

Text: Heb. 11:5

Title: "By faith Enoch was transferred"

Time: 3/13/2016 am &pm

Place: NBBC

Intro – Job transfers are a part of life. God has used job transfers in my life. It was a job transfer that took my family from Danbury, CT to Arlington, TX, and eventually back to school in South Carolina and back into the ministry here in New Hampshire. When I was a boy, my Dad’s job transfer brought us to a home that was adjacent to the property of Bible Community Church. Because of that transfer, our family began going to that gospel-preaching church, and in time the Lord saved me.

Our passage is essentially about a man who experienced a very significant transfer. Our KJV uses the word *translated* to describe the event, but the word essentially means *to be transferred from one place to another*. I like to tell the story of how God used my Dad’s job transfer to bring me to faith in Christ, and our author this morning wants to use Enoch’s transfer to inspire us to be faithful.

We said two Lord’s Days ago from verse 6 that faith is the power to please God in a way that we could not otherwise please Him. Here we find that Enoch had that God-pleasing faith. This ancient patriarch is an example of a faithful man whose faith pleased God in a way that ours should as well.

Enoch is mentioned 3 times in Scripture: here in Hebrews, in Genesis 5, and in the Book of Jude. I want us to consider those three passages this morning and learn from each a lesson about the way in which Enoch’s faith pleased God.

I. The faith that pleases God determines to walk with God (Gen. 5:24).

III: I read that when it comes to longevity, the residents of Okinawa, Japan rank #1 in the world. For every 100,000 residents on the island, 57 of them are centenarians, people 100 years old or older. Evidently, if you reach 110 years of age you are called a supercentenarian, and only about one in a thousand centenarians make it to the age of 110.

Appl: The Bible tells us that Enoch died at the age of 365. If my math is correct, he was born in the 622nd year after creation, and he died in the 987th year. The flood would not happen for another 650 years or so. So when we are dealing with numbers like this, we immediately get the impression that Enoch was a very old man when God transferred him from earth to His presence in heaven. But Enoch's son, Methuselah, died in the year of the flood. In fact, if you diagram the lifespans of these pre-flood patriarchs, you come pretty quickly to the conclusion that Enoch was a relatively young man when he walked with God in such a way that God took him. He had lived only about a third of the lifespan others in his day enjoyed. He probably had the strength of a 25 or 30 year old today. So Enoch was a relatively young man who walked with God. He was also exceptional in that practice (everyone lives and gives birth in this lineage, but only Enoch walks with God).

So as we consider this verse about this mysterious pre-flood patriarch, the question for us is not a mystery at all: "Do you and I have a faith that causes us to walk with God?" Answering that question honestly this morning requires knowing what it means to walk with God, and I would suggest two things in this regard from this context:

1. In order to walk with God, we must be allowed into His presence (Gen. 3:8-11). Man was created in God's image as a being uniquely designed to walk with and fellowship with God, but the day came to the Garden of Eden when man could walk with God no longer. Man sinned, and his sin meant that he now had to hide from his holy God. Worse still, Adam and Eve were driven from the garden, never to return to those days of walking with God there (Gen. 3:24). After such an expulsion as this, what could possibly make God and man walk together again? What could deal with the sin problem and restore man to the presence of God? Very simply, Jesus said, "I am the way . . . no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

Robert Murray McCheyne explained that truth this way: "As long as Adam walked holily, God dwelt in him, and walked in him, and communed with him; but when Adam fell, 'God drove the man out of paradise; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.' This flaming sword between the cherubim was a magnificent emblem of God – the just and sin-hating God. . .

"But Christ says, 'I am the way.' . . . Jesus pitied the poor sons of Adam vainly struggling to find out a way into the paradise of God, and He left the bosom of the Father, just that He might open up a way for us into the bosom of the Father. And how did He do it? Was it by escaping the vigilance of the flaming sword? No; for it turned every way. Was it by exerting His divine authority, and commanding the glittering blade to withdraw? No; for that would have been to dishonor His Father's law instead of magnifying it. He therefore became a man in our stead-yea became sin. God caused to meet on Him the iniquities of us all. He ad-

vanced in our stead to meet that fiery meteor. He fell beneath its piercing blade; for He remembered the word of the prophet, which is written: 'Awake, O sword! Against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.'

"And now, since the glittering blade is bathed in the side of the Redeemer, the guiltiest of sinners – whoever you be, whatever you be – may enter in over His bleeding body, may find access to the paradise of God, to eat of the tree of life, and live forever." And I would add, to walk with God. To walk with God we must be allowed into His presence, and Christ is the way into His presence. Have you faith that Christ's death for your sin is the way to the Father?

2. In order to walk with God, we must be willing to go where He wants to take us (v. 24, "God took him" – note that walking with God meant being taken somewhere for all of Enoch's life; in a sense, this was nothing new for Enoch; Micah 6:6-8).

Ill: When my sister and her little girl were with us the first time last summer, Ace, Katie, and I went for a walk in the sandpit behind the church. Ace seemed very happy to walk with me, and she held my hand as we were going through the pit. Katie thought that it was quite remarkable that her daughter did that, and she was so impressed that she took some pictures of Ace and I hand-in-hand going through the sand pit together. Katie explained that ordinarily, Ace does not like to hold hands or walk with anyone. She likes to be more like my dog Dixie and run around on her own a bit.

Appl: Well, it is a scene worth remembering to see the life of a believer hand-in-hand walking with their God. We have pictures of that in our church. Those we know walking with God have become willing to go where the Lord wants to

take them. It may be down a very difficult and dangerous path, but they are willing to go. They do what is right; they love mercy (*hesed*), meaning especially that they are faithful to their commitments; and they are humble people, who seek to willingly obey the Lord.

Walking with God involves recognizing that God walks on a certain path. More often than walking with the Lord, the Bible speaks of walking in His ways (Deut. 10:12, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul"; see Ps. 1:1-3). We cannot walk with the Lord if we disobey His directions. Do we have Enoch's faith? Do we please Him by walking with Him as one saved by Christ and in obedience to His directions and commands?

II. The faith that pleases God determines to speak for God (Jude 14-15).

III: Walking with God always leads to speaking for God, and speaking for God always requires first walking with God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor who was executed by the Nazis on April 9, 1945, just under a month before V-E Day. I like remembering him more as a war hero than as a theologian I would commend to you. His capital crime under that regime was aiding Jews to escape Germany and to cross the Swiss border during the war. After Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in January 1933, Bonhoeffer broadcast on the radio a message he called, "The Younger Generation's Altered View of the Concept of the Fuhrer." He warned young people against making an idol of a political leader. Authorities at the radio station switched off his microphone during the broadcast, but his address was printed and circulated anyway. In a

book he titled, *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer wrote: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."

Appl: The faith that pleases God determines to speak for God. Jude tells us that Enoch spoke for God, and we get the sense that it took a special faith to do so. Speaking for God like this takes faith for at least three reasons:

1. It takes faith to speak a negative warning, instead of a positive encouragement. So often we feel we have to say something nice or we will offend the one we are trying to help. But the good news of the gospel must always begin with the bad news first. We are sinners condemned under the just wrath of a holy God. The condemnation and penalty of God's law on our sin is death, and eternally so. And this truth is a schoolmaster that brings the sinful man to Christ. It takes faith to faithfully witness, because we have to believe that the very thing people do not want to hear is exactly what they must hear in order to be saved.

2. It takes faith to speak when not many seem to listen. The Bible never tells us how well Enoch's message was heard. We do know that after God took him and his message fell silent, spiritual conditions decayed from bad to worse. Seventy years after his death, Enoch's great-grandson, Noah, would be born, and eventually he would preach for years warning men to get into the ark and escape the coming flood. Only Noah's family listened. Few listen today. It takes faith to speak a message for God when so few are willing to listen.

3. It takes faith to speak of something that has not yet happened. Jude is actually quoting a work called the Book of Enoch, which was compiled from Jewish oral traditions in

the first century B.C. So as an inspired author of Scripture, Jude confirms for us that this particular oral tradition was correct history. Enoch spoke of the final judgment of sinners some 5500 years ago. Jude did the same around 2000 years ago. And even though we still wait for it, we are called to speak the same truth. Sin will not go unpunished. The ungodly will be brought to justice. Christ's kingdom will come to earth. Men must come to Christ before it is eternally too late. They must come by faith as Enoch, Noah, and Jude did.

III. The faith that pleases God need not fear death (Heb. 11:5).

Appl: Enoch was transferred so that he would not experience death. The Bible teaches that the faithful do not have to fear death. The death of Christ on the cross of Calvary defeated death. His resurrection caused death to lose its sting and the grave its victory. The apostle John in his old age did not fear death (1 John 3:1-2, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"). Enoch was transferred so that he would not experience death. John died, but he was still carefully transferred into the presence of His Savior. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. For the faithful, that is what death is – simply a transfer – the best ever job transfer. And job transfers, as we said at the beginning, are just a part of life.

Conclusion: Do you have the faith that pleases God? Does it cause you to walk with Him, to speak for Him, and to not

fear death? The day will come, as it did for Enoch, when we will walk no longer by faith, but by sight. McCheyne reflected on this and encouraged his people to realize that we can glorify the Lord in this world in a way we will not be able to in the next if we have faith. Do we have the faith that glorifies the Lord in this world? If not, ask God for it. He will give it. Then walk with Him, speak for Him, and some day your transfer will come safely in Him.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*