow God for this reason. We just want Him. When you put your trust in Christ, you're not looking for something else. You just want to know His character and His peace and His joy. You want to understand His mercy and His grace and forgiveness. You want to know His holiness and truth, but it all goes back to Him. David prayed in Psalm 27, "One thing I've asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days in my life, and behold His beauty."

Which brings us to one more thing I want to talk about this morning. Just to review these other ones, the first thing we learned from Enoch's walk with God is that by his walk, or his faith he was taken up. And then secondly, by his faith he was pleasing to God. And then thirdly, by his faith he was rewarded, which is, if you look back in your Bibles, you notice this is where the passage ends. Surprisingly enough, that's where it stops. Because like it was with Abel, the author doesn't tell you everything you want to know about Enoch; he's just giving you a summary, so he keeps it pretty short before he brings it to a close. But we don't want to end just yet.

We want to say a few more words about him. Which brings us to one more thing to discuss. And that is a summary of all this. What do we do with the life of Enoch? How do you summarize all the things that we just said? I mean, I don't know about you, but when I look at the lives of these people in the Hall of Faith, I can't go through it quickly. It takes me a moment to digest it because you're talking about things

that happened a long time ago. And you're talking about a man's life, so you have to step back for a moment and really meditate on this. And when you do that, you find there's a couple of lessons you take away from Enoch.

The first one is this, the godliest people don't always live the longest. I'll say that again, but the godliest people don't always live the longest. Sometimes the good go young, and I have to say that they go young, they don't die young because Enoch didn't die. But he certainly made a departure before everybody else because when you look back in Genesis 5, you see that those men lived a long time, didn't they? I mean, if you look at your handouts, you know it says Adam live for 930 years. Seth lived for 912 years. Enosh lived for 905 years. Do you know how old a birthday would get after 905 of them? I'm tired of birthdays in my 40s. One thing you notice when you read that list is that Enoch didn't do that. Genesis 5:23 says that he died way before that. Sorry, he didn't die, he was taken away way before that at the age of 365, I believe. Because sometimes that's what happens to godly people. They leave this world before everyone else. In a perfect world it wouldn't be that way. And in a perfect society, the righteous would live longer than the wicked, but friends you don't live in a perfect world. This world is fallen, which means it's not what it was without sin. It has plummeted. So sometimes in this world, things go bad; evil men live longer sometimes. I can't tell you how many times I've opened up a newspaper and read about some evil celebrity in Hollywood who celebrated his 80th birthday. In the same week, I had to go to the funeral for a saint who lived a clean and healthy life and died in their 60s. Why? Well, this is why, we live in a messed-up place due to sin.

In fact, I don't always know which one's better because everyone says they want to live to be 1000 years old like Adam did. I don't think so. Can you imagine how much sin you would see in 1000 years? Can you imagine how much sorrow you would experience if you lived all that time? I guess Adam didn't live 1000 years, but he came awful close. No thank you. I don't want that. Sometimes it's the grace of God that makes people go quicker.

Which brings us to another practical lesson from this man's life. And that is that God doesn't deal with all of His people the same. Remember, we talked about that a moment ago. But God doesn't treat all of us with the same degree of good or bad in this life, because Enoch was taken up while Abel was murdered, see that? And Enoch was snatched away into heaven while Abel was killed in the most senseless way imaginable, because that's what you find when you read the Bible. There's a big diversity in how people's lives turn out in here.

In fact, if you just look at the Hall of Faith, you find that Noah died a peaceful death, and Abraham did as well. And so did Isaac and Jacob and Joseph; they died of natural causes, and quite a number of the people. But when you look down in verse 37, it talks about the lives of some of the prophets, and it tells you something very different, because it says they were stoned, they were sawn into, they were put to death with the sword, they went about in sheepskins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, men of whom the world was not worthy wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the

ground. And you read all that and you wonder why. What did they do wrong? They're Prophets. The answer is nothing. They didn't do anything wrong. It just happened according to God's will. This was done according to His sovereign purposes. It is not as if God is up in heaven, randomly playing games with people and saying this one will suffer while that one won't. But on the contrary, in His perfect wisdom, He's choosing what's best for us. We can't see that. We can't look into the big picture and see what's best, but He can. And He says, it's best for this person to be sick; it's best for that person to be healthy. It's best for this person to have poverty, and that person to have wealth. It's best for this saint to live in this place; this saint to live in another. This saint to live in this age; that one to live in another. Which is where your faith comes into play because it's your faith that allows you to look at all this and say, "God, even though I don't understand, even though it doesn't make sense to me, even though I don't see the big picture, I will trust You." You know better than I do. I acknowledge that it's for my good because it comes from Your hand. That's the overarching principle of the Hall of Faith. You see God as the one standing over the whole story, right? And these men and women put their eyes on Him.

And another practical lesson looks at this from another angle. Another practical lesson is that even though God does this at times, and He brings us through times of sorrow, He also snatches people away, doesn't He? It doesn't happen a lot. It only happens a few times in the Bible and all this period of time. But sometimes He decides to sidestep the ordinary way of doing things in order to do something wonderful and bring people straight into heaven. You see it right here in Genesis 5. You're just a few verses into the Bible here, and God is snatching someone away. In fact, if you remember the timeline, God created the world in Genesis 1. Adam and Eve fall into sin in Genesis 3. And what happens next in Genesis five? It's just death everywhere. So and so lived, they died; so and so lived, they died; so and so lived, they died. And then you get to Enoch, and he didn't. He broke the chain of that. In order to tell you that God doesn't operate by the laws of nature, He doesn't follow the rules of science. Sometimes He just chooses to do a miracle because He's God. He took one man 2,000 years ago which should be an encouragement to you because it means if He did it once, He can do it again. And if He snatched one person away at that time, He could do it for the church in an age in the future because what could stop Him? Science? No. Nature? No. Physics? No. Chemistry? No. Biology? No. There's nothing that can stand in His way.

You know, I know some people struggle with the doctrine of the rapture today because it sounds like a crazy idea, but let me just say this. When you read a passage like this one, what's crazy about it? Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him. What's odd about the idea in the Bible? If the Lord allowed him to experience it, surely He can do it for the rest of us or the church at an age in the future if He so chooses. And we trust in Him in that.

It brings me to one more practical lesson from the life of Enoch, and that is that the only thing that really matters at the end of the day is your walk with God. If you're going to take anything away from this man and his life and his story in the Bible, this is it. The only thing you need to do pay attention to is your relationship with Him. Because there's nothing else that's going to matter in eternity. When you go to

heaven, there's nothing else that's going to matter but that. Because when you read Genesis 5, I think it's interesting because you don't learn anything about Enoch's job in here. You don't read anything about his appearance. You don't learn about his possessions and his sheep and camels and donkeys because who cares? All you're worried about is his fellowship with the Lord. It should be the same way with us. You need to make that relationship with Christ your number one priority as you go through this world.

You know, when he was 18 years old, Jonathan Edwards wrote a series of resolutions for his life that were intended to chart a course for the man he wanted to be one day. And if you've never read them, I would encourage you to do that. There's 70 of them. They're very humbling. He went over them, I believe, every week after he wrote them. And resolution 50 said this, he said, "I am resolved to act in such a way that will prepare me for the next life each and every day of this one." I think it would be good for all of us to have that resolution stamped on our minds as we leave this room today. You need to live like you're getting ready for eternity. Don't let anything distract you. We live in a world where we're distracted by everything today. For what? It won't matter then; it shouldn't matter now. Keep your mind focused on heaven.

Next week, we'll be looking at the life of Noah, the man who built the ark. He's the next person in the Hall of Faith. So please come back and join us for that; it should be really good. I was told that professionals built the Titanic, but an amateur built the ark with the help of God and which one floated? We'll talk about that next time, but for now let's close in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, we have I believe, had our minds and hearts enlarged at the story of your servant Enoch. What a man. What a time. He lived in an age when things were moving toward the flood and unraveling, and society was getting worse. People were not following you, and yet he stood up and he did. And it's a reminder to all of us this morning of where our priorities need to be. Lord, we are way too earthly minded to be of heavenly good. We're so focused on our jobs. We're so focused on our possessions. We're so focused on just the day-to-day ins and outs of life, and none of that's going to matter one day. Thank You for the reminder of him. Thank you for his persistence in loving You all those years and being faithful to your goodness.

Lord, would we be the same kind of people this morning? There's nothing else that's important in life but You. All these other things are going to burn one day. So Father, would You remind us to take away anything in this life, all the dross, so we can focus on Christ?

Lord, I pray for those this morning who know You; that everything we talked about would build up their faith. It would increase their trust in You, their belief in You would be made stronger, that's the whole point of this chapter. For those who are struggling with faith this morning, would You draw them out of it? Help them to remember that You are a God who should be trusted. You deserve it.

And as we come to the Lord's table, we remember what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us so that we could go to heaven. We remember His body that was broken and His blood that was poured out. Would You be glorified as we partake? We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.