

The Walk of Faith

By Faith: Pt.5

The Scripture passage we're going to base our teaching on this morning is Hebrews 11:5 – just one verse from just one chapter. The same chapter we're studying all summer. The question we've been looking at each week is; How can you live a life of power? Not mere existence or survival, but *power*. And the eleventh chapter of the New Testament book of Hebrews tells us the life of power is a life of *faith*. This is *the* classic chapter in the Bible about faith.

And the way that Hebrews 11 teaches faith is through example. The chapter gives us a series of character studies or case studies, and it shows us in each case how particular persons were able to *achieve* that kind of life of power and faith. Now the one we're going to look at today is this mysterious Old Testament figure, Enoch. His is a one verse kind of life. So let's jump right into it. **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.*"

Now, last week our traveling companion was Able, and Able was famous for *dying*. In fact, his is the first recorded death in the Bible. And not just any old

death, *murder*...by his brother actually. So Able is famous for dying, and Enoch is famous for...*not* dying. That's right, Enoch is one of only two people who are recorded in scripture as *not* dying – the other being the prophet Elijah.

By the way, it's not by accident that Enoch's story directly follows Abel's. The early church certainly didn't think so. Puritan preacher Thomas Manton, in his sermon on this passage, records, "In Abel's death the holy patriarchs saw what they might expect in the world; and in Enoch's translation they saw what they should receive from God." (XXI). In other words - we read the news - the world will straight up kill you – got a million ways to do it. But God is about life - life forevermore.

One of my commentaries makes what I think is a very nice link between the two as well. "Abel and Enoch establish a pattern for all the heroes who follow. Taken together they anticipate Christ's example of suffering and triumph. Sometimes, as in the case of Abel, people suffer for their faith without temporal deliverance. At other times, as in the case of Enoch, God brings great deliverance in response to faith. For most, the life of faith is a mixture of suffering and triumph...In a more profound sense, however, every person who lives by faith identifies with both Abel and Enoch. All, like Abel, will die without receiving the fullness of what God promised. All, like Enoch, are promised triumph over death." (Cockerill, 526)

Well, let's get to those promises. Now, if you're a careful student of this passage, you will notice that the "by faith" statement is a little different here. All the case studies start with this familiar refrain. By faith Abel. By faith Enoch. By faith Noah. By faith Abraham. By faith Moses. Every one of the case studies starts "by faith", and in every case, by faith is connected to an active verb.

By faith Abel *offered*. By faith Noah *built*. By faith Abraham *obeyed*. But in Enoch's situation, it's a *passive* verb. By faith Enoch *was taken* by God. In other words, this verse does not tell us what Enoch *did* by faith that caused God to take him. He did *something* by faith, but we're not explicitly told what it was. But it was because of this thing he did by faith that God took him.

Now, as I've said, Enoch is a rather mysterious character, because we know very little about him. There are only four verses about him in the entire Old Testament. So it makes you wonder, "Why would the writer of Hebrews chose this guy as one of the great case studies?" Let me tell you why. One of his four verses, **Genesis 5:24**, says that for 300 years, "*Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*" God took him right to heaven without him tasting death because Enoch walked with God.

So what we have, if you just put Genesis 5 and Hebrews 11 together, there's not much we know, but that's everything we know about Enoch. By faith Enoch walked with God. *That's* what he did that was so special, and it was *so* special that even though there's almost nothing told about Enoch in the Old Testament, the Hebrews writer latches onto him as one of the great cases in *all* of history of a life of faith.

What's so special about walking with God? Here's the answer: If you look up the word "walk", you'll see the first time the word walk shows up in the Bible is in **Genesis 3:8**, and there we read this. It happened right after Adam and Eve disobeyed. It says, "*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*"

See here's the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had just sinned, had just disobeyed. They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, and they were afraid, and they hid from the face of the Lord among the trees. Now do you know what we learn from that verse? Something amazing. We learn that in the very beginning of time, in the Plan A world, God took long walks with us every evening. Literally, the Hebrew says God walked in the garden in "the breeze of the day", which in that part of the country – *somewhere* in the Mediterranean region - the breeze would come up in the evening.

We are told that our human ancestors used to take a walk with God every evening. Now get the gist of this please. This is *God*, the Lord God, the Lord of the universe. If the 93 million miles from the earth to the sun were contracted into the thickness of a single piece of paper, then the diameter of just our Milky Way Galaxy would be a stack of paper 310 miles high. That's a staggering mental image – you can't even picture it.

But that's *nothing*. How many of you saw the pictures released by NASA earlier this month from the Webb Space Telescope? This one in particular has been making lots of headlines. It is the clearest image in the history of human kind of a specific cluster of *thousands* of galaxies. The Milky Way is just one little speck, one little dust speck in the vast universe.

And *this* God created all that and holds it together with the word of His power, and *this* One, every evening, would come to us and say, "Let's take a walk. Let's go for a stroll. I want to hear what's on your heart, and I want to tell you what's on My heart." Walking with God. And yet we're shown the minute human beings disobeyed God, they couldn't stand intimacy with infinity anymore.

You know a little bit about that. When you know you've wronged somebody and you see them coming, you go around the other way. You hope they don't see you. When you read the book of Genesis, we see that starting in Genesis 3, we no longer could walk with God. We were *estranged* from God. We were alienated from God. And if you read just Genesis 3 and 4, your heart just sinks, because the minute we weren't able to walk with God, we weren't able to truly walk with anything else.

The minute we were estranged from God, we were estranged from everything else, because *immediately* you see psychological estrangement. We're rootless. We're wanderers. We're full of fears. And you see estrangement from creation. We're at war with nature now, and we still are. Austin just had the hottest, driest July in recorded history – nature is trying to kill us. August might succeed!

You see our bodies subject to disease and death. We're just emerging from our caves from COVID and now they've got Monkey Pox! So we're even estranged from our bodies. You see immediately in Genesis 4 killing and violence, and we're estranged from each other. If you don't walk with God, you won't walk with anyone else. You'll be utterly alone. You won't even be able to walk with your own self. That's what Genesis 3 and 4 tell us.

We no longer walk with God. We're total loners, *but* suddenly Genesis 5 comes along, and any careful reader, anybody just reading Genesis and maybe has never read any other part of the books of the Bible, if you're just reading along, you get to Genesis 5, and when Enoch shows up, you're suddenly absolutely startled, because it says, **Genesis 5:24**, "*Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.*" You suddenly say, "What? Somebody *still* can walk with God in spite of all this? It's still possible? It's still possible to have that estrangement so utterly healed that God actually *takes* him and he receives eternal life, and he's welcomed into the bosom of the Father?"

Enoch walked with God in the cool of the day, and he's *still* walking with God in the cool of the day. How is it possible? That's the question, and do you know what the answer is – according to the book of Hebrews, the verse we just read? It's possible *by faith!* Faith. *You* can do it too. Now walking with God is so seminal to *everything* the Bible tells us about what it means to be a Christian. Being a Christian, Christianity, is not about a general belief in God, and it's not about just being a generally moral person; it's about walking...with...God.

Walking with God, has two parts: We walk *in peace* with God and we walk *in the presence* of God. To walk with God is to walk in peace with Him and in His presence. So let me just take a look at those two aspects and then show you at the end how the two actually are drawn together, how one leads to the other.

First of all, Peace with God. When it tells us Enoch walked with God - when it tells us *we* can walk with God - it's saying it means it's possible to be *reconciled* to God. The Hebrew word for "to walk" – *hálak* - you'll see it used constantly not only in the ancient usage, but even today, the word walk means more than just to physically walk. It means to be in partnership and the hostilities are gone.

When I was preparing for the *God at the Movies* sermon on *Belfast*, I did a lot of reading about that region, and in addition to the religious differences – which were the main cause of violence – they also had a troubled history of labor and management fights and strikes and all the stresses of that in the shipyards and mills of that blue-collar city.

One interesting thing I remember reading was the workers would talk about a bad mill and a good mill like this. They would say in the bad mill the managers were distant from the workers, but in the good mills, they would say, "They walk with us." See, that's exactly how the Bible uses the word. The word walk means no longer adversaries, no longer hostile, reconciled.

So when Genesis 5 tells us Enoch walked with God, it tells us something amazing. We're reconciled with God. Now, why do we *need* peace with God in the first place, and how does it come by faith? First of all, why do we need it? Because we're at war. Just the fact that Enoch walked with God means that he is one of the great heroes of the faith now. Walking with God is such an incredibly important thing because we're at war with God.

There's a war going on, and you won't understand walking with God until you understand there's a war going on. In fact, you won't ever be able to walk with God unless you *admit* there's a war going on. Well, how did the war even start? When Adam and Eve decided to disobey *one* of the things God told them - God must have told them thousands of things, but He also said, "Don't eat from that tree," and they disobeyed. And when they disobeyed one of the thousands of directions God gave, something *much* more fundamental and profound happened than just a violation of one general rule.

Here's what I mean: If somebody tells you to do 10 things, there are actually two elements involved when they tell you to do those 10 things. First of all, you have to decide your relationship to the directions - the list itself - but you *also* have to decide your relationship to the person - the person who issued you the list. You could do those 10 things because the person tells you, and strictly because the person told you - because you recognize their authority.

Or you could do those 10 things because they make sense to you to do. And even though both of those scenarios I just mentioned would look on the outside the same - the 10 things get done - underneath they're totally different in their *motivation*, because you assume a different relationship to the person who has done the telling.

You see, in the first case, if you do those 10 things because the person told you, you have set up a relationship. You're the servant and that person is in charge. That person has the right to decide what goes on. But if you do those 10 things because it makes sense to you, you are in charge and that person, is maybe an advisor, is a counselor, in a sense is a servant of *yours*. On the outside, the two different approaches look very much the same. Underneath...they're fundamentally different. They're based on two *different* definitions of your relationship with the person.

Now when Adam and Eve decided to just disobey one rule, they didn't just disobey one rule. There was a cataclysm. Our *entire* position in the universe changed. What they were doing was saying, "I can take you, Lord God, as an advisor but not as a King." And the moment they just made that one decision, to say, "I'll obey 999 things you say, but not the last one," what they said was, "I want the mastery. I want the kingship." And everybody knows when two parties claim the throne of the same spot, there's a war. When two parties claim the same spot, there's a war.

Not only did that happen to Adam and Eve, but looking our interaction with God's commandments - every single time you and I are dishonest, every time you and I are impure, every time you and I are selfish - every time you and I disobey one of those commandments in any regard, *or* even if you claim for yourself the right to decide *whether or not* you will obey...Even if you obey on the surface, but underneath you have seized for yourself the right to determine whether or not you will obey.

You see, these things aren't just violations; they are coup attempts. Every sin is an act of sedition. Every time you use your body, you use your mind, you use your tongue in a way that pleases *you* instead of a way that pleases the expressed will of God, you are committing treason. You are assaulting God's position. You're claiming the mastery. You're claiming the same turf God claims ... *you!* And as a result, there's a war. Do you see that?

Now, I would say - from my understanding of history and looking at things - not all, but *most* wars operate like this. There are two parties, an unjust aggressor and a just responder. Now, there are always a lot of extenuating circumstances, but by and large, usually one party tends to be the aggressor. Somebody starts the actual combat. Do you know what's interesting? The aggressor always has to use propaganda to convince itself internally that it's really the defendant.

You can see how the Nazis spoke to themselves about their war against Poland and particularly against the whole Jewish race. But you don't have to go back 70 years, it's happening right now between Russia and the Ukraine. Russia is *clearly* the aggressor. They started it. But what is Putin's talking points?

This May, in a Victory Day Speech to commemorate the Soviet victory over Germany in WWII, Putin gave justification for the current conflict. This is translated from the Russian, "An absolutely unacceptable threat to us was steadily being created right on our borders. There was every indication that a clash with neo-Nazi backed by the United States and their minions was unavoidable. Let me repeat, we saw the military infrastructure being built up, hundreds of foreign advisors starting work, and regular supplies of cutting-edge weaponry being delivered from NATO countries."

Notice there's no mention that all of these *defense* weapons were coming in to counter all the troops Russia was *already* stacking up at the border! He continues, "The threat grew every day. **Russia launched a pre-emptive strike at the aggression.** It was a forced, timely and the only correct decision. A decision by a sovereign, strong and independent country." This is not new. Military bullies always talk this way. It's always the same.

The aggressor, the one warring unjustly, sits there and says, "It's really *your* fault. You're out to get me. You're causing my problems. You're threatening me. If I don't make a move, if I don't claim the kingship, if I don't claim this territory, you're going to wipe me out. And that's the reason why we can invade and rape and pillage all of your villages. That's the reason why we can do it, because it's really your fault."

Now, my friends, you don't know your own heart unless you realize that that is our attitude toward God. When we claim the mastery of our lives, when we claim the kingship of our lives, we insist *all* we're doing is taking what's right, because after all, God is out to get us. That's how it started. Do you know why Adam and Eve disobeyed God? The Serpent came and he told them a lie...propaganda.

The Serpent came and said, "Has God really told you not to eat of that tree? That's only because He knows how good that tree is and wants to keep it for Himself. God is out to get you. He's trying to smother you. He's trying to hold you down. You have desires in you. You have aspirations, and God is keeping you from them. God does not desire your best. If you obey everything God said, you will *never* be all you're meant to be. God does not love you. God does not want your joy. God does not want your fulfillment. Seize the day. Create your *own* reality. After all, you have a right to do what

you want. It's your life!" That is propaganda. In other words, "It's your fault, God."

Now that's exactly what happened. God shows up and sees Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve...at that moment everything is in shambles. They feel fear on the inside, exposure on the outside. They know their bodies are falling apart. They know their relationship is falling apart. *Everything* is falling apart because they're estranged from God.

God comes and says, "What happened?" What does Adam say? "It was this woman *you* gave me." God turns to Eve and says, "What happened?" She says, "Why did you let that Snake in here?" It's *your* fault. "My problems are *your* fault. Yes, we're rebelling against you, but we couldn't help it. We're only defending ourselves. You're out to get us."

Now friends, unless you understand that lie has sunk deep in your heart - it's what we call our "sinful nature." What do you think your sinful nature is? Your sinful nature is a belief. It's character assassination against God. It's the propaganda that says, "God is out to get me. I have to be in charge of my own life. If I don't, I'll be smothered. He *doesn't* love me. He *doesn't* care for me." That's propaganda. "It's your fault." And that has sunk into our hearts from the beginning, and it's still operating.

Look at two different kinds of people. Let me give you an example of two kinds of persons. In fact, many of you fit into one or another of these categories. Some of you, here's the kind of person who moves to Austin out of a pretty traditional background and says, "Finally, I'm going to be able to cut lose. Finally. I was raised in a narrow, traditional home - maybe in a church - but Christianity is too confining. Traditional morality is too confining. I finally am free to do what I feel is right for me."

But here on the other hand you have a person who is very religious, very devout, very moral, but always feeling badly about himself or herself, always feeling down, always feeling unworthy, always feeling anxious, always feeling discouraged. Do you know what those two have in common? One is very irreligious; one is very religious. Do you know what they have in common? They *both* believe the lie that God doesn't love them, that God is not out for them.

The first person says, "I have this sexual feeling. If I don't give in to that, I'm going to lose out." Over here is a person who says, "God doesn't love me. He doesn't really forgive me. I'm too unworthy. I try and I try and I try, and my life still doesn't go well." They *both* believe the lie. They're *both* saying, "God, it's your fault. You're out to get me." Through religion, through irreligion, they're both basically not admitting how much at war with God they are, and they're at war with God *because* they're saying, "It's all your fault."

Now, the religious people won't *admit* that a lot of their anxiety, an awful lot of their depression, an awful lot of that feeling of unworthiness is really that anger. The irreligious people *will* admit it. "Why does God let the things happen that He does? A truly good God would never allow...!" You're mad sort of overtly. Over here, you're mad sort of covertly. Over here you're mad consciously; over there you're mad unconsciously. You're all mad, because you all believe the same thing. Propaganda. It's God's fault - and you are *claiming* the right to be your own kings, and so there's a war. Who controls the territory that is your heart?

But now listen, if there's an aggressor who has to war unjustly, there's always someone who has to war justly. If you're attacked, if justice is trampled on, then the other side *has* to go to war just to stand up for what's right. And therefore, the Bible says the reason we need to be reconciled with God and that it needs to be a two-way reconciliation - not only does our heart need to be turned, but God's heart needs to be turned. Why? Because God has a problem with us too. It's not *like* our problem with Him. It's a legal one, not an emotional one. God's not vindictive or vengeful. If that were the case... God is so superior to us He could've wiped us out a long time ago.

But what God has done in His restraint is He has passed sentence on us. He said, "If you want to rule, you'll have to rule outside the garden. You can serve in the garden or you can rule in the desert. It's one or the other. So out you go, estranged from each other, estranged from nature, estranged from your own body, estranged from your own soul, estranged from everything. Out you go." And God's wrath lies on us, the Bible says, and He has put a sentence on us.

Now how is it possible to be reconciled? Enoch walked with God. You have to go back to this because Abel and Enoch and Abraham, *all they knew* was the promise God gave to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve didn't know much either except that God came to them and said, "You're out in the desert. I'm putting a sword in front of the garden. You can't come back in. You're under sentence of death. You are cut off. That's your penalty. *But...* I will send someone. And he will be bruised. He will be wounded, but he'll get you back in. He will go through the sword so that you don't have to."

Now all Enoch knew, all Abraham knew, all Abel knew, all Noah knew was that somehow God was going to send somebody who was going to be wounded and hurt, and that would be the way in...but *we* know. My word! Think of the faith they had just in that, and we *know*! Do you know what we know?

Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:19-21**, "...*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: **Be reconciled to God.** 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*"

What's Paul saying? God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself - not counting their sins against them. Put it this way. Both sides of this war -fighting against each other, struggling against each other - both sides converged on the figure hanging on the cross. Both of us emptied all of our guns, emptied all of our ammunition, both of us converged on him, blasted him to pieces. Yes! That's what the Bible says. God was in Christ *reconciling* us to Himself. "He made him sin who knew no sin."

Don't you see? Both sides. God came in with His legal justice, and He made Jesus Christ into a desert, and He cut Jesus off, and Jesus descended into utter spiritual darkness. But not only did God put His part of the war on Jesus, we did too. If you look and see the attitude of the people around Jesus Christ, they made fun of him. They mocked him, because we're counter-kings. We're threatened by *real* kings.

And when we can get our hands on someone who threatens our control of our lives, that's exactly what we do. They mocked him! We mocked him. They speared him! We speared him. See, both sides converged on Jesus. And as a result, we're told God has poured out all of the penalty on him.

Somebody says, "Why does God even have to pour out His penalty?" Listen. It's justice. One side is warring unjustly, but one side is warring justly. If you went to court because somebody wouldn't pay you some large sum, and the judge said, "Well, why can't you just forget it?" you'd say, "Because I want justice!" You can't have a social order if you just say let's just forget all the debts to the law. You can't even have a society. In the same way, do you want God to be less just than your local circuit court judge? God is just. He had to do something. You can't discard that sentence, and He didn't. He poured it out.

And as a result, when Paul says "be reconciled", do you know what that means? Here's what has to happen: First of all, you have to admit you have been at war with God, and secondly, you also have to admit not only that you've been at war with God *unjustly*, you have to admit God has been at war with you *justly*, that God has a right to cast you out. And not until you see those two things and admit those two things will you suddenly find that what Jesus did on the cross *affects* you. Don't you see the logic of this?

If there's anybody here who says, "I don't believe I'm that mad at God, and I don't believe God is that unhappy with me. I don't believe I'm really just trying to lead my life and I'm trying to do a coup attempt. I don't believe I am revolting against Him. I don't think I'm that bad. I don't think God's that unhappy with me," when you look at the cross, you will never walk with God on the basis of it. It won't move you. It won't thrill you. It won't melt you. It won't change you. It won't make your heart go out to Jesus.

You can be moral. You can just believe. You can believe in all the doctrines, but if you don't believe you're at war with God unjustly and if you don't believe God is at war with you justly, if you don't admit that, you'll never, ever, ever see what Jesus did for you, and it won't change you, and it won't bring you out.

This is what happens to a person when you admit the warfare and you see what Jesus did: You have your heart changed. You go out to God and do what Adam and Eve *should've* done. You run out and you say, "Oh, my Lord, alas! Something has happened to me. My heart is dark. I can't see. Everything around me is falling apart. I can hardly see you. Will you take my hand? Will you help me? Will you walk with me?" Adam and Eve wouldn't admit they were at war with God, and so when He came and offered them help, all they did was say, "You're out to get me." Don't be like them. Be reconciled! *Walk* with God.

Now, that's not all we're promised. There's one more thing we're promised. Walking with God is not just being *at peace* with God; it's *enjoying peace* with God. Walking with God is not just the objective. The Bible tells us that when you receive Christ as Savior your warfare is ended. You're at peace with God. Your sentence is put behind you. You're acceptable in His sight. Your sins no longer can bring you into condemnation. **Romans 8:1**, "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" Walking with God is step by step, bit by bit. It's taking that peace and *working* it into your life.

Remember we said, the lesson from Abel is suffering is still real in this world – they'll still kill you. How do you have peace in the midst of *that*? Acts chapter 7 tells the story of an early disciple named Stephen, who was being condemned by this earthly kangaroo court, they sentenced him to death on false charges and they were about to stone him. How did he deal with that? How did he keep himself together?

It says he looked up to heaven and he saw Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of the Father - as his Advocate, as his Mediator, as his Reconciler. Stephen thought about the fact that God loved him perfectly in Christ. He wasn't upset at all about the fact that down here he was not only being condemned but he was about to be executed. In fact, his final words, as they were bashing his head open with rocks, were echoes of Jesus, "Lord, don't hold this sin against them."

He *practiced* the peace. That's walking. It's not just simply saying, "I know I'm at peace with God"; it's handling the criticism, going to God in prayer, dealing with the difficulties through Christ, continually saying, "I *am* at peace. Come on, hell. Come on, world. It doesn't matter what you send at me. It doesn't make any difference, because I'm His. The devil's trying to break me down but Jesus walks with me." The more you *practice* that peace, the more finally in the end you'll actually *experience* God's presence.

That's the second thing, the Presence of God. And this is how I'm going to leave you, and I hope this will leave you with a kind of yearning. The Bible tells us that the ideal will become the real depending on how much we are willing to actually walk. The word walk is very often used - not only in the Bible but even today - in contrast to talk. What do we say? Don't just talk the talk; walk the walk. Don't just believe it; live it out.

And if you *do* live it out in the way Stephen did, in the way we're saying right now, eventually God will actually do to you what He did to Enoch. He will bear witness in your spirit that He is pleased with you. You will feel God's presence. A Christian walking the walk with occasionally feel *something* of God's presence. That still small voice. The thing that made Enoch so amazing was that he seemed to have it all the time. Because we have peace with God, we can actually begin to have the reversal of the curse and start to actually sense and feel the presence of God when we pray.

C.S. Lewis put it this way. Let me end with this quote. It's a long one, but I think deservedly so. He's talking about those moments of transcendence when the mundane melts away and you just sense there's more to existence. A great piece of music or art, a spectacular sunset, or a hug from your child, the embrace of a lover. He says, "When I attempted, a few minutes ago, to describe our spiritual longings, I was omitting one of their most curious characteristics. We usually notice it just as the moment of vision dies away, as the music ends or as the landscape loses the celestial light. What we feel then has been well described by Keats as 'the journey homeward to habitual self.' You know what I mean. For a few minutes we have had the illusion of belonging to that world. Now we wake to find that it is no such thing. We have been mere spectators."

"Beauty has smiled, but not to welcome us; her face was turned in our direction, but not to see us. We have not been accepted, welcomed, or taken into the dance. We may go when we please, we may stay if we can: 'Nobody marks us.' A scientist may reply that since most of the things we call beautiful are inanimate, it is not very surprising that they take no notice of us. That, of course, is true."

"It is not the physical objects that I am speaking of, but that indescribable something of which they become for a moment the messengers... But we pine. The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret... **For glory means good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things.**"

"The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last. Perhaps it seems rather crude to describe glory as being 'noticed' by God. But this is almost the language of the New Testament... We can be left utterly and absolutely *outside*—repelled, exiled, estranged, finally and unspeakably ignored. On the other hand, we can be called in, welcomed, received, acknowledged."

"We walk every day on the razor edge between these two incredible possibilities. Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, **our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off**, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation." (*The Weight of Glory*, 39-42)

Dear Christian friends, don't follow God from far off. Walk *with* God. He longs to walk with you. Practice the peace you have. Practice the objective, and you'll know the subjective. If you don't have the same subjective sense of walking with God, it's simply because you're not practicing - in your prayer, in your scripture meditation, in your private and in your public - the peace you have. And if there's anybody here who doesn't believe they're at war with God, let me tell you, your life is a walk. Every action you're taking is leading you somewhere – toward God's door or away from it.

That's why it's a walk. You're either going to the garden or to the desert. It doesn't matter how moral you are. You can be moral and still be your own master, and if you are, you're putting little marks on your soul that are going to turn you into a monstrosity, which right now you only meet in a nightmare. The desert. One way or the other. But you can get in. The door to the garden has been opened. I implore you be reconciled to God.

Let's pray...