

Sermon Series: Transformed Leadership

Sermon Title: Transformed by Walking With God!

Sermon Text: Genesis 5:21-24, Hebrews 11:5-6

Sermon Presenter: Pastor Larry

Introduction:

“Jesus Christ my living hope!” Jesus is our living hope because He is alive! Jesus is our living hope because He defeated the power of sin, the power of death and the power of the grave! Jesus is our living hope because He lives in our hearts by way of His Holy Spirit! When we die to self and live for God our lives are transformed and the leadership potential of our lives grows exponentially! Let’s pray and ask God to teach us how our walk with God can radically transform our leadership! Pray.

Transformed leadership happens when an ordinary person places their faith and trust in the extraordinary God of the Holy Bible, The Creator God of Heaven and Earth and is then inspired by, directed by, motivated by, captivated by and dedicated to the principles of God!

Last week we talked about Cain and Abel and what they taught us about transformed leadership through their acts of worship. We saw how important our heart, our motivation, and our choices are when it comes to worship and how that affects whether or not our leadership is transformed. We saw the negative consequences that can happen when someone chooses the ways of the world and rejects the transforming power that God desires to bring into our lives. But we also saw the eternal impact that Abel had because of his desire to honor God with his worship. Even though he only lived a short time, in comparison to others of his day, his lasting testimony of bringing his best to God in worship has inspired many down through the years! God’s Word says this about him...

Hebrews 11:4... And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

Today we’re going to look at another individual who left a powerful testimony with his life and see how his life and testimony inspire and encourage transformed leadership! We’re going to look at a guy who became a great example of transformed leadership because of his walk with God! He is one of the most unique people in all of the Bible and in all of history. Take your Bibles and let’s look at Genesis 5:21 and we’ll discover some amazing things about a guy named Enoch and then see how his experience can relate to us.

The Text

Genesis 5:21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.

Genesis 5:22 After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

Genesis 5:23 Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years.

Genesis 5:24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

So now you know the unique thing about Enoch. He didn't die! He didn't live forever on this earth, but he didn't leave the earth by death. He walked faithfully with God, then he was no more, because God took him away. So fascinating! The only other person in history who could boast of such a feat was Elijah the prophet who was taken to heaven in a fiery chariot.

We don't have much information about Enoch's life but what we do have is powerful. We get a little more info from the Book of Hebrews in the hall of fame of faith chapter, chapter 11. Let's read that together...

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

So we don't know much about Enoch's life other than who his dad was, a guy named Jarod, and that Enoch was the father of Methuselah who is considered the person who lived the longest on the earth at 969 years. We know that Enoch lived a total of 365 years on the earth before he was taken home by God. We don't know Enoch's profession but we do know that he at one time was used by God to speak a prophecy against some extremely wicked people. We know this because of a passage in our Bible in the book of Jude, written by Jesus' brother Jude.

Jude 14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones

Jude 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

From the Jewish First Book of Enoch. (approximately the first century B.C.)

You might be wondering how any of this relates to you and what it has to do with transformed leadership. I will answer those questions now. From these passages of Scripture we discover several factors about Enoch's life that have valuable lessons for our life and our leadership...

Enoch walked faithfully with God

Enoch did not face physical death because God took him away

Enoch was commended as one who pleased God

Enoch spoke out against ungodliness

That's the order we find in Scripture, but I'm going to save the one about Enoch not facing physical death because God had taken him away, until the very end. I think you'll see why! So let's look at the first thing about Enoch that factors into our life and leadership...

Factor #1 - Enoch walked faithfully with God

While we don't have much detail from Enoch's life as to what that looked like, we have multiple passages of Scripture that tell us what it means to walk faithfully with God!

Before we can walk with God we must establish a relationship with God!

We know Enoch had a personal relationship with God because he walked faithfully with God. And according to the passage in Hebrews we understand that Enoch's relationship with God was based on faith! That faith was credited to him as righteousness through what Jesus the future Messiah would do for him on the Cross. People in the Old Testament looked forward to a Savior, a Messiah, and we look back to the Savior, the Messiah. We are also saved by faith through the grace and mercy of God offered to us on the Cross. So let me tell you how to establish a relationship with God through faith so it will be counted as righteousness for you...

- A. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior
- B. Believe Jesus died on the Cross to be that Savior
- C. Commit your life to Jesus by calling on Him to be your personal Savior

Your life and your leadership will be radically transformed once you allow Jesus to be your Savior.

The first step is admitting you need a Savior.

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The second step is believing that Jesus is that Savior.

God's Word says this...

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

Romans 3:22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

The third step is receiving Jesus as your personal Savior by calling on His Name.

Romans 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Once we establish our relationship with God we begin developing a pattern of fellowship with God.

We fellowship with God by faithfully talking to Him in prayer and by faithfully listening to Him speak to our hearts and minds through the Word of God and allowing His Holy Spirit to teach us the Scriptures and give us understanding. The Psalmist David said...

Psalm 119:34 Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.

Psalm 119:35 Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.

Psalm 119:36 Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.

Psalm 119:37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

We fellowship with God as we depend on His presence in our lives to bring us strength and confidence. Knowing He is faithful and always with us, always near, always by our side transforms us into Godly leaders on a daily basis. I like to say that God is beside us because He walks with us, and He's behind us because He's got our backs and that He walks before us because He is leading the way, and He's always watching over us because He is always above us, and sees what we cannot, and there's times when He walks underneath us because He is carrying us when we don't have the strength to walk another step.!

The Psalmist Asaph said this...

Psalm 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

Psalm 73:26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Psalm 73:27 Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

Psalm 73:28 But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Evidently Enoch had this kind of intimate fellowship with God! And here's another thing about walking faithfully with God...

Once we begin fellowshipping with God we will begin experiencing discipleship!

You could call discipleship, fellowship! Because a disciple is one who follows a teacher. And once we begin following Jesus and seeking to pattern our lives after His life, our life and our leadership begins to be transformed! Enoch followed God in such a faithful way. It's one thing to believe in God, it's quite another to follow God and live His ways and teach others by leading others with the way you live your life! Here's a practical question for each of us today...

Are we walking faithfully with The Lord? Or are we fair weather friends with God? Do we fellowship God only when things are going good and all of our needs are being met? Do we

fellowship with God when the chips are down and when life throws things at us we don't understand and that sometimes hurts us to the core? Are we walking with God faithfully on a daily basis or is it just when it's convenient? Are we following God as a disciple, as a student, as an apprentice or are we just curiosity seekers and onlookers? Jesus once said this...

John 8:31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Faithfully walking with God is about a relationship, fellowship and discipleship! But how do we faithfully walk with God? The answer to that is found in the next factor we see in Enoch...

Factor #2 - Enoch was commended as one who pleased God because he had faith!

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Folks, this is so important! God has placed within each and every human being the capacity to know Him and that capacity to know Him comes from the fact that we are made in His image and we have been given the ability to exercise faith. As the writer of Hebrews says, "anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." When we make the decision to believe in Christ, to trust Him to forgive us, and have faith that God will keep His promises to those who call on His name, then God rewards our mustard seed of faith by moving mountains for us. When we exercise our faith in God it pleases God, but we must remember: it's how big and great and awesome the object of our faith is, not how big and awesome our faith is. The object of our faith is our extraordinary God Almighty! I like the way Paul put it in Romans 12:1-3...

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

Being a living sacrifice means that we are yielded to and following God's good plan and His perfect will for our lives as we walk with Him every day! When we do this we no longer conform to the pattern of this world, but we are transformed by the renewing of our minds! And we don't do this with an arrogant pride of trying to make ourselves look good, but we think of ourselves

with sober judgment. I had someone ask me how I stay humble and I told them, "I know me!" That's a pretty humbling thing! I know my limitations, I know my shortcomings, I know my weaknesses, I know my inadequacies, I know my sinful nature, and all of that added up means that by faith I've got to depend on my extraordinary God to save me. I can't save myself! We all have the capacity to have faith because God has distributed the capacity for faith to everyone. The question is: will we exercise that faith by trusting in our extraordinary God to work in our lives! I've come to understand that faith is believing God can and trust is believing God will! Faith that trusts God is a faith that pleases God! Enoch had that kind of trusting faith! I don't know what you're facing right now, but the question for many of us today is this: Am I willing to have a trusting faith in God that believes and knows that God really does care about me and my hurts, my pains, my uncertainties, and my vulnerabilities! Am I willing to hold on to God's hand when tragedy strikes? Am I willing to trust that if God still has a work for me to do in this world he will give me the health and the strength and the resources I need to accomplish that work? Am I willing to trust that if God for some reason doesn't give me the answer I prayed for, the healing I asked for, that He has some greater purpose and that He will give me the strength to endure the trial and lead others to see the beauty of a faith that holds on to God because that faith knows God is holding on to me? I wrote a song back when we were first starting this church. I was working on my doctorate, and I just wasn't sure I had it in me. Then I had a tumor come up on my neck that required surgery. And I wondered if it was my time to go through what I as a minister had seen so many others go through. Obviously God still had a work for me here on this earth because that was around 18 years ago. But here's the lyrics to the song...

If I were captured and imprisoned
Yet You had other plans for me
You could set me free, yes You could set me free
you could set me free, yes You could set me free

If I were sick and diseased
The doctors had no hope for me
You could heal me, yes You could heal me, you could heal me,
I know that You could Heal me

If it be your will, You can do anything, You can do anything, if it be Your will
And I want Your will, more than anything, Yes more than anything, in my life

If I had a work to do, I didn't know how to do
Yet You had instructed me,
You would teach me, Yes You would teach me, oh please teach me, I know that You will teach me!

And if I didn't have the means or the where-with-all
There was no way for me
You would provide for me, Yes You would provide for me, You would provide for me,
I know You will provide for me!

Cause If it be Your will, I can do anything, I can do anything, If it be Your will,, And I want Your will, more than anything, yes more than anything, in my life, 'cause You are my life!

I knew a lady in Birmingham, AL who was an amazing Christian woman. She developed cancer. We prayed for her. We asked God to be with her and if it was His will to heal her. Many faithful saints of God prayed for her. She ended up with Hospice care. However, her faith, and trust in God's ability to heal her was powerful, but she said over and over that she trusted God to walk with her through everything and if it was His time for her to come home she was okay with that. Like Enoch, she faithfully walked with God. She prayed that God would either heal her from the cancer or use it for some greater purpose! On the day she passed away, I was by her side along with her family. Her grown son was there. He had for many years before walked away from the faith and was living in the world. His mom had been praying for him for years to come to know Jesus as his Savior. On that day, I remember this lady smiling and talking about how grateful she was for what Jesus had done in her life and how blessed she felt to have lived the life she lived. She was genuinely excited that she was about to enter into the very presence of her Lord and Savior. The One who had given sacrificed His life so that she might have eternal life! Everyone in that room was amazed to witness the beauty of her faith. Moments after she breathed her last breath, her son grabbed me by the arm and said, "walk with me!" We walked out the patio door to the back yard. He wept and said to me: "Brother Larry, that was the most Godly Woman I've ever known. She was the real deal. Man, I want what she had! Please tell me how I can know God like she knew God!" I explained how we can begin a relationship with God and he was gloriously saved that day and I can guarantee you that his mother was not only welcomed into the presence of God that day, but she got to see all the angels in heaven rejoice because Jesus said...

Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

God called this lady home in a different way from Enoch, but her walk with God caused such a transformation in her life that she was able to lead her son to saving faith in Jesus!! Enoch had yet another factor in his life that speaks of transformed leadership...

Factor #3 - Enoch spoke out against ungodliness

Jude 14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones

Jude 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

When it comes to transformed leadership, we need people today who will stand for what is right, what is Godly, what is true. But let me be quick to remind you that the way we stand for what is right and the way we say things is absolutely critical. Sometimes the world hates our message

because of the message, but sometimes they hate the message because of the obnoxious ways the messenger presented their message. God is so clear on this in His Word. Paul said...

Galatians 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

Galatians 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves.

And Peter put it this way...

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 Peter 3:16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Folks, we aren't going to experience transformed leadership if we don't hold on to our God-given convictions and if we compromise away our beliefs just to be accepted by the world. Enoch stood by his convictions and so should we. But we better make sure that our attitude is Christlike, gentle, and respectful! If someone is offended because of the truth of Scripture that's on them, but if I offend someone because I was judgemental, hateful, and prideful rather than humble, loving and Christlike then that's on me! Okay, one last factor about Enoch...

Factor #4 - Enoch did not face physical death because God had taken him away

Enoch walked faithfully with God, was commended as one who pleased God, spoke out against ungodliness and as a result did not face physical death because God took him away!

How could this factor have any relevance for our lives Pastor Larry. Do you think we could get so close to God that He would actually cause us to disappear? Well I won't say that's impossible, but let me throw something out for you to consider. Enoch walked so close to God, got so close to God that he literally was taken to heaven by God. But here's a way that God might choose to use your walk with Him to transform your life and your leadership but allow you to still remain in this life so you can still make a difference in the lives of others. If you will allow me to use a personal illustration? Many of you have heard my testimony about the night I got saved but some of you haven't, so here's the cliff notes version! My dad told me to get ready because we were going to a revival service at the church. I told my dad I was 14 ½ and had been thinking about the God thing and it wasn't for me and I wasn't going. My dad would have usually said, "Put your feet under my table, live under my roof, you'll do what I tell you!" But this night was different. He said, "Well son, I can't make you love the Lord. We'll see you later" and the family left for church. I started feeling bad about things and walked to church, heard a message on the brutality of the cross and realized if that was a true story I'd be a fool to walk

away from that kind of love. Thought to myself, “Well I’ve done too many bad things, I probably couldn’t be saved even if I wanted to be. And that’s right when the preacher said: “And Jesus looked down at the very people who had nailed Him to the cross and said, “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing!” I couldn’t believe what I had just heard, but I did believe and I cried out for forgiveness and for salvation and my life changed. It wasn’t too many weeks afterwards that my old friends began to have conversations...

“Dude, what’s happened to Larry? Where’s the old Larry? It’s like he’s disappeared and an alien has taken over his body! He’ll be back! It’s just a phase! He’ll get over it!”

But thank God I never got over it, and after about two years they realized I wasn’t coming back. The old Larry was gone and the new Larry was emerging by the grace, power and miraculous forgiveness found in Jesus Christ, God’s One and Only Son! I’ve had the privilege to pray with some of those guys later in life! I didn’t become perfect that night, I became forgiven! I didn’t become better than anyone that night, because I was still a sinner, but I became better off because I was clothed in the righteousness of Jesus that night! I still have so far to grow in my faith and my desire to be more like Jesus, but I began a lifelong process that night and I’m still a work in progress. The best way for me to describe what happened is with Scripture...

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

Romans 6:7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 6:8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 6:10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

Romans 6:11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Enoch didn’t face death in this world and once God took him home to heaven, Enoch no longer faced any of the other negative things we sometimes face in this world. He no longer faced sickness, discouragement, disappointment, anger, injustice, temptation, worry, fear, or death! But let me tell you this, while we still face those things, we don’t have to fear those things because when we walk with God our lives and our leadership in the lives of others is transformed and we can know that God’s Word is 100% when it says...

Colossians 3:1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Let's pray!