

Before we move on, I would like to circle back around to last week's passage in **11:3-4**.

Hebrews 11:3-4

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

We went through a lot of the detail about this passage last week (and if you were not here you should go back and listen); but throughout the week the Spirit impressed on me something that I think most of us missed. I don't mean missed in the sense of Biblical interpretation, but in terms of the real implication of this passage not just to our lives but for our lives.

As I said last week, I thought it was a bit bizarre that the Lord started off our journey through the hall of faith with this statement about creation and then moved straight into to the story of Cain and Abel. But I realized this week how purposeful and ordered this was. It's actually a bit overwhelming.

Clearly the story of Cain and Abel communicates that we are not good and that we need the blood, the blood of Jesus, even to be in good standing with God. This story depicts our abject neediness and continual dependence upon God's grace

and mercy in our lives. It proves that only God is good. We get that, but why first this emphasis on creation?

I believe the Spirit wants to stretch our heads and our hearts tonight because for most of us our God is still way too small. For some of us He is pocket sized; and for others He is pretty big but still He does not even stretch as far as the universe much less our own solar system. For far too many of us, our God is really just our (little “g”) god and He is not our big “G” God.

This is so wrong. It is because our God is so small in our minds and our hearts that we worry, we fear, we fret, we freak out, we think that life is caving in around us, and we live in anxiety and stress. We are so upset that things are not going the way we want them to go financially, professionally, relationally. We think people are “doing” this or that to us and we think it is not fair. We don’t know why we can’t have what we want now and we live as if we really believe that God is either not paying attention or is just doing it all wrong.

Tell me, how much of this past week was actually spent in peace and rest? How much of it was spent fully convinced that your Dad, who by the way is the creator of all things and holds all things together by the Word of His power, has not only framed and ordered the universe but has framed and ordered your life?

Your God is too small!

As we studied, the word we have translated in **11:3** “created” literally means to frame or set in order. We are to understand and believe that if the universe, with all its complexity, unknown and unseen components, and the interrelationships between everything that exists, is set in perfect order and framed with exacting precision, then we can relax for our God, our Dad, is big, huge, gigantic, and His

power, majesty, and exacting control over our lives are beyond anything else that exists. We cannot even comprehend it; we would go crazy trying to understand this part about our God. He is simply too big.

But He has framed your life, He has ordered it, and every aspect of your life comes under His vast and glorious scrutiny. That is why Jeremiah was able to confidently say: “can anything happen without the Lord’s permission” or “who can command things to happen without the Lord’s permission” (***Lamentations 3:37***). Obviously, it’s a rhetorical question and the implied answer is no one; no one at all. Jesus is completely sovereign.

Some of you are shaking your heads thinking, “Yea; that’s our God!” But this understanding has to become to you more than just an intellectual ascension to truth or an emotional reaction to a pretty cool idea; it has to become your truth as it is the pathway to your living in peace and rest without fear or anxiety.

It is possible you know—to live in peace and rest by holding fast to the truth of who God is. I believe this was David’s truth. I believe, through his suffering and ordeal throughout his life he learned how big his God really is and as a result he made the decision to trust himself completely to his Dad.

Psalm 139:1-18

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me

and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

That is amazing; that describes your God! He has not only made all things and framed the entire universe, He has framed your life and not a single thing can happen to you without His permission. He knows you; He knows everything about you. And He knows exactly what is required in your life in order to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ (***Romans 8:28-30***).

And if our God is this big, this personal, this in touch with us (knowing even our thoughts before they are formed in our minds), then we need to wrap our heads and our hearts around this reality. We need to let this truth have a higher voice of authority in our lives than our emotions and all those crazy feelings that tell us that life is spinning out of control, that life is unfair, or that we are in some kind of trouble because things are just too crazy.

The truth is that regardless of how we feel about things and regardless of what we are actually going through, we are safe, we are ok, and we don't have to freak, for we belong to God; and nothing is going to happen to us that He has not appointed for us in the wisdom of His love and in the intimate knowledge of you and me.

Remember, this life here is transitory and it is not our real life; our real life is hidden with Christ in God (***Colossians 3:3***). We are here on this earth to fulfill God's purposes and to become His light so that others can wake up from the dead. Despite what you may think, this life is not about our personal achievements and glories (those are fine and wonderful if they happen), but our lives are to be about being God's ambassadors to a lost and dying world (***2 Corinthians 5:18-21***).

But to be an ambassador, we need to know Him so we can know how to represent Him; not just in words, but in deeds. Our lives must reflect the fact that we belong to the big "G" God and not some little "g" god. Therefore, we have to become convinced that all the things that we feel are out of control or unfair in our lives are all intentional, ordered, framed, and purposeful. God uses all of that to teach us how to trust Him and how to be in relationship with Him.

Thus, the truth is that we can rest in Him—it's all in control. We can take comfort in knowing how big He is. We no longer have to fight Him trying to wrestle away control of our lives. Our God is the creator of the entire universe—of all that seen and unseen; therefore, we can rest knowing that His hand is behind all things in our lives and that nothing—absolutely nothing—is random. Therefore, we are not at risk; we're not! It does not matter how things appear; we're not! So fear should have no place in our lives.

We may hate what He is doing with us; but as I said last week, liking what God does in our lives is not a requirement of faith. Consequently, despite our angst over the methods God uses to teach us to trust Him, we can still rest. We may feel the pain, the loneliness, and the frustration, but we can still rest. We can always be assured that through it all He is doing His "God stuff" in our lives and it is good for He has made to us an unbreakable promise to us: He is our God and we are His people (***Hebrews 8:10***).

I have talked with so many of you this week and I know that this truth is far, far, far from your minds. You are so wrapped up in your here and now and you're acting like your orphans who have to care for themselves and not sons and daughters of the Creator. You have to learn this—He is your God! You have to press this from your heads into your hearts. You have to let your minds be renewed with this truth. You have to scrape away the fear and the doubt and let the Word of God be authoritative over your lives.

Since you have been chosen and set apart by God to live by faith (since for some reason He had you come and hear this tonight), one way or another you are going to realize that this is the truth. You can either adopt this as your truth or

you can learn that this is your truth. I would prefer the former to the latter and I think you know what I mean.

I want to return for a moment to a passage we studied in John which I thought was beyond beautiful.

John 10:27-30

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. "I and the Father are one."

I love the imagery Jesus employed. If you belong to Jesus Christ, you are in the Father's hands; and His hands are so big that no one can snatch you away and do anything which the Lord does not permit. We belong only to God and no one gets the rights to us; even the devil is subject to this truth. He can do nothing to us unless God allows him to be used as a tool for God's purposes. It is time to rest in the fact that He is our great and glorious God.

Therefore, if you need to know His will, focus on knowing Him and He will lead you in His will. If you are fearful of mere men and their threats and accusations, focus on how big His hands are and the fact that no one can do anything that He does not specifically allow. If you are worried about your life, realize that He has already framed and ordered your life. If you are filled with fear, remember that

no one and nothing is bigger than our big “G” God. When you are lonely, remember that He knows you completely and His eyes and His thought are always about you; in fact, His thoughts toward you are so numerous that they cannot even be counted. This is your God. This is who loves you and chose you to be His own.

He is our God and we are His people! Book it Dano; take that to the bank; so let it be written so let it be done; it’s tried and true. However you want to affirm it; it is a fact and it is something upon which we can rely every moment of every day of our lives.

And that is why when it comes to faith the Spirit first spoke about creation. The Spirit wants us thoroughly convinced that with big “G” God as our God we can live by faith as men and women who are set apart for Him, set apart from this world; men and women who know that He is in control for He delights in the details of our lives (*Psalm 37:23*).

Let’s now pick back up in **11:5**.

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Now this is an interesting verse. Enoch shows up in Genesis 5 as the 7th noted descendent beginning with Adam and again in Luke 3 as part of the genealogy of

Jesus; so he is fairly important. But of all people, the Spirit brings up this man of whom we know so little about. His entire story is told in 4 short verses.

Genesis 5:21-24

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Other than being in the lineage of Jesus, that is it; that is all we know about him. No infamous deeds or mighty acts of greatness. No kingdoms conquered or victories in battle. In addition, we are not told that he was any more holy or righteous than anyone else. This man just walked with God in a time when it was probably quite difficult to walk with God. The picture that is painted for us in ***Genesis 6*** about this time period is horrible. “The wickedness of man was great on the earth and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (***Genesis 6:5***). Yet, in the midst of it all Enoch walked with God.

The name Enoch means to initiate or to instruct, as in to train up a person. It seems he lived up to his name sake as he must have been instructed in the things of God because he clearly initiated an intentional relationship with God that is very New Testament in nature. He walked with God.

I just love is that the imagery presented in **Genesis 5:21-24**. It is so intimate and I believe captures the beauty and the power of Enoch's relationship with God; and, therefore, provides for us an example to follow.

Notice that it does not say that he was a man who followed God—which in my mind pictures a man who knows the rules and requirements and follows them. It does not say that he walked before his God—which in my mind pictures a man who also may be fulfilling the expectations of righteousness, but since it is before God it gives us the feel that God is separate and distant and just judging from afar. No, this passage says that Enoch walked with God; and it says it twice which is God's customary way of making sure we know that He meant what He said.

I picture in my mind two people walking arm in arm such that if it was God's will that they go left, Enoch naturally just walked with him to the left or to wherever God wanted him to go. In essence, Enoch knew God as a person. He was so connected relationally to God, and trusted Him in the depth of his soul, that he walked in the will of God throughout his life. He was always with God and God always led this man.

This is how I want to live. So many of us strive and fret over discovering the will of God; but I believe that if we are walking arm and arm with God we will live out the will of God for our lives as He will guide our steps. We don't need to know where He is taking us (we don't—I know we want to know, but we don't need to know); we just need to trust Him with our lives fully confident that He will guide our steps. We need to put our arm in His arm.

You see our job is to know Him so we can trust Him; and it is His job to ensure that we are where He needs us to be at any moment in time. This way of living is perfectly captured for us by Solomon in Proverbs.

Proverbs 3:1-2, 5-7

My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying... Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

We are to know the ways of the Lord and we are to store His Words in our hearts and never forget them. We are to trust ourselves to Him completely—with our whole heart. Not just part of it, but the whole thing. This means that we do not get to reserve areas in our heart where we get to play god and try and be our own provider, protector, counselor, comforter, defender, warrior, healer, security, provider of justice, and so on.

We have to trust that He is our big “G” God and not a little “g” god and let go of all the arrogance in our hearts that tell us that we really know what is best for our lives. Because we really don’t and we really can’t; but He can.

We are finite; He is infinite. He sees from beginning to end; we can only see what is right in front of our eyes. We can only make assumptions based on the

facts as we know them; but He knows what is and more importantly, He knows what will be. He even knows the thoughts and intentions of everyone's heart (**Hebrews 4:12**). We are so easily deluded and deceived by our own hearts and our own desires; whereas, He always knows what is best for us.

Our understanding of what is happening in our lives (or what is best for our lives) is by definition of our humanity entirely limited; yet, for whatever ridiculous reason it seems so right to us; it feels so right to us to play god. But only God—our God—knows what is best. His wisdom is unparalleled.

Our job is to fear the Lord and turn from evil; which is just another cool way of summarizing what we have recently been studying in Hebrews. Since **only God is good** (and we are not), we must reject our own ideas of what is right and wrong and what we determine we need in and for our lives. Instead we must lean only on His understanding.

Our job is to trust in the Lord knowing that **without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)**. Without faith it is impossible to walk arm and arm with God. So you see our two pillars of truth are found everywhere in the Bible; it's always been the truth.

The good news is that since God is God, He always does His part. Jesus will guide our steps; Jesus will make our paths straight. He will show us where to go. We just have to put our arm in His arm and let Him lead us wherever He wills. We just have to walk with Him in the same way that Enoch walked with God and was commended for his faith as having pleased God. You get the connection: trusting God (or having faith) equals pleasing God. Walking with God is only possible by this kind of trust.

This is what the Spirit wants us to understand. Enoch knew that His God was the God of all creation and He let that truth be His truth; so He trusted Himself to God and the rest is, well as they say, history.

Now, we are told in **Genesis 5:21** that Enoch was the father of Methuselah which also makes him the great-grandfather of Noah (who is the next person we will study). Methuselah lived longer than any other man who has ever lived (969 years); yet, he still died before his own father. And that is because Enoch never died. He was literally taken up, raptured, or in the Greek, he was “translated.” It’s the same thing that happened to Elijah. God just plucked Enoch off the face of the earth and took him to paradise.

That little phrase “and he was not found” is kind of a funny commentary on humanity. Clearly there were those who heard what happened and maybe even saw it but did not really believe that he had been taken by God; so they went around searching for him. The same thing happened when Elijah was translated. They went about searching for him and of course did not find him either. It seems that the way of humanity is to always doubt God or to try and prove God wrong. But neither Enoch nor Elijah was ever found; so God always gets the last laugh.

There are those who believe that in Enoch we see a picture of the promised rapture of the church. The parallel goes as follows. Enoch was commended as having pleased God because of his faith and in this way he could be a type or a picture of the church. In addition, Enoch was taken out of the way right before the great and terrible destruction of the whole earth brought about by the flood. And according to **1 Thessalonians 1:15-18**, those believers who are alive during

the time of the end will be taken up in the same way as Enoch; they will be raptured into the presence of God and will be with Him forever.

According to **Revelation 14:14-16**, this rapture event occurs right before the earth is judged by God and the bowls of God's great wrath are poured out upon the earth and upon all those who dwell in the earth. In **Matthew 24:21** this time is called the "Great" Tribulation. So in this way, Enoch's deliverance before the flood provides for us a parallel of our future and perhaps the Spirit wanted us to make this connection and be encouraged and strengthened.

With that said, none of these types are actually confirmed in the New Testament so holding the story of Enoch up as a true type of the rapture of the church it is not something that we can proclaim with any certainty; it is just an interesting parallel and possible foreshadowing of the future.

Now what is really fascinating is that there is actually an ancient book of Enoch which a lot of first-third century Christians believed was inspired and should have been included in the Bible. Many of the church fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen and Clement of Alexandria, all make use of the Book of Enoch. Even **Jude** quotes from it in verses **14-15** where he prophesies of how Jesus will return with His holy ones (us) to execute judgment on the earth.

So we know for sure that at least some portion of the book of Enoch was inspired since Luke quoted it. This book is actually included in the Ethiopian Orthodox Bibles (there again is that strange Ethiopian connection we talked about when we discussed the potential location of the lost Ark of the Covenant).

Anyway, the Jews did not include this book in their Bible because it is considered by many to be more Christian than Jewish. But probably the main

reason this book did not pass either the Jewish or the Christian canonization process was for its controversial statements regarding the infamous **Genesis 6** passage.

The book of Enoch asserts that 200 fallen angels made a pact to do the unthinkable deed and somehow have sex with women which purportedly resulted in giants being birthed in ancient times. The members of the council of Laodicea (who were responsible for formalizing the canonization of our modern Bible), were extremely uncomfortable with this idea and put this book and many others under the ban; so eventually it fell out of circulation.

There are those who think the council made a big mistake in banning this book over the **Genesis 6** controversy for **Jude 6** makes a strange reference to a group of angels who did not keep their proper abode and as a result are kept in eternal bondage under darkness for the great Day of Judgment. It is very likely that Jude took this comment from a passage in Enoch 10:11-14 which says:

And the Lord said unto Michael: 'Go, bind Semjâzâ and his associates who have united themselves with women so as to have defiled themselves with them in all their uncleanness. And when their sons have slain one another, and they have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them fast for seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, till the day of their judgment and of their consummation, till the judgment that is forever and ever is consummated. In those days they shall be led off to the abyss of fire: <and> to the torment and the prison in which they shall be confined forever. And whosoever shall be

condemned and destroyed will from thenceforth be bound together with them to the end of all generations.

And then consider that in ***Revelation 9:1-11*** we get a story of these strange demonic beings who have been bound in the abyss, or the bottomless pit, and are released only for a very short time, during the tribulation, to wreak havoc on humanity. They are instructed not to touch the plants, the grass or the trees but to harm humanity by torturing all those who do not belong to the Lord for a period of 5-months. They are not allowed to kill anyone just torture them with the agony of scorpion stings. It seems they are pretty ticked for having been locked up for so long.

Whether or not these references are all connected we do not really know; but the whole thing is very fascinating. This little book of Enoch also talks so much about the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Elect One, and the Righteous One—all terms which were adopted by many of the New Testament writers. For example, in Luke's description of the transfiguration in **9:35** he quotes the Father as saying "this is my Son, my Chosen One" or in the original Greek, "this is my Elect One." The phrase "Elect One" is used 14 times in the book of Enoch.

Now just for fun, let's look at another excerpt from Chapter 46:1-2 of the book of Enoch. I am actually going to tie it back to Enoch (so it's not entirely just for fun), but still it is pretty cool.

There I beheld the Ancient of days whose head was like white wool, and with him another, whose countenance resembled that of a man. His countenance

was full of grace, like that of one of the holy angels. Then I inquired of one of the angels, who went with me, and who showed me every secret thing, concerning this Son of man; who he was; whence he was; and why he accompanied the Ancient of days. He answered and said to me, this is the Son of man, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed: for the Lord of spirits has chosen him; and his portion has surpassed all before the Lord of spirits in everlasting uprightness."

Can you see how this is entirely Messianic? This probably explains why the Jewish council kept it out of their Bible. But I like that it says that God revealed to him His secrets. This is exactly what God says He does for those who fear Him—essentially for those who believe that only God is good and that without faith it is impossible to please God. Check it out; it says that in ***Psalm 25:14***.

So maybe Enoch wrote the book of Enoch and because he walked with God he had all these great insights into things of God; or maybe someone just chose to write under the pen name of Enoch. But, either way, what we do know is that Enoch feared the Lord. He walked with God and was commended as pleasing to God; and since we know that without faith it is impossible to please God, we know this man sets an example of faith for us to follow.

Before we close, do you want to learn another little interesting tid-bit about Enoch's son Methuselah? His name means "man of the dart" or "he dies and it is sent." Now we have no indication that Methuselah was a man of faith like we do about his father Enoch (remember, faith is not a hereditary trait), but still his

name was quite prophetic. “He dies and it is sent” is a prophecy about the flood. And what is notable is that the year in which Methuselah died, the flood came and destroyed the earth. How is that for cool? These little tasty bits in the Bible always blow my mind.

Well that is enough for tonight and next week we will pick up with the story of Enoch’s great-grandson, Noah.

Let’s Pray.