4/19/2015 “A Walk With God”

Hebrews 11:1-10

Walking, as everyone knows, is the most ordinary and natural thing you can do. And it was the most ordinary thing God did after He placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. Here’s Genesis 3:8. *“And they heard the voice of the LORD God* ***walking in the garden in the cool of the day …****”*

And it sounds like the LORD wants us to walk with Him all the days of our lives. He said this to His servant Abraham Genesis 17:1 *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God;* ***walk before me****,…”*

And do you remember the man who walked with God and God raptured him up into Heaven? Genesis 5:24 *“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”* Don’t you thing we often make the Christian life a whole lot more complicated than it was meant to be? For example, the Bible says “walk in love.” And look at these words. III John 1:4 *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”*

What a simple picture of the Christian and his God. We walk with Him and He walks with us.

“I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses.
And the voice I hear Falling on my ear
The Son of God discloses.
Chorus
And He walks with me and He talks with me
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known.”

The man who wrote those words, C. Austin Miles said this about the day he wrote these words. “One day in April, 1912, I was seated in the dark room where I kept my photographic equipment, and also my organ. I drew my Bible toward me and it opened at my favorite book and chapter, John chapter twenty. I don’t know if this was by chance or by the work of the Holy Spirit. I will let you the reader decide. That story of Jesus and Mary in John 20 had lost none of its power and charm.

It was though I was in a trance, as I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary’s life, when she knelt before her Lord and cried, “Rabboni”.

I rested my hands on the open Bible, as I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows.

It was Mary. As she came unto the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in, and ran away.

John, in a flowing robe, appeared looking at the tomb. Then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John. As they departed, Mary reappeared leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept.

Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing there, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched, and looking into His face cried, “Rabboni”.

I awakened in sunlight, gripping my Bible with my muscles tense, and nerves vibrating, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the lyrics exactly as it is sung today. That same evening, I wrote the tune. It is sung today as it was written in 1912.” [Found on [www.gafneyledger.com](http://www.gafneyledger.com) “Stories Behind the Hymns” by Warren Shiver].

What’s on my heart today? “Walking With The LORD: It’s a Walk.” Please take your Bible and open it with me to the 12th chapter of the Gospel of Mark. I want to direct your heart into thinking about what your life would be like if you felt that each day of your life was a simple walk the LORD. A number of years ago, Pastor Henry Blackaby wrote a book he called Experiencing God. In it, he describes what he means to experience God. See if these things aren’t true in your experience.

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the Church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God’s invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.

What do you think your simplest desire as a Christian is? Consider this. The simplest desire in my life is to have a real, moment-by-moment relationship with the LORD, or, to put it in Pastor Blackaby’s words, “To experience God in my life.”

So, I’ve titled today’s sermon “A Walk With God.” Shall we pray?

Today I’d like to approach the matter of walking with the LORD by asking you a few questions. They aren’t complicated and they aren’t original with me. But they’ve been very helpful to my life and I’m sure they will be to yours as well.

Question # 1 – Do you love the LORD with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength?

If you could ask Jesus just one very pointed and very direct question, what would it be? One day in the life of Jesus a man came to speak with Him and to ask Him a very pointed question. Look with me at Mark 12:28 *“And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? (29) And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:*

*(30) And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (31) And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

*(32) And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: (33) And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*

*(34) And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.”*

The one thing that matters over every other thing in this world and in the world to come is love. And what else would you expect from the Person Who is LOVE? So, if Jesus says that this is the greatest commandment ever given, it certainly implies that every one of us is responsible to do it.

Turn with me to I John 4:10. *“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* The very first thing God has done for each one person here is to love you; and not because you are good or because you do right or because you love other people. Rather, it’s God’s basic nature. He is love. I John 4:7 *“Beloved, let us love one another: for* ***love is of God****; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”*

And here’s I John 4:16. *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.* ***God is love****; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”*

What is the very first thing that matters with God? Isn’t it whether or not you have freely choose to respond to His love and love Him back? You see, He simply loves you. He loves me. It’s just a given. There is absolutely no doubt as to that.

So, the question I am asking you to answer today is this. “Do you love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength?”

And, of course; the only one way for you to do that is by first believing His LOVE for you. First things come first, of course. And when someone hears the Good News that God loves them, they realize that the ones God loves are the sinners; not the righteous; not the self-righteous; not those who think of themselves as the good; not the religions. He loves sinners. That I can identify with.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Now, in order to choose to love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind, you first must believe and receive *His* love for you. I John 4:16 says this. *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”*

The beginning of LOVE in your heart occurs at the moment you sense in your spirit that this is GOD. He, in His essence and basic character is LOVE.

Then, when you realize that that love is already being expressed and that He loves you; you must respond to it. You will either receive it or dismiss it. And, yes, it takes faith to believe that His love for you was so great that He sent His only Son to His death to pay the penalty for your sins. So, go ahead, believe it.

Now, as a child of heaven; now that you have repented and received Christ as your personal LORD and Savior, would you ask yourself this simple, but very pointed question today. “Do you love Him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind?” When you do this, you will know, by experience whether or not you have a personal relationship with the LORD. This is what it is to have a walk with God.

First, do you love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind?

Second, does God have a right to interrupt your life in order to work His will in your life? When was the last time you considered God as the Divine Interrupter? Does He ore doesn’t He have a complete right to interrupt your life to work out His perfect upon you?

I recently had what I might describe as an exasperating event. Someone called me and talked on and on and on for nearly fifty minutes. I had very, very little input. I couldn’t even get a word in. I didn’t enjoy it. Actually, as the hour went on, I got more and more impatient. Now, here’s the question for me. Does God have a right to interrupt my life with a call from a lonely soul who has nothing to do but talk?

Dr. Blackaby puts it this way, “When I accepted the LORD, I gave him the right to help Himself to my life any time He wants.” Now, that may be true of Dr. Blackaby. But you might never have given that right over to the LORD.

You see, God is a completely sovereign God. He oversees everyone on this planet. And He is the Ultimate Determiner of what happens in my life. And one of the ways the LORD deals with us in love is by allowing things to come into our lives that will turn our hearts towards Him. He is the Divine Interrupter of my life.

Have you met any bitter people recently? A bitter person is someone who has had to deal with a very great difficulty and, rather than humbly receive it as the will of God; instead of committing themselves to the True Judge; they chose to resist God or (in some cases) they falsely accuse Him of being either mean or cruel. One lady said this to me this week “It’s just not fair.” Her husband had died.

The effect of that kind of attitude is one of unbelief and even blame. They blame God. Or they blame man (sometimes a doctor) for their plight and they live with a spirit that is unwilling to humbly accept that thing as having been allowed of God.

A number of years ago, some friends of ours had a very hard experience. Her a little two-year old boy walked out into the road and was hit by a car and killed. The mother, a Christian, made a choice that day to blame God and to refuse to trust Him as a loving Father Who had not made any mistakes with her life. Soon after, she sued the people that she felt bore the responsibility for her son’s death. She turned away from the fellowship of her Church family. And, she became a very bitter woman. In spite of all the Scriptures that clearly and plainly showed her the way out of her anger and resentment, this mother chose to turn against the LORD and against Christians. And why? Because she was not willing to let the Creator of the Universe and her heavenly Father have the divine prerogative to interrupt her life in that way.

Now, folks, that’s somewhat I’ll extreme, I’ll grant you. And God does not interrupt everyone’s life so dramatically. Yet, He *does* sometimes allow that. And, had this young mother humbly surrendered her heart to the LORD at the moment it happened; at that moment when God’s grace is the most evident; she would have found the strength she needed to move forward in her life. Instead, she’s been stuck on hold for a number of decades. Here’s what we read in I Peter 5:5 *“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”*

You see, it’s a matter of trusting God that He *does* know best, even and when we do not quite understand how.

Question number one: Do you love the LORD with all your heart.

Question number two: Does God have a right to interrupt your life to work out His will upon you?

The third question I would ask you from the study on Experiencing God is this: do you listen to God’s Voice as you read and study His Word? Hebrews 4:12 says this, (12) *“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*

When you have the Bible, when you read and study it, when you meditate on it, when you look at it as it is indeed, the Word of the LORD Himself, you find it is just what you need at every point in your life. Now, look a little closer at what Paul says here.

One, God’s words are life-giving. *“For the word of God is quick (alive),…”* The only book in existence that has the ability to give and sustain life is your Bible. It has quickening power. It contains the ability to change you from a sinner into a Saint. It is the Power Book. It has the power to condemn your soul to Hell and the power to rescue you from the penalty for your sin and guarantee you a home in Heaven. It even has the power to heal. When it comes to surgery, wouldn’t you prefer a surgeon with an instrument that is *sharper* than a sword; something called a scalpel? You see, a scalpel is designed for careful and intricate work on your tissues and blood vessels. The LORD’s voice is just such a scalpel. It’s sharper than any two-edged sword. It’s able to *pierce* deeply inside your conscience. It can divide apart your soul from your spirit. Your soul, as you know, is your personality; your relationship to yourself. Your spirit consists of your relationship with God. And God’s voice is able to distinguish one from the other in you. And, if a scalpel can dissect the joints of your body from the marrow in your bones, God’s voice does something even greater. It can pierce its healing power right into your joints and the marrow inside your bones. And, then, Paul adds, it can even discern between the thoughts and intentions of your heart.

Can you see why it’s so important that you see the Bible as it truly is – the Voice of God Himself? Because by His Words He speaks to your heart. He speaks to your body and your bones. He speaks to your soul, your spirit, your thoughts, *and* your intentions.

Every time you try to go about your daily life with decisions and work and all the facets of your life without His Voice to guide and sustain you; it’s like trying to operate your car on tomato juice. It just doesn’t work. You need His Voice to operate your live. You need it continually. So Pastor Blackaby’s question is this: do you listen for God’s Voice when you read His Word? When you do, you find that you experience God.

Q # 1 – Do you love the LORD with all your heart?

 Q # 2 - Does God have a right to interrupt your life?

 Q # 3 - Do you listen to God’s Voice as you read and study His Word?

Now, fourth, Are you willing to adjust your life to God’s ways and join Him in *His* work?

There isn’t one of us here that doesn’t know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we each have a strong will. But to walk with the LORD you need to ask yourself if you are willing to adjust to God’s ways and God’s times and God’s control over your affairs.

Haven’t you had a sense at one point this past week that what you were doing was right in the eyes of the LORD? And haven’t you had that sense that what you are doing is wrong in His eyes? You see, every time you adjust your life and your attitude to *His* ways and to *Hi*s will, you strengthen yourself and you are truly walking with Him because you know in your spirit you are willing to do *His* will.

Do you remember the great man Joseph, the one God made Prime Minister over the country of Egypt? Joseph had a very great sense of truthfulness even as a teenager. When his father directed him to check up on his older brothers, shepherds, he returned and gave a negative, but a *truthful* report about them. And, partly because of that truthful report, this led to their hating him and eventually selling him as a slave to some traveling merchants.

If Joseph hadn’t been ready and willing to adjust his life to the ways and will of God for him (even to the hatred of his own brothers), he could never have developed into the man he eventually did and become the one person God could use to feed the entire world.

When it comes to walking with the LORD, first, do you love Him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind?

Second, Does He have a right to interrupt your life in order to work His will out upon you?

Third, do you listen to His Voice as you read and study His Word?

Fourth, are you willing to adjust your life to God’s ways join Him in *His* work?

Now fifth, and finally, do you know what *God* wants for your life *or* are you telling Him what *you* want Him to do for you?

Please turn with me in your Bible to the Gospel of Mark 10:17 *“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (18) And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

 *(19) Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. (20) And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

 *(21) Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (22) And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”*

Here was a man with a mission. He was determined to discover the road to eternal life. And when Jesus spoke to him about what *God* wanted for his life, he refused to let the Him have His way with him. Mark tells us this about him. *(22) And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”*

The man was sad at Jesus’ response and went on his way grieved. Why? Because what *he* wanted had become a higher priority than what God wanted for him. You see, he wanted an intellectual answer to his question and Jesus gave him a practical one; one that would lead him to a walk with God. Sadly, he rejected it.

Folks, these five questions are truly five priorities; that is, if you want to walk with God. Please honestly answer these questions as if the eyes and heart of God were observing you.

First, do you love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Second, Does He have a right to interrupt your life in order to work His will out upon you?

Third, do you listen to His Voice as you read and study His Word?

Fourth, are you willing to adjust your life to Him ways and join Him in *His* work?

And fifth, do you know what *God* wants for your life or are you telling Him what *you* want Him to do for you?

You see, it’s a walk with God. It’s not a race. It’s not even a power walk. It’s a daily letting go of your ways and choosing His.

Now, if you are here today and you’ve never received the LORD as your personal Savior, make today the day of your Salvation.

It’s a huge choice you make when you receive Jesus Christ as your personal LORD and Savior. The Scripture says this, *“The wages for sin is death,…”* and *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is the ways of death.”* And the wages for your sin might be death, *“but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our LORD.”* *“It is appointed unto men once to die; and after this, the judgment.”* If you will repent of your sins and believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, then you are making today the Day of your Salvation. Then, you can and will walk with the LORD.

*Your* need is to recognize that the one thing that separates you from God is your sin. You, like all of us in the Church, have broken the Ten Commandments. God commands you to Repent of your sins and to Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ.

* To Repent = to change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* To Believe = to simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins.

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for every sin you ever committed. He became your Substitute on the day He died on Calvary two thousand years ago. For you, here’s the greatest news in all the world is this: The Father gave His Son to pay the penalty for all your sins. Jesus Christ died on the Cross as your Substitute and wants to be your Savior today. What could possibly hold you back from becoming a member of the Blessed Church of Jesus Christ? Won’t you cry out to Him for His free gift of salvation?

Think about the LORD as the One Who loves you and Who desires that you come to know Him. His first goal for you is to bring His forgiveness into your heart. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

The One Who made you has given you His best. And if He’s given you His best, think how much more He’ll give you if you’ll come into His Family. Will you, right now, repent of your sins and pray this prayer to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and LORD? “Father, I realize I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me. Thank you. Amen”

Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.” Rev. 3:20.

As we sing, think about the message of Jesus to own mother and to His brothers. *“But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.”* (Luke 11:28)

 Shall we pray?