



Walking with God

Genesis 6

IDENTIFY THE SONG

You'll never walk alone. It's by Gerry and the Pacemakers. Other people who've sung it are. Frank Sinatra, Judy Garland, Gerry & The Pacemakers, Elvis Presley, Doris Day, Roy Hamilton, Patti LaBelle & the Blue Belles, Johnny Cash, Tom Jones, Marty Robbins, and Renée Fleming.

The anthem for Liverpool Football Club and many others. GATES OF ANFIELD

We are social animals – we always walk with someone. In fact, for the majority of people, they desire the company of one or more people who are their confidants, role models, close friends, partners, wives, husbands. People with whom they want to share their lives together.

WALKING WITH GOD

At the beginning, Adam walked with God – literally. Adam and Eve shared their lives with God. We heard about how that relationship broke down last week. By the time we get to chapter 6 we find people still needing to walk with somebody.

Actually we are told in the Bible of two strands of the human race – those that were like Cain and just rejected God, and those who were descendants of Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve who followed in the murdered Abel's steps in worshipping God and trying to honour Him.

That seems to be the best explanation we have of the rather strange wording of the early part of chapter 6 where we read: *When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. Then the Lord said, 'My spirit shall not abide in mortals for ever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' The Nephilim were on the earth in those days - and also afterwards - when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.*

Who were the sons of God? Were they heavenly beings? Some say angels but we know from what Jesus said, that angels don't marry (Matt 22:30 – at the resurrection people will be like the angels and will not marry or be given in marriage). More likely the sons of God refer to the line of Seth – people who still worshipped God but who started to take an interest in the beautiful women. Beautiful maybe, but not followers of God. They gave birth to these Nephilim – or sometimes translated giants or maybe better translated mighty men – a great tradition of warriors. Maybe they thought that this was good and virtuous to produce a race of great men. It was all about muscle, human greatness, self aggrandisement and God was left out.

Many people find these passages in the early part of the Bible difficult because it's hard to match what we know of human history to these events because they are so long lost in time. But from God's point of view, He wants us to understand through reading about Noah, that right from the early history of God's dealings with our human race, that who we walk with matters. The line of Seth, the sons of God decided to yoke themselves with people who didn't share their desire to follow God. What happened? What has happened in every civilization since. People drop to their lowest common denominator and that means walking with those they have yoked themselves to rather than God and becoming like them rather than God.

Within generations, the human race, which had been appointed stewards of the God's creation, had ended up with a world out of control. WORLD OUT OF CONTROL

VERSE *Gen 6:5-6 GOD saw that human evil was out of control. People thought evil, imagined evil--evil, evil, evil from morning to night. GOD was sorry that he had made the human race in the first place; it broke his heart. (The Message)*

The human race had made themselves into disaster zone! God is long-suffering – they had plenty of opportunity to change course because there was still Noah as a role model for the right way - but eventually needed to act. He put in an opening shot by reducing their life span. No effect. Then it was a matter of deciding to wipe the slate clean.

But in the heart of all that we find Noah. People who had chosen who they walked with, and it wasn't God. But we read that NOAH WALKED WITH GOD. We know the story, Noah and his family were saved by being in the ark, but the rest of the people drowned.

Noah chose carefully who he walked with. He walked with God. In fact one of his forefathers, Enoch also had the same accolade. God rated these men highly. Enoch was taken by God – into heaven. Noah and his family were saved when the rest drowned. What would you prefer; going straight to heaven or 40 days in a boat crammed full of animals?!!

People who walk with God are blessed people! God wants us to walk with Him. Walking with someone is just that. Before my wife had mobility problems, we used to love to go out and walk together. It was not just about going somewhere, but an opportunity to talk and be with one another, share our deepest thoughts, share our deepest feelings. And when we got stuck trying to clamber over rocks or avoid getting stuck in mud, we were there to help each other.

It's the same with walking with God; exactly the same. He wants to walk at our side throughout life. In Noah's day, people wanted someone to walk with them by their side, but it wasn't God because others seem to have been more important than Him. And they did as they pleased and celebrated the mighty men that their lives produced.

Noah walked with God.

So what can we learn from this story about what it means to walk with God?

- God was gracious to Noah

Noah found favour in the sight of God - But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. KJV

The word favour bends towards favour based on grace rather than on meritorious action. It is the first appearance of the word grace in the Bible. Right at the heart of the story we find grace – God's unmerited favour. What was it about Noah that meant that he received the blessing that God's grace brings. He still recognised God and was prepared to follow Him. God showed grace, Noah had faith.

What's the next thing we are told about Noah – he was a righteous man. Why was he righteous – because he had found favour with God?

Walking with God starts with a recognition of who God is and what He makes you. *Eph 2: 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*

- Noah acted with integrity

Another thing we are told about Noah – he found favour with the people. Not because he was a bad man, but because he stood out as a good one. In a world where few can be trusted, people with integrity stand out – and are respected because others can trust the, If we are righteous, then we should seek to be people of integrity.

Wesley *"It is easy to be religious when religion is in fashion; but it is an evidence of strong faith to swim against the stream, and to appear for God, when no one else appears for him: so Noah did, and it is upon record to his immortal honour."*

God calls on people that walk with Him to reflect His integrity. In a world that needs hope and needs Jesus, people of integrity stand out. Let me ask a question: do you stand out as a Christian? Do you have that reputation for integrity? People who walk with God walk with integrity. An unachievable aim?

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to be people of integrity. A tall order? Noah managed it and he was by no means a man of 100% virtue – read Genesis 9 to read about him making a fool of himself after a drunken binge!

God calls us to be people of integrity. How, by walking with Him. By spending time with Him in prayer and with His word. By learning to recognise Him in every part of our lives. By committing our human relationships to Him that we might have wisdom to be Jesus to them. By learning to recognise His voice and see His ways in everything we do. How do you do that? Ask the Spirit as you spend time with Him to give you that understanding. That can't happen unless you spend time with God.

12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor 2 (NIV)

- Noah trusted God whatever.

Noah did all the Lord had commanded him. NOAH BUILD A BOAT Noah had to build a boat. We know the story and the dimensions and purpose were read to us. It is the stuff of a lot of interesting children's presentation and humour. Here's a couple for you. PICS.

To give you some idea here's picture of an ARK that was built in Holland, so it gives you some idea of the kind of scale although we are not altogether certain of the cubit lengths in the Bible. This ark was built by a man in Holland as he is convinced that the whole of the Netherlands is going to be drowned by rising sea levels! Nice to see that not all Christian fruitcakes come from America!

Of course, read children's Bible stories and we read of how people found this a huge joke. Mr Noah built an ark, the people thought it was a lark. Actually, the Bible is less clear how hilarious, weird or just plain nutty people thought Noah was. Actually they might have just been plain unbelieving that God would wipe them out. Whatever that thought or did, Noah walked with God, so when instructions came, Noah carried them out. Why?

NOAH TRUSTED GOD WHATEVER However ridiculous a task it seemed, Noah did it. Why? Because Noah walked with God. And in walking with God, he knew God's mind, he knew God's ways and therefore he was prepared to believe God even though it was a tall order to build this boat and find all the animals he needed to put on to the ark.

If our true desire is to walk with God, one of the biggest tests comes when God starts to take us out of our comfort zone and starts to ask us to follow Him even though the way through is not clear and the means do not seem to be there. Do we move forward in faith? That's the big test of how much we trust the One we are walking with. If we jump, will He catch us? That's the nature of trust.

Let me try to be practical. As a church we are looking to see the Parish Nursing ministry grow and we believe God is leading us and directing us in this. Do we have the resources to do it? Not yet. Do we know where they are coming from? Not exactly, no. We have to move with it in faith. Daft? By the standards of many, yes. But we have done it before and found that we have a God who meets all our needs. And I don't think that's the only area God wants us to walk with Him as a church in faith.

WHEN YOU WALK WITH GOD YOU NEVER WALK ALONE

What about you and me? The same applies. Are we hearing God's voice in something? Maybe you are and this is a live issue to you. You're wondering what to do. Here's my advice First, be sure that you've heard right – ask someone to pray with you and talk it through with someone who's a mature Christian. Once it's clear, take a step. I find God starts us with small steps and them progressively bigger ones; the biggest of all being a point of no return.

WALKING WITH GOD

Maybe this is new to you. How do I start walking with God. Spend time with Him. Spend time with His word. Ask His Spirit to open it to you that you'll understand and discern His voice. Take every opportunity to worship and serve – you get to know God best in the same way you get to know people, by doing things with them. You get to trust God by trusting God. Share with other Christians your experiences and knowledge. Build one another up.

Noah found favour in the sight of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

Prayer

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