**Beginnings**  August 16, 2015

A Long Obedience: The Story of Enoch

Question: what things are easy for you to do? what things do you find difficult to do?

Feedback:

We are going to study the life of Enoch today.

Three Sundays ago I gave to you 8 key points that came out of this chapter. There are several other emphasis’ that you need to be aware of in order to understand the significance of Enoch’s long obedience and to be rightly challenged to live as he did.

In Genesis 5 we learn that people in the time of Enoch lived a long time.

Adam - 930

Seth - 912

Enosh - 905

Kenan - 910

Mahalalel - 895

Jared - 962

Enoch - 365

Methusalah - 969

Lamech - 777

Noah - 950

This question is often asked about the Bible... does this book tell the truth?

To ask this question is to also ask, “Is God a Being of integrity?”

Let me explain.

God says in 2 Timothy 3:16: *“all Scripture is God-breathed.”*

The words on these pages are God’s thoughts; the things that he wants us to know...

about himself; about this world we live in, both seen and unseen; about who we were and now are; and what he has done and will yet do to rescue both us and the creation.

God says in 1 John 1:5 that he is light and there is no darkness in him.

God says in Isaiah 45:19: *I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right.*

When we put these three verses together we learn that if there is any error in the Bible,

then it is not God-breathed.

I believe in Genesis 5 God told the truth.

And while it is not our experience in this present time, there was a time when people lived lives, whose length were not measured by decades, but by centuries.

Since God doesn’t explain in Genesis 5 how or why people lived so long, while it would be interesting to know, it is not a crucial detail to the story being told.

A detail that is very important in chapter 5 is a phrase which is repeated eight times in verses 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, and 31. **“and then he died.”**

God had told Adam in 2:17 that he would die if he ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 5:5 confirms this is exactly what happened.

**This impresses upon us that God is a person who keeps his word.**

It’s comforting to know that God is the same...yesterday, today and forever.

He is faithful. He does what he says. He does not flip-flop.

If God has said something in this book, then that something is true for all time.

But it is also a much needed reality-check to be reminded that God does not give idle warnings.

God told Adam he would die if he ate from that one tree.

The serpent told Adam that God was lying.

Adam chose to believe the serpent and went ahead and did what God said not to do, only to find out... that what God said would happen, happened - he died... just like God said he would.

The fact that the phrase “and then he died” is repeated again and again, is meant to teach us a sobering reality about the infection of sin.

**While Adam and Eve had been created perfect, their children were not.**

When you hold a newborn baby, it is hard to believe that infant is anything but innocent.

But the Bible tells us the truth.

Psalm 51:5: *I was sinful at birth, sinful from the day my mother conceived me.*

**Our fallen human nature is received from our parents and in turn passed on to our children through procreation.**

I was infected with sin at my conception. As were you.

And in turn I have infected each of my children; just as you have with yours.

This is the chilling commentary of Genesis 5.

**God deliberately repeated the phrase, “and then he died,” because he wants us to live with the awareness that because of the fall, there is now an expiry date on each of our lives.**

This is bad news.

But it is also good news.

Let me explain.

The good news that is greatly expanded on in the rest of the story told by the Bible, is hinted at in the story of Enoch told in verses 21-24.

Let’s read these verses.

Now look at Hebrews 11:5-6.

Enoch was the exception.

He didn’t die like all the others whose names are recorded in Genesis 5.

Book by book the Bible gives glimpse after glimpse of what God was intendeding to do in order to undo what Adam and Eve had unleashed.

**From Enoch we discover that the destiny of a human life can be changed if a person will respond to God and choose to *“walk faithfully with God.”***

We are not the masters of our destiny.

That ship has already sailed.

Our destiny is already settled.

Unless....we respond to God and choose to walk with him.

Then and only then can our destiny be changed by God.

When we link Genesis 5 with Hebrews 11 we are given additional insight into what it means to walk with God.

\* To walk faithfully **WITH** God one must have faith **IN** God.

\* To have faith **IN** God is to believe he exists.

\* The person who has faith **IN** God **COMES TO** God.

\* The reason a person orients and centers their life in God is because they have become convinced that there is great reward in living as God’s friend instead of as his enemy.

\* It pleases God when a person chooses to come to him and walk faithfully with him.

It would seem that for the first 65 years of his life, Enoch did not walk with God.

But something happened to Enoch in his 65th year. He had a son.

The birth of Methusaleh was a pivotal moment in Enoch’s life.

For many the birth of a child is the beginning of their own spiritual awakening.

The miracle of birth impresses upon many people the reality that there has to be a God.

And then when the enormity of the responsibility of caring for, influencing and teaching this new life begins to sink in, it makes many parents, if not all, aware of inadequate they are for the job.

It’s at this point, that some begin to seek after God.

And often, their spiritual search brings them into contact with other followers of Jesus and with Jesus’ church.

These parents want their child’s life to be different than theirs; they hope that their child won’t repeat their mistakes. As they come to the church, they want their kids to be taught truth, as much as they want us to help them find God.

For many people the birth of a child is the beginning of their own spiritual awakening.

Several weeks ago I talked with Kim Steele about what she does as she teaches children up to 2 years of age in the Cradle. I am so thankful that a person has spoken with Kim about partnering with her.

I also told you about Carol Davies and what she does as she teaches children from Grade 1 to 5 in Jonah’s Place. Carol needs several others to work with her. Is God impressing upon you that this is where he wants you to serve others in his name? If that is the case, please speak to Carol or myself.

Why does this church invest time and effort into ministry to children?

Why should some of you become part of a team that endeavors to love and influence and teach children?

Because of the gospel of Jesus.

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

We believe Jesus said this because he loves kids.

We believe Jesus said this because he knew that the very best thing is for a child to come to know him at an early age.

But we invest time and effort in ministry to children, also for the sake of their parents.

We want to help families know and love our God and Savior.

The birth of Methusaleh was the catalyst that brought Enoch into relationship with God.

The very same thing still happens today with many people in our culture; with many who live in the town of Sooke.

Verse 22 tells us that after Methusaleh’s birth, Enoch walked faithfully with God.

There is a detail in v.22 that is meant to grab out attention.

Enoch walked with God for the rest of his life.

Eugene Peterson wrote a book entitled “A Long Obedience in the Same Direction.”

The example of Enoch and the emphasis of Peterson’s book reminds us that Christianity is not

a “flash in the pan emotional experience” or a short lived belief, nor is it a “that happened to me once” religion.

If you are a follower of Jesus, for however many more years you have to live on this earth, your God wants you to walk faithfully with him.

And to do so, will require of you a long obedience.

We try many different things for a short while.

I tried playing the penny whistle.

I tried learning the violin.

I tried cross country skiing.

At present, I don’t do any of those things.

You’ve done the same, haven’t you?

We all have a list of things we tried and then gave up.

And that is ok.

But when it comes to knowing God and walking with him as his friend, this is not something we are to try out for a little while.

To come to God, to believe in and to receive Jesus as your Savior is to make a lifelong commitment to him.

The example of Enoch is meant to motivate you and me to go the distance with God.

As we do so, we discover and experience this reality: as we walk faithfully with God,

God walks faithfully with us.

Our closing songs are prayers that have been chosen to help you express your commitment to God.

**The Blessing**

Micah 6:8

*He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?*

*To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

It is a good thing to walk humbly with God.

If you do so, you will know the blessing of his friendship.

There are individuals who are ready to listen and to pray for and with you.

Head over to the wall mural after our closing if we could in this way be of assistance to you.