



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH
SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

HEROES FROM HEBREWS



Dodging Death — Hebrews 11:5–6;

Genesis 5:8–24; Jude 14–15

Jon Culver | June 3, 2018

We're in a summer series we're calling "Heroes From Hebrews." We kicked it off a couple weeks ago when I talked about what faith is—the substance of faith, the evidence of faith, tests of faith, the object of our faith and the reward of our faith. Last week Pastor Tim looked at our first characters, Abel and Cain, showing us why Abel's faith was far greater than Cain's.

This morning we come to the next story in Hebrews 11. We'll look at only two verses, five and six, but there's a lot packed in them, and hopefully we'll find some helpful insights.

⁵ 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. 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.

What just happened here? Did you catch that? Enoch was taken up to be with God, then he was no more. If you're like me, I've heard that before, but I really don't know too much about Enoch. Maybe you don't either. But the idea that he was taken up into heaven sounds like something taken out of a superhero comic story. He was walking along one day, then poof, he was no more? I think there's a movie called Thor where that actually happens. A guy just disappears and goes to another place. This is nuts.

I want to start by appreciating some of the things we read in God's Word that are literally unbelievable. Enoch dodged death. He avoided death. He's one of two people recorded in Scripture who actually dodged death. Yet, as incredible as it is that God actually spared someone from death, that's not what we'll be focusing on today. What's much more amazing, and where we want to focus our attention today, is on Enoch's faith. There was something about his faith that brought such pleasure to God, so much so that God decided to take Enoch straight into His presence.

So what made his faith so pleasing to God? If you're here today and you have a relationship with the Lord, I would imagine that there is a huge part of your heart that desires to please Him—or it should. I think anyone who truly understands Who God is—His majesty and glory and sovereignty—then their greatest desire should be to please Him. But what does this look like and what can we learn about this from Enoch's life? As with Abel, we don't have a lot of information about Enoch. Moses gives us a few insights in his writings, which are the first five books of the Old Testament, also known as the Pentateuch.

It struck me this week as I was thinking about these things: when was the last time you ran into somebody named Enoch? We run into guys named Abraham, Noah, Paul and David—all these great men and women of the Bible whom we name our children after. We even name our sons Jonah, who was someone who ran from God. Yet Enoch is not a name we hear. I'm not implying that we should start naming our children Enoch—although I sort of wish I had at least used it as a middle name for one of my sons.

Nevertheless, Enoch is one of only two men who went directly to God and dodged death. In fact, he's the only one identified in this way in Hebrews 11.

We have to assume that the details Moses gives us in Genesis 5 are the details on which he wants us to focus. We aren't told much about how Enoch lived his life that may have caused him to go directly to be with God, but still some of the aspects of his life we are given should help us understand why God was pleased with him and might provide a model for us today. There are only three

places in Scripture where Enoch is mentioned. We read about him here in Hebrews 11:5–6. There’s also some in Genesis 5, and finally, Enoch is referred to as an example in Jude.

Let me just set up the passage in Genesis. In the 32 verses in chapter five, Moses covers 1,500 years of history. So there’s a lot going on. In summary, there were some men who lived a really long time and had lots of kids, then they died.

I was thinking about this this week and realized that’s kind of the summary of my life as well. There was a guy who lived—hopefully a lot of years—had a bunch of kids, then he died. And that’s about all we know about most of the characters mentioned in Genesis 5.

So we know that Adam lived 930 years, fathered a bunch of kids, then died. Seth lived 912 years, fathered a bunch of kids, then died. Enosh lived 905 years, fathered kids and died. Kenan lived 910 years. Mahalalel lived 895. Poor guy—couldn’t quite get to 900. He was close. Then we come to Jared who lived 962 years, fathered kids, then he died. We don’t know much about what those guys did. I mean, seriously, how do you fill 900 years’ worth of life? What does that look like? It will be fascinating when I get to heaven to learn some of the details of what those lives were about.

Let’s look at what Moses tells us, starting in Genesis 5:18. Here’s where the narrative changes. We’ll pick it up with Jared:

¹⁸ When Jared had lived 162 years he fathered Enoch. ¹⁹ Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. ²⁰ Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

²¹ When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Again, it makes me ask what just happened here? So we have guys living to be 900ish years old, and then all of a sudden there’s this guy—the seventh from Adam, born about 600 years after Adam—who has a son named Methuselah. Most of you probably know Methuselah lived to be the oldest man who ever lived—969 years. Methuselah was Noah’s grandfather, so Enoch was the great-grandfather of Noah. By the way, Methuselah actually died the year of the flood. We’ll think some more about this when we look at Noah in a few weeks. But this gives us a little context for who Enoch was. His lifespan in our day might be like someone who is in their late 20s or early 30s, while everyone else lives to be 85-90 years old. Then all of a sudden, this young man is taken away. He lived about 40% of the normal lifespan for his day.

So what was it about Enoch that was different from everyone who had lived before him and everyone who’s coming after him? That’s what we need to think about this morning. Part of this is that the other men who were living in those days were living unrighteous lives, at least in general. There were a few exceptions and Enoch was one of them. This is why the author of Hebrews chose him as someone to highlight in the heroes of faith section. Something was different and we want to pay attention to that.

What was different about Enoch? According to Moses in Genesis 6, God came to regret that He had made men, and He was ready to wipe them all out. In fact, that’s just what He did—all except for Noah and his family. This implies a level of degradation that’s hard for us to comprehend. We think the world is bad right now, that there’s a lot of sin and debauchery and nasty stuff going on. And yes, there is. But I don’t think we can hold a candle to some of the stuff that was happening back then and how widespread it was. Just think how bad it must have been that God actually regretted creating man, 1,500 years later.

Is it possible for us to please God in a similar way to Enoch? That’s our question this morning. I’ll keep it to two points. Having faith that pleases God involves two things from Enoch. I’m not saying this is all there is to pleasing God. What I’m saying is that from the life of Enoch as we’re given it in God’s Word, I find two things that we might also apply to our lives today.

First, Enoch walked with God. Secondly, Enoch warned others of God’s judgment. The first of these characteristics is much more enjoyable to talk about, while point two is much more uncomfortable. It was uncomfortable for me, as I tried to evaluate my own life, and I think it will be difficult for all of us as we wrestle with what that second point looks like. We’d rather talk about walking with God than thinking about His judgments.

Pleasing God involves walking with God.

God has wanted a walking partner from the beginning—from His time in the garden with Adam and Eve. He created man for the enjoyment of a walking relationship that involved companionship, dialog, intimacy, joint decision making, mutual delight and shared dominion. That’s how it was meant to be in the garden—a oneness with God, a relationship where they would walk together in the cool of the morning. God still longs to walk with each one of us, which is why His arms of grace are spread out and open, trying to pull each of us into a closer relationship with Him. Some of you are walking with Him today, while others of you need to

hear this, because God is calling you, saying, “Please come walk with Me. I long to give you My grace and have a walking relationship with you.”

This language or analogy of walking resonates with me. I love to walk. I’ll be honest—part of it is because I hate to run. Walking is the better alternative for me. They built a campground across the street from us in Big Rock a couple years ago. Initially I was kind of annoyed, but it worked out really well for us. A paved area, a beautiful place that backs up to a reservoir. I love to go out early—maybe 4:00 in the morning—when everything is cool and still. Some of my best moments with the Lord are during those walks. I also love to walk with my wife and children. As much as we can, we try to get out in the morning while it’s still cool. It’s getting harder as the heat comes—although we like the heat as well. We talk and pray. We share and catch up—which is hard to do with six kids during the day. But there’s a sense of connection and oneness. It’s a precious time for us.

I think God desires that in our lives as well. Enoch walked with God. He didn’t walk in front of Him; he didn’t walk behind Him. He walked with God. I’m kind of a fast walker, so early in our marriage I walked ahead of Sarah (mainly because I was immature, I realize now). “C’mon, keep up with me, woman. We’re going somewhere.” Fortunately, the Lord has convicted me of that and I realize that’s not helpful. If we want a relationship, we need to walk together, in tandem.

That’s what we see illustrated with Enoch. He walked with God. I find three things in this passage that illustrate the idea of walking with God.

Friendship with God

God longs to be in a friend relationship with us, just like I long to be in a relationship and a deep friendship with my wife. Imagine the depths of intimacy Enoch must have experienced in his 300 years of walking with God. Practically, I don’t know what that would look like for him on a daily basis. I know what that can look like for me and there were probably some parallels in his life as well. But there was a sense that he walked with God because he longed to be with Him.

I was meeting with a couple recently whose wedding ceremony I will be officiating later this month. As I was getting to know them better, I asked them what they both enjoyed. Right away they both said, “We just love being together. For two and a half years we’ve been in a relationship and we’re now getting ready to be married. But I don’t think we’ve spent a day not being with each other.”

That really struck me that, at its core, marriage is about friendship. Yes, all the other things that come with marriage are wonderful and delightful, and I’m thankful for them. But at its core, as I’m learning in my own relationship with Sarah, it’s the friendship that is the foundation of our relationship. We enjoy each other.

I don’t think it’s much different with God. God has modeled marriage after His relationship with us and He desires to be in covenant with us that involves a deep, abiding, healthy and vibrant friendship. And for that to happen, we must spend time with Him. We must share our hearts openly with Him. Sarah and I can’t have a relationship where we keep everything surface level. I’ve got to risk saying things. I’ve got to risk being open, even saying hard things, and also receiving them from her as well. There has to be mutual submission, love and respect toward each other. I believe Enoch experienced this with God. He was open with God. He was free to share his heart. But he wasn’t like “buds” with God.

A couple years ago there was a fad going around with t-shirts that said, “Jesus is my home boy.” Do you remember that? No. He’s not. He’s not your home boy, or your bud, and you’re not just hanging out. No, there’s still a sense of awe and reverence and worship, because I am connecting with a holy God. He is Creator; I am creation. Yet God allows Himself to enter into a friendship and a relationship that allows me to have access to Him and be open and free, sharing my heart and my desires with Him. It’s constantly growing and deepening.

Living a life of faith

It’s his faith that was pleasing to God—but what about it was pleasing to God? What stands out especially to me is Enoch lived a life of faith.

If you’re like me, we can focus on moments of great faith, either in others or in ourselves. I look at someone and say, “In that moment, he evidenced incredible faith that carried him through.” And that may be true. There are those moments—those “mountain-top” experiences—when our faith may have been tested, but it was God Who actually came through. We can look back on those times and think, “Man, can you believe what God did?”

I'm guessing that Enoch had some of those moments as well. But what strikes me about Enoch is how long he walked with God—three centuries. He had some highs and some lows. But do you know what he had a lot of? Everyday moments—ordinary, mundane moments. He may have had squabbles with his wife, not taking care of the kids, frustrations, annoyances. He was a sinner. We only hear the good about Enoch, but we know he was a sinner, because only one Man walked the face of the earth Who had no sin.

We don't know the specifics of his sin like we do many others in Scripture, but we know he wasn't perfect. We know he struggled. We know he sinned. I would love to speculate on his sins, but Scripture doesn't give us any clues. I just know as a father with a handful of kids, I can guess what some of his sins were. And I know what it's like to be married, so I can imagine some of those sins. Plus, Enoch was living in a very trying and sinful and difficult time.

In Hebrews 6, the author is setting up how Enoch's faith was pleasing to God and mentions that whoever draws near to God — that friendship part—will acknowledge that God exists and that He rewards those who seek Him. That part of acknowledging He exists is part of living a life of faith. It's not denying the existence of God; it's saying, "I know God is Who He says He is. He's a righteous, holy, faithful, sovereign God. Who He says He is in His Word is Who He is. His promises are true today, so tomorrow you can take them to the bank."

I also think Enoch had a sense of purity in those ordinary moments as a husband and father. We'll see in a moment how destructive this time was, how much people were indulging in sexual immorality and denying the existence of God. Yet Enoch stood in opposition to that. He was a man who walked with God in a pure way. Our culture needs people who are willing to walk in purity in character, integrity and relationships.

So don't think, "The only way Enoch could have done that is if he had removed himself from the world. Who can live in that level of sin?" We don't see that here. Enoch did not remove himself from the world. For 300 years he was living in the world in the midst of this. He had children. He was in relationships. We'll see later that he was warning people. He was proactively involved in the world. This is not a call to separate and pull back. This is a call to engage with the culture and to be a light in dark places, just doing it in a different way. We are to be in the world, but not of the world; to live purely and righteously.

Enoch walked with God. He pleased God without having the gift of the Bible that we have today. There weren't prophets at that time. He was doing this in a one-on-one relationship. It does appear that God revealed some things to him to help him in that journey, but he was still doing it on faith. We see a man who walked faithfully with God for 300 years. He wasn't perfect or without struggles or blemishes. He wasn't without some highs and lows. But he had 300 years of ordinary, mundane moments of walking with God.

Some of us need to hear that today. As a dad, I need to hear that. Some of you moms need to hear that, in the mundane moments of life. Some of you kids need to hear that in the midst of struggling through high school or middle school or preparing for college or as young adults. "Man, it just seems hard. It seems so long. How can I sustain this?" It's our God Who gives us the ability to sustain our faith. He gives us the faith and then helps us sustain it. He becomes the object of our faith.

Following Jesus' teaching and example

Not only are we to have friendship with God and live a life of faith, but we are also to follow Jesus' teaching and example. In Hebrews 12:1-3, the author says, "*Fix your eyes on Jesus...*" So as you think "follow," I also want you to think "fix." Fix your eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. The only way you can have friendship with God, the only way you can walk in a way that evidences a lifestyle of faith, is if you are focused on Jesus.

Enoch didn't know Jesus. When he lived, there was no Messiah. There was a promise of a Messiah. He knew that the serpent had bruised the heel of the Messiah, but he also knew that the Messiah would come back and crush the head of the snake (Genesis 3:15). He didn't know when, but he had faith that a Messiah was coming to rescue His people.

Those of us here today don't just have the hope—we know it to be true. We have God's Word that shows and convinces us that there is a Messiah, and His name is Jesus. He offers grace and forgiveness of sins for all who will put their faith and trust in Him alone. So when we follow Jesus' example and fix our eyes on Him, it's because Jesus has set the course for us. No one had a relationship with God and walked with God like Jesus. He walked in step with God—in eternity past, present and future.

Specifically as we see through the New Testament, while He was on earth, Jesus walked with the Father. There wasn't a moment except for one when they weren't in step with each other. That one moment was when He took the full brunt of our sin and shame on His body, bearing the weight of our sin so that we could be in relationship with the holy God. Outside of that, He constantly

walked in step with His Father. He knew when to pull away from others, withdraw and spend time with His Father to be refreshed and rejuvenated. Often for Jesus it was in the morning. He knew when to say no to things and slow down. He knew when to cry out to His Father. He was in such a close relationship with the Father.

As I was studying this, I realized how much that language of walking is present throughout both the Old and New Testaments. We're encouraged to walk with God, to walk with Jesus. Jesus encouraged His disciples to be fishers of men, yet we know from what we see in the New Testament that for many, the teaching was too hard. John tells us in John 6:66 that for some, the teaching was too difficult and they "no longer walked with Jesus."

Some of us here struggle with that today. Maybe we have started walking with Jesus, but we're finding it hard right now. We're finding ourselves slipping back. Jesus is walking, but we're not walking with Him. It could be from our own sin, a lack of faith, things we haven't offered to God and asked forgiveness for, or things we haven't been open and honest with others about. It could be hidden sins in our own hearts that are causing a break in our relationship.

Going back to the analogy of marriage, when Sarah and I are not on the same page—when we're not walking in step with each other—it's usually something I've done that has caused a break in that relationship, where I'm not being open and honest about something. It requires some hard "come to Jesus" moments, openness and honesty, humility and brokenness.

For some of us today, the only way to get back in step with Jesus is to humble yourself and recognize your deep need for Him. Maybe that involves some relationships in your life as well. My heart's desire is that you would follow His teaching and commands. Walking with Jesus is more than just agreeing with Jesus. It's a lifetime commitment of 100%. It's not that you're going to do it right 100% of the time. This side of eternity, we're going to mess up and struggle. We're going to need lots and lots of grace. I praise God, Who gives us grace abundantly, over and over and over again. My life is filled with moments of grace. I'm beginning to realize that the older I get, the more I need Jesus and the more I need the gospel. I didn't just get saved and everything is always good. I need Jesus more today than I ever have. We all do. And He offers that gift of grace. But it does require everything and it's a challenge. It's hard. It's difficult. It requires suffering and loss. It may cause you to go without things or to have severed relationships with people who do not want to walk with Jesus. It is costly. That's why Jesus says, *"Anyone who would walk with Me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me"* (Matthew 16:24).

Paul says that anyone who desires a godly life will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). If you're here looking for the good life now—your best life now—you're not going to find it here. In fact, I just read a quotation from John MacArthur the other day that said, "Your best life is only now if you're going to hell." That hit me like a ton of bricks. This is your best life—if you're going to hell. If you have the hope of the heroes of Hebrews, this is not your best life. It's not that this is meaningless and that it doesn't matter, but your best life is still to come.

Jesus offers us something far greater, just like those heroes in Hebrews. He offers us a better resurrection and a better country, a better life and a better future, complete with the opportunity to dodge death. Maybe not like Enoch in an earthly sense, but to dodge death for those who will put their faith and trust in Jesus alone.

Following Jesus means walking according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. It means putting aside the fleshly desires—and there are many of them—and asking God in those moments to help you fight against those things that want to compete against your affection for Jesus. Rather, we should be walking with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit and allowing the Spirit to produce and bear the fruit of love, joy, peace and patience in us. These are all things we cannot produce in and of ourselves. We are wholly dependent upon a holy God to work through Jesus to bear that fruit in us (Galatians 5:16–26). Following Jesus means we have to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:6–7).

There are things in my life right now in which I'm trying to follow Jesus by faith alone, not because they make sense to me. I don't know how it's going to work out. I want to pull back control and put faith in me to figure it out. But God is calling me to walk with Him and trust Him, even on the things that I can see right now because I'm trusting in a faithful God. The object of my faith is Him.

So God is calling us today to live as wise and not unwise. That's the warning. You can live one of two ways as you follow along and try to walk with God: wise or unwise. I pray that our hearts would desire to be wise based on the wisdom we see in God's Word. I long for my heart and our hearts to walk with God like Enoch, in step with Him—not behind, not before, but with Him. As we have friendship with God, we should live a life of faith, following Jesus' commands.

Pleasing God involves warning others of God's judgment.

Turn now to the book of Jude which only has one chapter containing 25 verses. The other thing the Bible tells us about Enoch was not only that he walked with God, but also that he warned others of God's judgment. This will be shorter and probably harder to swallow as we try to apply this to our lives as well.

In Genesis 5, we saw that Enoch was 65 years old when he had Methuselah. Then Moses says he walked 300 years with God. Now, I don't know if that means for the first 65 years he wasn't walking with God, then something happened when he had Methuselah and all of a sudden the course of his life changed and he walked by faith. It seems that way, but I'm just inferring; I don't know for sure. Having a child—if that was his first child—will certainly change things in your life and give you a desire to walk with God.

I sense that God revealed some things to Enoch that gave him some level of zeal and passion to begin warning others about God's judgment. So Jude actually quotes Enoch. We're not exactly sure where this comes from and I'm not going to spend time trying to explain some of the different schools of thought regarding its source. But Jude was aware of it and included it in his book. So look at Jude 1:14–15 to see prophecy he quoted:

¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Let me set this up a little bit. It's interesting that Jude goes out of his way to say that Enoch was "the seventh from Adam..." That's important, because there were other Enochs listed in the Bible and he wanted to make sure that those first-century readers were clear that this was the Enoch who walked with God and then was no more.

This is in direct comparison to a man named Lamech back in Genesis 4. Lamech was "a seventh" from Cain as well. They were two totally different men. Lamech was not a man who walked with God. He was the first polygamist we see recorded in Scripture. He had two wives and did some heinous act where he killed someone and had some curse or punishment placed on him.

Jude's purpose in his letter was twofold. He wanted to expose the false teachers who had infiltrated the Christian community—specifically those who were indulging in pretty heinous sexual sin—and those who were denying the existence of God. Second, he wanted to encourage Christians to stand firm in their faith and fight for truth.

Jude thought it was important that believers stand against those who were actively against Jesus Christ and the gospel. He reminds us that there is a time and place for the aggressive protection of truth from those who seek to tear it down, and his primary example is Enoch. I wish I had more time to develop what's going on in Jude, but basically he's warning us pretty directly. He would not be a preacher who would have a successful megachurch today. He's a guy who's out there saying, "Here's how it is. Here's how it's done. Don't be like this. Make sure you're like this. There a bunch of ungodly people who are going to be punished. Be aware." And he uses Enoch as an example.

It's interesting to see both an immediate and a future context to this. As I mentioned before, Enoch had a son, Methuselah, who died the year of the flood, so Enoch was pre-flood. Part of this prophecy related to the fact that a flood was coming that was going to wipe out the earth and only Noah was going to be saved.

But I also believe Jude uses this, because this is written post flood, to say that there is a judgment coming for all people who have ever lived. All—godly and ungodly alike, every person here in this room today—will face a coming judgment. Jude is warning people that this judgment is on its way. He uses this quote to illustrate what he said in the previous 13 verses. He mentions Cain, Balaam and a few other bad examples, then he says, "Be like Enoch, who warned that a judgment is coming." So Enoch was passionate enough in the last 300 years of his life that he spent time warning people of God's judgment.

The ungodly

The primary focus in this passage, I believe, is the ungodly. How many times do you see that word mentioned in these two verses? Not once, not twice, not three times, but four times. Any good Bible student knows we should pay attention to words that are repeated. Four times Enoch is warning the ungodly. We need to warn those who are actively engaged in activities, lifestyles and choices that are against God. Some of that may relate to denying the existence of God.

In the context of Genesis 5 and 6, there was extreme sexual debauchery, a total perversion of what God created for marriage, life and relationships. This went along with an active denying of the existence of God, where they were trying to be gods themselves. We see that played out in the way they engaged in their relationships and ultimately they tried to build a tower to reach up to God. There was such sinfulness going on, at such an awful level, that I can't even wrap my mind around it. But Enoch was passionate about his relationship with God and he was actively warning others of God's judgment—specifically the ungodly.

A few years ago I saw a video by a guy named Penn Jillette. Have you heard of Penn and Teller? Penn's the guy on the left. He's the one who does the talking. The video is not new, but it still strikes me. I'm not going to show it to you, but I want to read a little bit of what he says to illustrate a point. The point is that we struggle with warning others about God's judgment, at least if you're like me. Maybe you're different. Maybe you love telling everybody God is going to judge them for their ungodliness, but I struggle with that. I want to tell people about God's love, but I struggle with warning them. Yet the most loving thing I can do is warn them about God's judgment.



So Penn and Teller do a show and a guy from the audience comes up later to talk with them and he gives them a copy of the New Testament, in which he's written something. Penn is a pretty strong atheist—actively against the existence of God. But he is so moved by the boldness of this man and the attitude of this guy, that he shoots a video afterwards in which he said some pretty profound things—things that have encouraged me to realize we need to be warning people as well.

I've always said I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe there is a heaven and hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward. How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate someone to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?

If I believed, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn't believe that that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point that I tackle you—and this is more important than that.

This guy was a really good guy. He was polite, honest and sane, and he cared enough about me to proselytize and give me a Bible. I know there's no God and one polite person living his life right doesn't change that. But I'll tell you, he was a very, very, very good man. And that's really important. And with that kind of goodness, it's okay to have that deep of a disagreement.

I don't share that because I heard last week, "Hey, Penn came to know Christ." I don't know that. As far as I know, he's still ungodly, actively denying the existence of God. And we have all kinds of illustrations in our lives, those who are actively against life at conception, actively against upholding God's standards for marriage and what sexuality should look like, actively involved in so many other ways that go contrary to God's Word. There's a bit of fear in us and I get it. It's in me too. We're afraid to engage in that conversation, saying, "I love you enough that I want to warn you—there's a truck coming and I want you to dodge death as well." But something in Enoch was so fired up that he spent those 300 years, it seems, warning people of God's judgment—specifically those actively against God.

That's been challenging to my heart this week as I've reflected on all the moments I have quenched the Holy Spirit's promptings and not spoken up. Yet I find that with the ungodly—when it's somebody who's really against God, really against the core of what truth is—sometimes I can rise up. But there are two other ways I can struggle; two other applications that are secondary to the warning in Jude, but which are important as well.

The unreached

Two weeks ago we mentioned that there are two billion people who have not yet heard of Jesus. Two billion people—what are we doing to be sending and financing and going to reach them? Some of you are actively doing that through water projects and missions trips. Our church has a heart for that. We want to reach those and we need to be actively involved in that. But that still feels a little distant. Let's be honest.

The uninterested

There is another group that particularly hits home for me. How about the uninterested? Are we warning them of God's judgment? I can get fired up and motivated when somebody is a real jerk, warning him, "All right, this is what God's Word says." But you know where I get real timid? With those who are uninterested. My neighbors. My family members who don't know Jesus. The people I'm

in relationship with who really don't want anything to do with Him. Over time I think, "You know what? It's not worth it." I've even stopped praying. I'm not even trying anymore. This can be all levels, from those who are kind of antagonistic about it or those who are really nice.

I have a friend I do some work with who is probably one of the nicest guys I know. He's probably one of the best people I've ever been around. He's fair. He has integrity. He's honest and generous. I love spending time with him. His wife knows the Lord, but he has no interest. I've been on plane rides with him. But it is so hard to try to engage in these conversations with him. Yet I love him and I want him to be warned of God's judgment. So God has impressed upon me this week that I've got to more actively pray that God will use me to minister to and warn my friend.

I don't know where you are today. Some of you need to be warned today. Some of you need to have your faith bolstered and to be encouraged to warn others. If you're here today and you're feeling God's conviction and warning, there's time to change and receive His free gift of salvation—today. You do not have to endure His eternal judgment. You can be with Him forever—and there is plenty of time, as of today. We don't know what the future holds, but today there is time for us not only to be walking with God, but to be actively warning others about it.

So this is our challenge: be like Enoch, both in how we walk with God and how we engage the world. Again, this is not a call to be removed from the world. This is a call to be engaged in the world and to be active.

Pleasing God involves a reward.

We see in Enoch's life that there is a reward for those who please God. In Hebrews 11:6 we read that those who have real faith that pleases God also understand that God rewards those who seek Him. Don't miss that today. God loves to reward those who follow Him. He's not a God Who's saying, "Do all this hard stuff, then that's it." No, He offers us His approval, His pleasure and an eternity with Him.

For Enoch, it says he went to be with God. I still can't get over this: he went to be with God. One day he's walking, then in the next moment he went to be with God. It's just amazing. No funeral. No goodbye. His wife and kids probably were saying, "Hey, anybody seen Enoch today? Anybody know where Dad is?" "I don't know. He was walking in the field." "Well, go see where he is. See if he passed out or something, because nobody can find him around here."

Then over time, because it says he was commended for his faith before he was taken, they probably realized, "I think God might have taken him. He's not here anymore. He went to be with God." They would have known the kind of life he lived. It wouldn't have been a shocker, because Enoch walked with God.

I officiate funerals on a fairly regular basis, many times doing them for unbelievers. Often in a funeral I just ask, "Hey, throw out a word or phrase that would describe the person we're celebrating." It's a hard celebration when they don't know Jesus. But what would you say? I've never heard anyone say, "They walked with God. Their faith brought pleasure to God." That might be true for some, but wouldn't that be wonderful—to be known as a man or woman who walked with God? That's my heart. That's what I want on my tombstone. "Jon walked with God." And part of that walking with God should be a willingness to warn others about God.

Enoch and Elijah are the only two who dodged. You know, it's unlikely that most of us are going to dodge death from an earthly standpoint. But all of us have the opportunity to hope, to be like the heroes in Hebrews, to dodge death eternally and to be with God forever. That is far greater than dodging earthly death. We can have a better resurrection, a better hope. Because Jesus conquered the grave and is coming back, we will be with Him forever. If we're walking with God and warning others about Him, we have the opportunity to be with Him forever.

I mentioned earlier that I love walking. Two weeks ago when I shared, I mentioned a little story about my daughter Scarlet. I'm actually going to share another story about her. I promise that I won't do this every time I preach, but God's doing some fun things in her life. A few weeks ago we read a book that had something to do with taking walks with Dad or being with Dad. She said, "On Saturdays, let's make it a Dadder day and we'll take a walk in the morning." So she's been getting up early and we'll go out for walks. [It's actually had a bit of a negative impact, because she's so excited about it she's waking up too early on Saturdays. So we might need to adjust that.] But she's really enjoying it. It's something we both look forward to and I also get to do this with my other kids and with Sarah.

But this particular illustration applies to what we're talking about here today. Now, she doesn't get up and get all excited because of something I'm going to do for her, something I'm going to give her. She's not going on the walk to ask me for money. She doesn't

want anything from me. She just wants to be with me. She puts on her roller blades and off we go. It's delightful. So the other day we were talking and she said, "I think I want to go to college." I asked her, "What do you want to go to college for?" "I want to be a mom." "Well, you don't have to go to college for that. I mean, that's fine, but you don't have to do college." "How long do you think I have to go to college to be a better mom?" I said, "Well, you could probably go for a year or two or four—whatever it is you want." Then I asked her, "How many kids do you want to have?" She says, "Three."

Now, before I tell you why she said three, one of Scarlet's chores is to unload the dishwasher with two other siblings." One dishwasher, three of them. It's not a huge job. One does the top rack, one does the lower rack, one does the silverware. We have a big family, so we probably run our dishwasher more than you do, but still this chore is just a few minutes a day. Half of the dishes get put on the counter and I have to put them away myself.

Anyway, she replied, "Three kids. One to unload the top, one to unload the bottom, one to unload the silverware." I'm cracking up. That makes perfect sense. She's already thinking about how she's going to put the kids to work. My point is, we have moments when we're walking and we're just together. The depth of that relationship is only going to grow as we spend more time walking together.

Friendship, sharing, talking—that's what God wants with us. How's your walk with God? Are you walking with Him and are you understanding what's coming so that you're wanting others to walk with Him and with you in that process?

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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