Ascension Day Genesis 5:21-24
May 13, 2021 175-173-170-169

"On Christ's Ascension I Now Build"
I. Build my life now.
II. Build my hope of eternal life.

Dear Christian friends,

Genesis 5 is one of those chapters many WONDER WHY God put it in the Bible. It's a genealogy chapter – "so-and-so lived x-amount of years and **begat** so-and-so. After that they **lived** x-more years – had other sons and daughters – ***'and then he died."*** We recognize some of the names in this chapter – Adam – Seth – perhaps Enoch and his son **Methuselah** and later on Enoch's **great-grandson** Noah. But in between are some **weird names** like ***"Kenan"*** and ***"Mahalalel."***

Tonight we turn to this **brief account** of Enoch's life. **Jesus'** ascension and **Enoch's** life go HAND-IN-HAND – just as **your life** and mine **go hand-in-hand** with Jesus' ascension. With the help of Enoch's life we tonight sing and say, "ON CHRIST'S ASCENSION I NOW BUILD" – build 1)my life now and 2)my hope of **eternal life**.

I. Build my life now.

"After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years, and he became the father of sons and daughters." Isn't that a beautiful description of Enoch's life – ***"he walked with God"***? Twice Moses writes, ***"Enoch walked with God."*** Wouldn't you like that to be said about your life – that you ***"walked with God"***?

The prophet Amos wrote, ***"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"*** To ***"walk together"*** means you've agreed on WHERE you're going and HOW you'll get there. It **means** you're not arguing or fighting along the way. ***"Walking together"*** means you're UNITED – ONE in spirit – purpose – goal.

Does that describe YOUR ***"walk with God"***? Mine is **often more like** a TUG-OF-WAR. God says, "Go this way" and my sinful nature says, **No**, I'm going this way." Do you always see EYE-TO-EYE with God on your priorities in life – on the way you treat and **talk about** other people – the TV shows you watch, etc.? Do you always agree with GOD'S ROLE in your life – that GOD CONTROLS every area and **minute** of your life? Paul reminds us, ***"The sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature."*** I can sure see that in **my life** – and I'll bet you can too. JUST TAKE the **8th Commandment** – that we are to always "TAKE THINGS IN THE KINDEST possible way- "PUT THE BEST construction on everything." That sure can be a **real struggle**!

Enoch's walk with God was BUILT on his faith in God – a faith that clung to **God's promise** of a Savior. In Hebrews 11 we read, ***"By faith Enoch was taken up, so that he would not experience death, and he was not found because God took him away. In fact, before he was taken away, he was commended in Scripture as one who 'pleased God.' And without faith it is impossible to please God."***

Like Enoch our ***"walk with God"*** is a WALK OF FAITH – a faith that clings to Jesus – **crucified** – **risen** – **ascended** – **returning**. Jesus' ascension reminds us that He had come here ON A MISSION. That mission was to ***"crush the serpent's head"*** – to set us free from sin and guilt, death and hell. That mission meant the Son of God HAD TO LEAVE **the glories** of heaven – be born a true man and take the place of all people under God's law. That MISSION MEANT Jesus perfectly obeying all the commandments for us – Jesus personally paying for all our sins BY ENDURING the death and hell we had coming – Jesus conquering death and the grave. **Ascension Day** boldly proclaims that mission ACCOMPLISHED. Jesus returned to heaven our CONQUERING KING – **not** a defeated loser.

Trusting in Jesus we now ***"walk with God."*** All our sins have been **washed away** in Jesus' blood. We've been clothed with Jesus' righteousness – His perfect life. We've been given – NEW HEARTS – a NEW ATTITUDE – a whole new way of life. ***"Walking with God"*** we live each day FOR GOD'S GLORY – guided by God's Word – safe under His protection – comforted by His promises. ***"Walking with God"*** we walk WITH God not AWAY from God. God is our DAILY COMPANION not an occasional **visitor**.

It's not easy ***"walking with God."*** Enoch lived about 700 years before the flood. That sounds like a **long time** but back then people **were living** 800-900 years. As the time for the **flood drew near** things kept getting worse and worse. **By the time** of Noah there were only eight believers left in the whole world! With Jesus' ascension into heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost we are now living ***"in the last days."*** Do you remember how Jesus described these days? ***"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."*** In Enoch's day people were MORE AND MORE ignoring God – pushing God **out** of their hearts and lives. Jesus warns us to EXPECT THE SAME today.

Jude tells us that Enoch warned people of God's **coming judgment** – called them to repent **before** it was too late. JUST LIKE **Enoch** Jesus calls on us to LIVE and SHARE our **Christian faith** in a world becoming MORE AND MORE HOSTILE to God and His will.

Enoch found his strength and **comfort** in God's Word and **promises**. SO SHOULD WE! Today reminds us that we ALSO HAVE the **comfort** of Jesus sitting at God's right hand – firmly in control of all things – ruling and working **everything** for His glory and our eternal good. **When it looks** like everything is OUT OF CONTROL in **the world** LOOK UP and see your ascended Lord sitting at God's right hand as ***"King of kings and Lord of lords."***

"ON CHRIST'S ASCENSION WE BUILD" our lives now – our DAILY ***"walk with God."*** "On Christ's ascension" we also build…

II. Our hope of eternal life.

Genesis 5 presents some FASCINATING FACTS. Adam lived **930 years**. Seth lived **912** years. Methuselah – **Enoch's son** – lived 969 years – the longest we know any person to have ever lived.

Genesis 5 might impress us with **how long** those people lived. But we can easily miss ANOTHER FACT in this chapter. EXCEPT for Enoch each person's life mentioned ends with the words, ***"Then he died."*** Through all the THOUSANDS of **years** of this world's existence – for all the BILLIONS of people who ever have or will walk this earth – EXCEPT FOR only **Enoch** and **Elijah** the end is ALWAYS ***"then he died."*** It doesn't matter HOW LONG a person lived – WHERE they lived – WHO their **parents** were – it's always ***"then he died."*** If Jesus doesn't return soon **your life** – my life – will end with, ***"then he died."***

The Bible reveals the REAL CAUSE of death – sin – defying God. ***"The wages of sin is death. The soul that sins, it shall die."*** It's always tempting to MAKE EXCUSES for our sins – to think they're "NO BIG DEAL" – that nobody **got hurt**. **With death** God says, "THINK AGAIN!"

The only real answer to death is TO BUILD Christ's ascension – to build our hope of eternal life in heaven on Jesus **crucified** – **risen** – **ascended**. Good Friday ends with ***"then (Jesus) died."*** BUT Easter dawns with "AND NOW HE LIVES!" ***"Why do you look for the living among the dead?"*** the angel asked those startled women. As we recall Jesus ascending into heaven recall also His beautiful promise, ***"In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with Me, so that you may also be where I am."***

"All the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God. Then, he was not there, for God took him." God spared Enoch PHYSICAL death and instead took him BODY AND SOUL directly to heaven. WHAT A BLESSING from God!

Luther makes an INTERESTING POINT in a **sermon he preached** on Enoch. Think how Enoch's family felt! ***"Then he was not there."*** WHERE was he? WHAT had happened to him? Did his unpopular preaching of repentance finally ANNOY some people **so much** that they killed him? IF ONLY they could find Enoch – AT LEAST **find his body**. WHAT GRIEF this must have caused Enoch's family UNTIL GOD REVEALED what had **really happened**. What comfort then! What joy – what peace!

It's the same for us **as we deal** with death. We need GOD'S REVELATION of what happens when a **Christian** dies. We need the REVELATION and the COMFORT of **Jesus' resurrection** and **ascension**.

We don't count on **God taking us** BODY AND SOUL directly to heaven **as He did** for Enoch. God has never promised us that. But God has promised that the VERY MOMENT our soul leaves our body in death it will be with Jesus ***"in paradise."*** Even as we bury the **dead bodies** of our Christian loved ones God reveals that our loved ones ARE NOT DEAD but are now in that blessed ***"multitude before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb."*** As we face up to **our own** death God reveals that when we die we will join Enoch and all God's **faithful before us** in singing the praises of our living Savior.

"All the days of Enoch were 365 years." Back then they **would have said** Enoch "died YOUNG." We never know HOW MUCH TIME we have left. None of us **expects to live** to 800 or 900 years. But do we perhaps figure we're STILL GOOD for a few more years – 10 – 20 - 30 or more years? Enoch reminds us NOT TO COUNT on that. We may not know EXACTLY WHEN we'll die but we do know EXACTLY HOW to die – building on Christ's ascension – trusting in Jesus **to take us home** to heaven.

ONE MORE THING about Enoch. He used his time on earth to PASS HIS FAITH ON to his son **Methuselah** who passed it on to **Lamech** and **Noah**. Parents, have you made sure to DO THE SAME with your children and grandchildren? More important than **passing on** FAVORITE RECIPES or the FAMILY FARM is passing on the one true faith – Jesus **crucified** – **risen** – **ascended** – **reigning** – **returning**.

"All the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God. Then, he was not there, for God took him." BUILDING on Christ's ascension we now ***"walk with God"*** and look forward to one day JOINING ENOCH with God in heaven. Amen.

Hymn #170