

"God Pleasing Faith" Hebrews 11:5-6

INTRO:

My high school English teacher assigned us the task of writing our own epitaph. The question was: *"What would you want written on your tombstone?"* I wasn't in a very spiritual state at that point in my life, so my answer was, *"His friends know who lies here, to all others it doesn't matter."* Pretty depressing wasn't it?

In **Hebrews 11**, God gives in the verses honoring Enoch, an epitaph for Enoch. This is an unusual epitaph in that it could not appear on his grave stone. Enoch never died. Yet, as the Lord of Glory honors His servant Enoch, He assigns to him the greatest possible honor that any created human being could receive. *Enoch pleased God.*

How can we also reach this plateau of greatness in God's eyes? How can we be assured that God would say of each of us, "He pleased God?" The account in **vs. 5, 6** can help answer this question.

We can be well pleasing to the true and living God, if, with the Lord's help we follow *Enoch's Example (v.5)* and practice *Enoch's Faith (v.6)*.

I. Enoch's Example (v.5)

II. Enoch's Faith (v.6).

- A. ***"By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God"*** (Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch is relatively insignificant in the Old Testament record. Abel was born and died in **8 verses** in **Genesis 4**. Enoch's life's story comprises **7 verses** in **Genesis 5**. Although He did not give a great deal of material in the Bible on these two men of God, God wants us to remember that these folks are great in His eyes.

There is an important lesson in this for us. You and I may not see our names in the marquees, yet we are not unimportant to God. I think when we stand at the Bema of Christ, we will be surprised at who God honors. Some of the unknowns will get the greatest honors.

- B. Although Enoch appears in the Old Testament only in a genealogical list, there is something very arresting about that list. We read that so in so begat someone and lived after that so many years and died. Until Enoch there is an unending line of coffins to underline the truth of God's statement, ***"In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die."*** (**Genesis 2:17**) In the continual funeral march there is one arresting break.

“And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” ENOCH NEVER DIED! How is it that Enoch never died? **Vs. 5** here in **Hebrews 11** gives us the answer. ***“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, ‘and was not found, because God had taken him.’”*** He did not die because God **“took”** Enoch. The word literally means to transfer from one place to another. Enoch was raptured.

C. When Enoch was taken, he had this testimony, ***“he pleased God.”*** Two principles need to be seen here. **(1)** What an accomplishment pleasing God is and **(2)** how Enoch pleased God.

1. Let us consider what an accomplishment pleasing God is. Perhaps, the best way to show you what Enoch accomplished in pleasing God is to draw an example from the life of the Apostle Paul. Remember that classic passage in **Philippians 3**?

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Paul says he presses toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Do you know what that mark is? It is pleasing God. Paul makes a similar statement in **2 Corinthians 5:9**, ***“Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him.”***

Paul's life goal was to please God. Enoch had accomplished it!!!

2. How did Enoch please God? The easy response is found in the **Genesis 5** text. The Bible says **“he walked with God.”** But what does that mean?

It will help us to realize the parallel that we find here. In the Hebrew of **Genesis 5**, it says that ***“Enoch walked with God.”*** But, when the Septuagint (LXX) translators translated it they wrote: ***“Enoch well pleased God.”*** This is the translation the inspired writer of the Hebrews borrowed for this verse.

Walking with God is therefore equivalent to pleasing God. This suggests some principles to us. **(1)** Fellowship with God is as important as service in pleasing God. Remember the lesson of Martha and Mary. **(2)** Fellowship with God, which is pleasing to God, is ***“progressing”*** and not ***“stagnant.”*** In order to walk with God, we must have the same destination and a common ground.

II. Enoch's Faith (v.6).

A. Our walk is very important if we are to please God. The writer of Hebrews, in his divine commentary on Enoch's testimony, focuses in on one aspect of that walk that is key to why Enoch was able to please God. Enoch had God pleasing Faith. What Is God Pleasing Faith?

What does it look like? ***“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 diligently seek Him.”*** Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God pleasing faith has two parts.

B. The first aspect of God pleasing faith involves our belief concerning the reality of God's person. If we are to please the Lord we must believe ***“that He is.”*** That is we must believe that He exists. Oh, that's simple I believe that God exists. Do we?

What happens when our Lord commands us to do something we don't want to do, or tells us not to do something we want to do? Much of the time, we Christians do just what we want as if God didn't exist. I am convinced that we need to look at our lives and ask ourselves, “How would things be different if God didn't exist?” I'm afraid we would have to answer, “There wouldn't be much difference.”

If we are to please God we must believe that He exists, and the reality of His presence must make a difference in our lives.

C. Second God pleasing faith seeks God for Himself, not just what He can do for us. We must believe that He becomes ***“a rewarder of them that diligently (continually) seek Him.”*** A faith that pleases God is a faith that seeks God Himself. This kind of faith is personified by David in the 27th Psalm. ***“When You said, ‘Seek My face.’ My heart said to You, ‘Your face, Lord, I will seek’”*** Psalm 27:8. Notice this statement has an object (that which is sought) and a result (that which is true because of the seeking.) The object sought is God Himself. The verse does not say: ***“We must believe He is a rewarder of those who seek His blessings.”*** It says that He is a rewarder of them that seek *HIM*. If we seek Him, He becomes our rewarder and our reward.

Are we walking with God? We need to continually, persistently walking in the light as He is in the light.

Do we show that we really believe in Him? Do we acknowledge that He is God and has a right to have His way in our thinking and our lives?

Do we seek Him for who He is or do we still seek Him for what He can do for us?

What do you want for your epitaph? How about aspiring for the one that Enoch had? “He (or she) pleased God.”