

Walking With God

Genesis 5:21—Enoch lived sixty-five years and begot Methuselah, and after he begot Methuselah Enoch walked with God three hundred years and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years, and Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Micah 6:8—He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

Hebrews 11:5-6—By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and *“and was not found, because God had taken him”* for before he was taken he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Hebrews 11:27b—For he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, we want to thank You for just the little thing that our brother said: “My father was an alcoholic, but Jesus redeemed him.” Lord, we want to thank You that You are a God who redeems. And as I think about this, this is generations, and as we look in Genesis after Adam sinned, here You are. You have people that are lost and You redeem. Lord, we are grateful. We are grateful that You are a redeeming God. And we ask You this morning that You would speak to us the things that are on Your heart, and You would make them real by the Holy Spirit. Lord, I know that You have things on Your heart that You want to speak to us, and they are for this time, not in some way that is specifically for this time, yet in another way it is because it is You speaking to us. And Lord, that is what we want. We do not want anything else but to have a witness to Your voice from Your Word. And Lord, from that witness we can walk fresh with You. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

You can see from these verses the thing that is on my heart is this desire of God to walk with man, but not for God just to walk with man but for man to walk with God. I think that is the thing that is really on God's heart for this time—for this time in our lives and for this time we live in. But even if these things in our world were not like they are, it is still His desire. This is the whole reason for His redeeming us. He has redeemed us so that we can walk with Him. That is His heart's desire.

Walking Humbly with Our God

One of the other verses that I chose was from Micah: “He has shown thee, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you.” When we look at that “require” I think of our job requirements. You have to do this, this and this. Or another way that Hebrew word is translated is that He has shown thee O man what is good and what does the Lord seek? What is the Lord seeking for in man? This is what He seeks for.

Brothers and sisters, the bottom line of that verse in Micah is not only to do justly and love mercy, but it is to walk humbly with It God. That is the bottom line, the sum total of everything.

It is not to say that the other things are not important, but the sum total of these things is that we walk with God, and we walk humbly with Him because we know Who He is. So this is what God is seeking in this time we are living in. He is seeking for men to walk with Him.

Enoch Walked with God

In looking at Enoch during this time and the story of Genesis, after man sinned the next thing that happened was first Cain and then Abel were born. Abel had something revealed to him which was that the Lord wanted a sacrifice. It was not the sacrifice of his hand, the work of his hands, but it was that of another life which he offered to God as a pleasing sacrifice.

After that it seems like nothing happened, but during the time of Seth it says that men began to call upon the name of the Lord. It is a wonderful thing to call upon the name of the Lord. But generally when do we call upon the name of the Lord? HELP!! Lord, help me. I am not saying that is a bad thing because sometimes that awakens us to the Lord, but that is not the whole desire that God has for us. Yes, He wants us to have that sacrifice which pleases Him, and He wants us to call upon His name, but He wants more than that. He wants more than just an acknowledgement of Who He is. He wants us to walk with Him.

What does it mean to walk with God? I do not want to reduce it to something religious. It is not reduced to thinking that if I do certain things, that means I am walking with God. If I have a quiet time then I am walking with God. If I have a quiet time every day that means I am walking with God. If I have a quiet time and I go to the Sunday meeting, that means I am walking with God. No, let's have a prayer meeting. If I am doing these things that means I am walking with God. However, you can do those things and not walk with God.

What is walking with God? And the reason why I am saying this is because sometimes that is the way we think. I am doing the things that I am supposed to do as a Christian, and that is what suffices God. Now I was raised Catholic. You take the sacraments and God is pleased with you. That is all you need to do. Just take the sacraments and make sure you go to mass on Sunday if not every day. You are going on Sunday and you are taking communion and you are going to confession at least every three weeks. You do those things, and you think that makes us right with God; that is what pleases God.

It says in Hebrews that walking with God is the thing that pleases Him. Enoch had this testimony that he pleased God. How did he please Him? He pleased Him by walking with Him. That is what Genesis tells us; "he walked with God."

What does it Mean to Walk with God?

So what do we mean by walking with Him? To walk with God is just as if you are walking with another person that you are interested in. It is not just that I am walking along with someone else, because I can walk with somebody and not even give them the time of day or not even acknowledge that they are walking with me. It is because I can be so caught up with myself and the things I am thinking about. But when we are walking with someone, the first thing is that we are aware that someone else is there. I am aware of the presence of another. Also it is not enough just to be aware, but it is also to be conversant with them. Now when I say conversant, I do not

mean just to be conversant on my part. In other words, when I walk with them and all I am doing is yacking and yacking, that poor person has to be the sound board for whatever I am yacking. So it means that conversant means that it is a two-way conversing, and that is what walking is. So it is an awareness that someone is with you; someone is accompanying you which means they are walking with you. You are aware that they are accompanying you and that you are conversing with them.

The first few dates I had with my wife were walks partly because I am a teacher and didn't have a lot of money to take her places. But you know it was during those times my wife and I became acquainted with one another, and this is what God wants. I began to know who she was and she began to know me. I could have taken her to a movie, but during a movie you are quiet, looking at something else, and there is no interaction. I could have taken her to dinner, but I would have been too self-conscious about either dropping something or eating with my mouth open. But when you walk with somebody, you are conversing.

So this will be the subject of the next couple of times I am going to share which will be about walking with God and for a couple of reasons. I believe that this is a testimony that God wants in His people in this day. He wants a testimony of ones who have walked with God. He wants people to know that we are walking with God. That is what was displayed to the people of the last days in which Enoch lived days. When you think about Enoch as our example of living in the last days, it is amazing. And there are only two people in the Scriptures that I know who walked with God, and they are both in the Old Testament at this time. It was Enoch and in chapter 6 of Genesis it says, "Noah walked with God." No one else. To me it was eye-opening to think they were the ones in the last days because Jesus said, "My coming will be like the days of Noah." In the days of Noah there were all of these other things going on, but you also had one who was walking with God. It is incredible to think of that!. So this is the testimony that I believe God wants displayed in His people in the last days.

Fellowshipping with God

The other thing is that the ministries of the Pittman boys of Kenny and Geoffrey have been about fellowship. In one way we can look at walking with God as being fellowshipping with God. So I think God is speaking at this time and saying, "If you have three people coming up and saying there is something about fellowship, there is something about this walking with God. Maybe God is trying to speak to us. Maybe this is the word of God for us at this time. So with that in mind, those are the things why I am bringing this up. My intention is not to show you this is how you walk with God. This is not going to be a how-to thing. Do these things and you are walking with God.

I believe it is much like little kids. How do little kids learn to walk? The first thing they do is observe others doing it. They also might have something to help them walk. My sister gave my older daughter, Katie, a little shopping cart toy, and that was the day she learned to walk. She pushed it all over the lawn and then let it go. She was then in a whole other realm of life where she was going to be getting into a lot of things.

So it is not that we need to tell you how to walk because the Holy Spirit is going to do that. And I do not want to take away anything that the Holy Spirit is going to teach by saying this is the way you do it and not giving Him His place. So the Holy Spirit has His place in our walking with God, and we need to know that place.

Why God wants Us to Walk with Him

So today and in the next few times I will share I want to talk about the whys, the whats, and the where of walking. Today I want to focus on the why. It is not me telling you that you should walk with God because I am scolding you. God is not scolding you. I want to concentrate on why God desires us to walk with Him because I think that is more important. I think for a lot of us we look at walking with God as a duty and not it being God's desire for us. We are trying to please Him without knowing that He already desires us, He is already pleased with us because He has redeemed us. That shows us right there that He is pleased with us. And to further please Him now He wants us to walk with Him.

In walking with Him God is not seeking to expose us where you are wrong. Or you have a flaw in your character here, and this has to be dealt with. He is not there to point out our shortcomings, but He would have us become acquainted with Him to know Him in His Person. He is asking us to walk with Him, and He is really saying, "I am letting you in. I am letting you into something that no one else has been able to get into. I am letting you in to be with Me." He brings us in behind the curtain. He brings us into His house. He brings us into His space in order to show us something of Himself, to allow us to know something and see something of who He is.

He Makes Himself Relatable

I am not talking here about something theological like the attributes of God. We know He is omniscient, He is Omnipotent, He is Almighty, and all those things. And I think for those of us who get caught up in those things, we lose the picture that God is knowable. He just becomes too great, and He becomes too theological. He wants us to know Him in His Person. So we are not going to be talking about the attributes but something of who He is. And He also makes Himself relatable. In other words, He makes Himself comprehensible, not fully comprehended, but He makes it so that we comprehend something of Him that draws us closer to Him and helps us to go on and say, "Jesus." I can even know more, and this is the idea of Him walking with us.

So He has opened the door to us. That is what redemption is all about. The door has been opened to us and we are to come in because that is what He desires. He does not force us to come in. He opens the door for us and then leaves it to us. Thankfully He gives us His Holy Spirit to give us a little nudge here and there to help us. As we become aware that He is with me, alongside me and He begins to open up more and more of who He is.

Now I want to look at four things. Sometimes as God opens the door, these are some of the ways He does that. This is not a comprehensive list but as I looked back on my life, I am sharing with you what God has done for me in opening that door. Sometimes He opens up who He is by using nature.

He Opens the Door to Us Through Nature

Psalm 19:1-3—“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.”

A lot of times you may look at that and say this is for unbelievers. No, this is for us also. And I want to go back to Psalm 8, another psalm of David.

Psalm 8:3—“When I consider your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit Him?”

When we look at these things, there can sometimes be a danger in it. We see God and notice how little we are, then our focus becomes on us. The Lord is trying to get us to focus on Him: “I want you to see who I am.” When I think of nature, one thing I miss about my daughter who lives in Montana is that she and I were the nature people. I miss her saying, “Dad, come here now and look at this sunset.” She was the one who shared that type of thing with me. “Look at these things; this is wonderful!” When I think of nature and the Lord telling us something about God, it is like inviting you into His house.

When someone invites you into their house, you get to see something about what they are like. You get to see by the arrangement of the table whether they are an orderly people. What kind of person are they? You get to see by the art they have on the walls the things that catch their attention, what they appreciate. So when you see nature, you hear God saying, “look at what I have done!. This is good. This is good!”

We have been to some houses in which people have very low-kept houses. Maybe it is like going to a rich person’s house and would you trust your kids to go with you into that house? Wouldn’t you be self-conscious that they might break something or they are going to mess something up. God is not like that, He would say, “You know something, it is all replaceable. You do not have to worry about it at all. This is what I am like. I have all these things that I enjoy. These are things that I have made, but they are not to the point of saying, “Don’t touch this. Do not feel that you cannot come in and enjoy who I am because you are worried about what might happen. You are totally put at peace because God says, “In My house it is good. It is good and I want you to enjoy the goodness of it because the goodness is Me.”

You cannot look at the sky with the clouds that were both gray on the bottom part, and when you looked up higher, there was the immaculate white of those thunderheads, and then there was the blue mixed in with it. You cannot just look at it and say, “What a diversity of color and yet what a beauty is in it, and how different all the things were. You cannot look at a flower and not say the order of it is so amazing. It is not just wonderful.

I was watching the blue planet the other day on television where you see the different types of animals, and you see all the things that God has made which gives you a picture of Who He is. He is so creative and so providing of everything that is needed in the household He has created. Everything that is needed for all those animals is provided. As it says, “Consider the birds of the

air. They do not toil or spin. They are not out looking for a job because God feeds them. You get a whole new picture of God. So one way that God shows us who He is as He begins to open the door is His nature, and we become sensitive to these things.

You know, we are not all nature freaks, but every once in a while those of us who are not nature freaks see something, and all of a sudden we are blown away. And that is the way it is with God. We see something of God, and it blows us away, not in a way of saying, "Oh, I can't stand this." But it blows us away in such a way that says, "Oh that I might know more, that I might see more. I wish I could look at this forever, but I am driving."

He Opens the Door Through the Scriptures

Sometimes He lets us in through the Scriptures. In the Greek there are three words for 'Word.' It is graphe, logos, and rhema. Graphe is just the ink on the page, just words, logos is conceptual, you get a concept and you can see it, rhema is something for today. To put it another way, graphe, the written word, ink on the page, logos, conceptual is a concept that brings understanding so it is like a photograph. Graphe would be the word mountain, and logos would be a photograph for mountain. Now I have an idea of the concept. I see the mountain and have the conceptual, the concept of what a mountain is. Rhema is a word that leads you to action. It is like the red engine light in your car when it comes on. When you see that, you must act now. It is like the flashing red light behind you, so when you see those, you need to act. So these are the three things.

What I want to do now is concentrate on going from graphe to logos because we read the Word and a lot of us are just in graphe. That is what we do, that is what Christians do when we read the Word. We have our devotional times, we read the Scripture, and a lot of times we do not even remember what we read by the end of the day. What did you read today? I do not remember. But God brings us from graphe to logos. Sometimes He leads us there; other times He blurts out something from the Scripture, and it hits us in the face. We realize something in that Scripture, and it may be just a leading as we begin to think about what we have read. As we begin to study what we have read, all of a sudden something comes into focus, and God is behind it. It is not our great intellect that is doing it. God is drawing out that desire to know Him because He has put it in us. The life of Christ is in us, and Christ desires His Father be revealed in us, just like the Spirit within us desires to show Him to us. So I want to use this opening to show you something natural, and then I want to show you something a little more spiritual.

You know what a coach is. When I was in high school I played basketball, and our coach was Coach Porter, just Coach Porter. When he was a young guy, he played basketball at UCLA. Now you are all Southerners so you really do not appreciate UCLA. Between 1964 and 1975 I think UCLA won the NCAA championship ten times; one time it was seven years in a row. Their coach was Johnny Woodman. He was known as the Wizard of Westwood because of all this. Well Coach Porter played for Johnny Wooden. In 1953 he played for UCLA, and they asked him, "What team was that?" he said, "The team that did not win." He was the captain of the 1953 team. So when he was my coach, he was 39 or 40 years old, and he was my coach for three years. It was my sophomore year when I started to play on the varsity. He was just Coach Porter, and you know by that time we were beginning to get rebellious which was the end of the sixties and seventies.

I remember he was really upset with the way I dressed when I went to school and he really let me have it.

But he did something for us that year of 1970. He took us to a UCLA practice and let us watch the Bruins play which was during the run of seven in a row. So the first thing that happened was that Coach Wooden, the icon, looks up and he sees not us but Coach Porter, and he called him by his first name. "Barry!" We could have dropped dead right there that here this icon of coaching knew our coach by his first name. It was like the Lord unveiling His Son to Peter (I mean this reverently.) It was that type of thing, and all of a sudden the estimation of who Barry Porter was went through the roof. We were an okay team, but it put a whole other spring in our step about how we approached our practices because of who we were practicing for and it was as if Coach Porter to us was Johnny Wooden, and we looked at him in that way. All of a sudden there was a whole new respect for this guy who did not really raise his voice. He was kind of a meek guy, but all of a sudden it changed the way we looked at him, and we had a great team that year. We won twenty-seven in a row and then we lost in the quarter finals. We never got to be a champion, but it was as if we were the UCLA Bruins that year.

Now the reason why I am saying this is that I want to put it in a different place. There is a Scripture in Malachi 1:14 where the Lord says to His people: "I am a great king." And a lot of time when we look at God, He has become so generic that word has almost lost its meaning. So His people were saying to Him, "How have You loved us?" They were saying, "What have You done for us lately?" Then the Lord says through the prophet, "I am a great King." It is as if they didn't know." He said, "I can tell that you do not know because of what you offer Me. You offer me the blind, the lame, you do all these things, yet you do not have any idea of who I am. So He had to come out and blurt it out. Let's come in to see who He is by saying, "I am a great King."

Now was this to get them to knuckle under or something like that? No! "You need to see who I really am. You have to see me as I am if you want to honor Me because you are not honoring Me now." I think one of the things the Lord wants from all His people is to honor Him. He wants us to honor Him for who He is, not for what He can do, not for His power, but for who He is. He is a great King.

For us Coach Porter was Coach Porter, but then we saw that relationship with Coach Wooden and it changed us. It changed the way we viewed him, it changed the way we viewed what we were doing, such as practice. We would say, "Practice, man! It is just practice." No, it gave us a whole new appreciation of practice because we were doing the same drills that Johnny Wooden was having them do. We were running the same offense. We were doing the same press. All of a sudden it made it so that it was right; this can only be right. We were talking in the Bible Study about submitting, being in subjection. We found ourselves placing ourselves under someone because we saw something that was great that we had not realized before.

So in Malachi he says it is not enough that I remain generic. I do not want you in a place where I am only generic. I want you in a place where you see who I am, and then as you see who I am, you adapt yourself to who I am. You change; you are transformed by what you see of Him afresh because the graphe becomes logos, and God uses His Word all the time to show who He is. That is what this whole Book is about. God is in this Book, and if you look for Him you will find Him.

Isn't that what it says in Hebrews 11:6: "I reward those who diligently search for me"? I want to look for God in the Word.

He Opens the door Through the Experiences of Life

The third way is that He shows us something of who He is in our experiences of life. That just means we might not know something about God, but then when we look back at where we have gone, we see God in our life. Then we begin to understand who God is because we see something of how He acted in our life. And sometimes we do not see it because we are too close; we are not far enough away. Sometimes as we get further and further away we look back and we see, "Oh, I did not see that before but now I have a chance to see it and now I have a new revelation, not just appreciation, of who God is because I have seen Him in my life.

In this I chose Genesis 49 where Jacob was blessing his children, his sons. One of the things he said, "From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." Where did he get this idea that God was a Shepherd? Where did he get that? You have to remember this was toward the end of Jacob's life, and I think as he is getting close to death, even when he went before Pharaoh he says, "Few and evil have been my days, and I have not even attained to those of my father. I am looking back over my life and what do I see? I see that God has shepherded me. He has been my Shepherd." Now Jacob was a shepherd, but he would not say that God is like him. However, when you look back at his life, you can see the twists and turns. When you look at Jacob's life in Genesis, you can see that all through his life the Lord is guiding and shepherding him. He is a conniver, so where does God lead him? He leads him to another conniver because He says, "Jacob, I want you to look at yourself, but you cannot see yourself in you, so I am bringing someone who is just like you, and it will be like you looking in a mirror." He goes back to Bethel and leaves there and goes to Shechem. He goes back to Bethel and sends his sons to Egypt, and then he goes to Egypt. All the way through you can see the Lord guiding and shepherding his life.

What is the psalm that everyone in the literate world knows? It is Psalm 23 which David wrote. If you go to a funeral you will hear Psalm 23 read. David's idea was not that he was a shepherd because he could look back. If you look at I Samuel from about chapter 15 all the way through II Samuel, you will see what David means: "I have seen You shepherding me. I have seen You guiding me through my life in all these ways." So he is looking back. I do not think David was a little guy when he wrote this. I think this was after his experiences. He wrote this after he was king, after he had been chased by Saul because a lot of these things that he talks about, you do not know until you have been through them and found out that God has been our Shepherd.

I want to look at one thing from Psalm 23. We look at the places He leads us to, green pastures, still waters, periods of rest, and those are wonderful things. But it says in verse 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me." So part of our journey is through the valley of the shadow of death. Really, our whole life is in the valley of the shadow of death. Death is ever before us. And the shadow is deceiving because I could stand behind a wall when the sun is behind me, and it will project my shadow. If you see my shadow you might think I am twenty feet tall and very wide because it is deceptive. So a shadow is a deceiving thing especially for us who are Christians. Hebrews talks about those who are always under the fear of death, but we have been relieved from that. Death has been destroyed

for us, so it is a shadow which means it is distorted. It distorts our view. So what do you have to do to make a shadow? You have to stand in front of light, so a person who gets in front of light is blocking the light from coming through. Thus you have a distortion.

I Will Fear No Evil

This is what David found out as he went through the valley of the shadow of death. He did not say that he stayed in the valley of the shadow of death. He said, "I go through. I see the distortions and I am faced with the distortions and they are threatening, but I will fear no evil. Now that does not mean that he will face no evil. It does not mean that he will not be touched by evil. Evil is not just something demonic. In the Scriptures evil is sometimes looked at as being a calamity or destruction or loss or that which leads to calamity or destruction or loss. That is evil.

He said, "Evil might touch me, but I fear no evil." I just want to say something about this idea that evil will not touch me. In 1 Samuel 17 when David was before Saul before he encountered Goliath, Saul was saying, "Oh, you are just a little guy. Have you been tested?" And David talked about how he protected his sheep. But in that talking about how he protected his sheep he said this: "When the lion had my sheep in his mouth or the bear had my sheep in his mouth ..." In other words, brothers and sisters, sometimes we are in the mouth of a lion or the mouth of a bear, and the teeth are in us. He is probably shaking us around a little bit. You know how an animal will shake something and break its neck. He shakes us around a little bit, but the whole idea is this, "I will fear no evil!"

I think of those brothers and sisters that are in Afghanistan and facing death by the evil forces. Does that mean they will not die? No, but the fear is cast down because once I am dead I am with the Lord, and I do not have to fear any judgment in that way. I am totally free from that. He leads me through the valley. He would have us to know that no human in this way is the shepherd. To fear no evil just means this—that whatever happens with all the ups and downs of life, with all the tribulations that may fall, Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation." You are going to have it, but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world.. So you are going to face these things, but the whole idea is that I will fear no evil. Why? Because I am walking with my Shepherd. A lot of time we do not know, we do not feel that we are walking with the Shepherd. However, when we look back on our life and we say, "You know, the Lord was with me. It is like the syrupy footprint thing that says," There is only one set of footprints." "Where were You then?" "Those are My footprints I was carrying you." The whole idea is that He is with me. Then because I can look back and see that He was with me going through the valley of the shadow of death, and even being in the lion's mouth, what do I do? I trust Him because I know He is with me. This is the whole idea. God is opening up a curtain to us that says, "You might think I am not there, but I am. You may not see it now, but as you get farther along, you are going to look back and see, because I am going to let you see, that I was with you and what I did for you in that situation.

A lot of us think God deserts at that time, and a lot of young people think, "Where was God when this was happening?" It is because we are not far enough away to yet see what the Lord has done. He has not completed you, He has not completed something in our lives. He is waiting for us to see it further down the line walking with Him to realize, "Oh my goodness, I did not

know, but now I do, and things go on. I know that He is with me whatever I am going through. I know that He is with me, and I will fear no evil. We entrust ourselves to Him, and we are able to endure whatever trial it is. And the testimony that goes out from that is we are at peace. That is the most wonderful thing that you can be in a trial and for people see that you are at peace. Inside, you may feel like you are going a thousand different ways, but why are you so calm? It is not an outward calm; it is an inner calm that exudes and comes forth, and people say, "You are at peace. Why are you at peace?" That becomes our testimony and the answer to why we are at peace becomes our witness to them as they see us go through the valley of the shadow of death. And if or when they go through it, they see that you are walking with God through all of life's valleys and peaks.

What is the shepherd quality that David saw? Was it that he was just leading? He was strong? No, I think he saw that the Shepherd cared for him. So often this is something that we lose sight of. We go through things, and we think that God does not care. David is saying "I am going through the thing, and I understand by going through it that God cares for me." It is interesting because one of the Lord's last instructions in the gospel is that which He gives to Peter: "Care for My sheep." God's heart is to care for His sheep, and that is where He is. God wants us to know that He cares for us.

The last thing He shows us is something about Himself through a relationship that we realize we have. Again I say we realize it because sometimes we do not recognize it. But then we realize it because something happened, and we discover that God is just who Jesus said He is—our Father. What is the difference between a shepherd and a father? The shepherd does care for his sheep, but a father ransoms his children. A father will pay a ransom. Why? It is not because he cares for them, but because he loves them. You will only pay a ransom for someone that you love. I would not pay a ransom for a stranger, but I would for my daughter. I would pay whatever it takes because I love my daughters. And it is the same for us.

In Isaiah 43:1 it says, "I have called you by name," and then it says, "Fear not Jacob, I have redeemed you." Later on it says in v. 3: "I have given Egypt as your ransom. I ransomed you." We talked about redemption this morning, and we think of that as for us. We have been redeemed before the Father; there was a ransom paid. He had to ransom us, and this is the Father's love. We find out that the Father loves us, and we realize everything He brings into our lives is out of a Father's love.

We were studying in Ephesians chapter 5:6, and in Ephesians 6:4 he talks about a father nurturing his children. It is out of the father's love that he disciplines and nurtures. Everything comes through the love of my heavenly Father, and everything that He does for me is redemptive. It brings me closer to Him.

I think one of the problems especially for younger believers is that we are looking for things to do that will enable us walk with God, and we do not know how, which is true for some of us older believers. How do we remedy this? How do we get around this? It is simple; you just go to God and tell Him: "Heavenly Father, I want to walk with You, and I do not know how. Show me. I put my life and my path into Your hands. I do not know. I just know that I should be reading the Word and doing this and the other things, but I do not want to just be doing them. I want to give

them back to You and You guide me into the place where the curtain is open to me, and I see who You are. And I am able to discern all these things about You and how You want me to walk with You.”

Sometimes one of the most misunderstood verses in Nehemiah is that which says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” For a long time I considered this as my joy in the Lord. It is not, it is the joy *of* the Lord. It is His joy. If we could realize His joy in having us redeemed so that we can walk with Him, if we could realize His joy of having us in His presence, and if we could realize that even now He is by our side, it could revolutionize our lives. It could revolutionize the way we look at Him, and it could lead to the place where it is not just Him that is opening the door to us, but it is we who are opening the door to Him to come into our lives in a fuller way and let Him show Himself to us in a way that transforms us. This is what God is after. He wants us to walk with Him. He just does not want us to tow a line; He wants us to know Him, and out of that knowing Him, our life will be directed by what we know of Him. That is what He is after.

Let’s pray:

Heavenly Father, You are mysterious, and I admit that we can study and do things like that and never really come to know who You are. But we thank You, Lord, that You offer Yourself to us in this way. You offer to us to come through the blood of Jesus to You where You have separated from us everything that offends You. Everything that is wrong You have separated from us. Lord, imprint that on our minds and hearts. We come to You saying, “We do want to walk with You. We want to have the testimony that we are walking with You. We want that testimony to be that You are with us. We want to be aware of You. We want to be conversing with You. We want to be able to look back and see that You have been with us, we want to be able to have You open up the Word to us in a way that it jumps out at us and says, “This is Who I am.” We want to come into Your house and be at peace. And we want to know Your great love as our Father. Lord, we are unable to get these things by ourselves so we appeal to You because You love us and we appeal to You because You said, “You want to walk with us.” Lord, we believe You are true, and so we come to You and ask: “Help us to walk.” In Jesus’ name. Amen.