

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 14th January 2024 10 am

Walking with the Lord

Joshua Daniel to lead this morning

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP

Scripture

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk -

Chorus MP

Notices

Prayer and share time.

Reading

Hymn MP

Sermon: Walking with your God

Hymn mp 760 When we walk with the Lord

Closing Prayer

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Prayer and Exordium

Cast your mind back to that first date, whether a boyfriend or girlfriend, or maybe the first meet up with your husband or wife to be. I bet somewhere along the line you went for a walk together. Maybe it was the first thing you did and that is how you got to know each other.

There's a sweetness and intimacy in walking and talking with someone you're in love with.

So it is with God. It is a relationship of love, and he made each of you to walk with Him – and He with you. Walking together, in perfect love.

One Bible verse sums up how we as God's created being should be, it's Mic 6:8 **He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

How is your walk with your God? x2, is it bitty? or maybe it's non-existent?

If we are to walk with the Lord, it's no great surprise that we see this with Abraham, that great example of our faith. James said he **was called God's friend**. Jas 2:23 See also 2Ch 20:7 - and friends walk together!

In Isaiah the Lord God says: "**But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend**, Isa 41:8 x2

The Lord commissioned Abram saying: "**I am God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless**" Gen 17:2 - and this he did.

Abraham said later to his servant "**The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success**". Ge 24:40 And he did in bringing Rebekah as a wife for his son Isaac.

Jacob as he blesses his son Joseph said: "**May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day**, Ge 48:15 **may he bless you**. The patriarch Jacob too walked before God.

But it didn't start with Abraham - Early on in Genesis 5 with the list of the descendants of Seth, Adam and Eve's son, we read that Enoch **walked with God** – and **for 300 years** no less. Jude speaks of Enoch as a prophet who warned that judgment was coming on **the ungodly**. Enoch did not die but the Lord **took him away, he was no more** he was someone who pleased God, someone who we are told a second time: **walked with God**. Gen 5:24

Turn the page and you hear that Noah was **blameless among the people of his time - and - he walked with God**, x2. Gen 6:9

Moses said no less than 8 times on the east bank of the Jordan that the Lord's redeemed are to **love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways and to hold fast to him**— De 11:22.

Joshua who succeeded him said the same: **But be very careful .. : to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul."** Jos 22:5

⇒ **How about you? Have you walked with the Lord? Are you walking with the Lord now?, today?**

Why was all this said? Because they were – as we are - inclined to walk off. To leave the right path. This is what happened later in the time of the Judges who **quickly turned from the way in which their fathers had walked, the way of obedience to the LORD's commands.** Jud 2:17

I know that is me, quick to walk off, walk away, leave the ancient path, and head off chin out in totally the wrong direction. Is that you to?

How often does that happen in relationships? If things aren't going well, then we're off, there's a parting of the ways.

That first happened in the Garden of Eden. **Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day,** But where is Adam? Where is Eve?

they had hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Ge 3:8

The LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Where is man? Where is the man and the woman, the jewel of God's creation, made with the capacity to know Him - Made to enjoy sweet fellowship with his Lord and God, to walk in the garden in perfect bliss. Where are they?

▪ *The human race looks back longingly to that walk in the garden.*

He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Ge 3:9-10. From that time onwards man has stopped walking with God.

How grievous to the Lord to have man depart. Oh how sin separates. No wonder the picture of walking either with the Lord - or walking away from the Lord - is such a widely used picture in God's word.

Yes sin separates, - it is always good when considering a course of action to ask the question "will this action I am contemplating bring me closer to my brother or sister? or will it separate us. How easy it would be for us here to separate over a 101 'issues'! – and behind it is usually pride.

Sin causes people to go in separate ways, the devil loves to divide and will give plenty of practical reasons why we should do so.

⇒ **Remember - Not to walk with Him - is not to walk with others.**

▪ *F.B. Meyer said, "Unbelief puts our circumstance between us and God, but faith puts God between us and our circumstances."*

Walking in fear of the Lord is a huge theme in the Bible. We don't have time to explore the full range of the 200 references in the Bible to how we walk.

We don't have time to consider how often the Lord's people failed to walk with Him but instead walked in the own way, or walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, or walked in the ways of Ahab, or walked in the ways of wickedness, or the walked in the ways of darkness.

Q - This has been OT - Is this something we see in the NT?

Some say the Lord is alongside the people in the OT hence the metaphor of 'walking with'. But they say the Lord is now no longer 'among' his people - but He dwells 'within' them/us. So maybe the best interpretation would be Jesus's words that we should 'remain in me' or 'abide in me'

But in the OT the Lord dwelt 'within' his chosen people too. So we can expect to find the that phrase used in the NT, and it is.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Joh 8:12

To look to Jesus, to follow Jesus, is to walk in the light.

The Bible says a fair bit about this, and that in fact many walk in darkness.

Such as the foolish man in Proverbs 7 who was not careful to avoid the home of the adulteress **"I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in."** Prov 7:7-9

How foolish, how unknowing of his sinful passions, he walked in darkness. Do not be deceived - to allow sinful passions to lead you is to walk in darkness.

⇒ **That is not to walk aright - but to sleepwalk into the devil's snare!**

John reminds us: **Whoever claims to live in him - must walk as Jesus did.** 1Jo 2:6

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 1Jo 1:6

- Should we not say as the Sunday school song goes, 'Be careful little eyes what you see, be careful little feet where you go'.

So how is your walk with the Lord?

Maybe you are not exactly sure what I mean? Q How do I do this in practice?

Am 3:3 **Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?**

There's an agreement. Ask "is my mind aligned with the Lord's?, is my heart is aligned with His, my will is aligned with His Will".

The time you have is for Him, so is the money, so is the energy, so too the gifts

Some people are quick to declare their love for someone, is that you? And Christians too for the Lord, but Jesus warns against cheapening words saying: "If you love me, you will obey what I command. Joh 14:15

The Apostles John later explains: **And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.** – and reminds us that you cannot separate the two for he says **his command is that you walk in love.** 2Jo 1:6

⇒ These are hard, key disciplines worked at - worked in - over many years

Alignments in will and direction are best made when young. While things are pliable is the time make them permanent.

- A pastor once noticed "On the pavement leading up to my church one can see the imprint of two baby feet pointing toward the door. Some mother had set her baby down there when the cement was still fresh. She started him in the right direction.
- Early impressions become permanent. Start the child right! that was 14 years ago, and still the impressions on the pavement are as if made yesterday." How much better to turn the feet of a little child toward the door that is Christ Himself, than away from that door. — *Sunday School Times.*

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jo 1:7

To walk in constant fellowship comes from obedience to our father's will.

One problem is to run ahead – It's easy to run ahead!

- We carry on without listening to the Lord, we know what to do! Up in the morning with my new day, my life, my plans ... we just expect Jesus at the end to rubberstamp it all.

Let us be like David who always stopped to pray: "Lord what is your will in this?"

Wait for the LORD and keep his way, Psalm 37:34

3a

Equally it is easy to 'lag behind'.

This is to again to be insensitive to the Lord's leading....

1. The Lord prompts, he lines up a conversation for you to have with someone and you miss it, you don't speak when you should.
2. The Lord puts into your mind the needs of another, you can visit and help, or there's a service in the church you can do, but you leave it, do nothing.
3. Or there's a chance to say a kind word to encourage a brother, and you put it off – and the chance is quickly gone.

This is to lag behind. - Abraham didn't lag behind, as our example of faith he listened to the Lord - when told to kill his son no less - he was up early and immediately off to do it. We too, Paul says, are to **walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham** Ro 4:12

- Here are Abraham's steps of faith — He left all for God, left all with God, found all in God and yielded all to God.

⇒ He walked the steps of faith that fall on the seeming void, - and found the Rock beneath. — J. G. Whittier

Jesus is the great example of constantly listening to His father's will and walking aright with Him.

1. At the wedding at Cana Jesus said to his mother, **my time has not yet come,** but then he immediately realises that it now had - and orders the servants to fill the water jars. John 2:4
2. Jesus when told by his brothers he should go up to the feast if he is the Messiah – he hasn't gone up – but then he does go up. John 7:6-8

That is the walk of faith – it is to live your life in glorious daylight. Didn't Jesus say: **A man who walks by day will not stumble.... It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."** Joh 11:9,10

If you are not walking with Jesus, you are - however it may appear to you - fumbling around in pitch darkness. With no light you are constantly bumping into people, bumping into a host of obstacles, you're away from the road.

Jesus says **The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going.** he says ... **Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you.** Joh 12:35

If you have left the path and have lost your way, then this is what you are to do - and this is the same for everyone - Look to the Lord in His way, for outside of that, you will not find Him. x2

Isaiah says of the Lord: **You come to the help of those ... who remember your ways.** Isa 64:5

3b

⇒ We may be sure God is never and nowhere to be found - but in His ways.

Our God has made known His ways in His Word – His Word is Jesus, the living word - and Jesus, now risen from the dead beckons you to Himself.

To surrender obedience to all His will - is the secret of access to all His blessings. x2 There you will find His sweet fellowship.

Note: You will not find the Lord – off from His way – Being lost is a terrible experience. Has that happened to you? It can have terrible consequences.

- Like a couple who ended up in the Australian Outback, away from their broken down car they walk around lost, not knowing where they were. They were found dead. A local paper reported "For Australians it is an all too familiar story. They didn't know where the water was and walked to their deaths. It was too late when people found their dead bodies". What is so sad is that they were less than 10 minutes away from water.

How close are you? Are you close enough? Do you think you are close enough? Do you think being here this morning brings you close enough?

To miss the salvation found in Christ – is to die. And eternal death awaits all who have not found the Lord Jesus Christ, the life giver.

Jesus is the **Way** for the lost, the **Life** for the dead and the **Truth** for the confused. He has made a **Way** through the cross, the **Truth** about sin and judgment is dealt with in the cross – and through the cross there's power to bring you to real **Life** with God.

If you are listening this morning then you are not far - for the word is here as Paul says: "**The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,**" Dt. 30:14 **that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming** Ro 10:8

What will you do with it? Will you turn from the dark way of sin and into the way of light and life through Christ Jesus? Do this and you will live. Do this and you will find yourself walking with your God.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve hid from the Lord and no longer walked with Him. Is there someone here still hiding from Him? That despite appearances, are you in truth, avoiding Him?

⇒ But God has now made a way - Christ is the way – He is the way back.

Christians can lose their way too. Jesus see all we do, it is He who walks among the seven golden lampstands, Re 2:1 = the churches.

He spoke to the church in Sardis. Many there were trying to appear as active in the faith, but the Lord calls them out. He can see that their deeds are non-

existent. **“Wake up! He says Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God.**

There are many churches today like the church at Sardis - the dirtiness of the world has killed off enthusiasm for the Lord, the work of the Lord, the walk with the Lord. Most is done by the few. Is KNBC like the church at Sardis?

The remedy is to repent, to turn and to seek Him. Did you know not to be actively seeking the Lord is a sin? King Rehoboam we are told **“did evil, and how? because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD.”** 2Ch 12:14

Ps 105 says: **“Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.”** Ps 105:3-4

Jesus goes on: **Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.** Re 3:2-4

Only when we walk with the Lord will we be able to live a life of Holiness. x2

And this walk is a lonely walk. You'll often feel alone on the way.

- A.W. Tozer says: 'The loneliness of the Christian results from his walk with God in an ungodly world, a walk that must often take him away from the fellowship of good Christians as well as from that of the unregenerate world. His God-given instincts cry out for companionship with others of his kind, others who can understand his longings, his aspirations, his absorption in the love of Christ; and because within his circle of friends there are so few who share his inner experiences he is forced to walk alone.
- The man [or woman] who dwells in the divine Presence in actual inner experience will not find many who understand him. He finds few who care to talk about that which is the supreme object of his interest, so he is often silent and preoccupied in the midst of noisy religious shoptalk. For this he earns the reputation of being dull and over-serious, so he is avoided and the gulf between him and society widens. He searches for friends upon whose garments he can detect the smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces, and finding few or none he, like Mary of old, keeps these things in his heart. It is this very loneliness that throws him back upon God. His inability to find human companionship drives him to seek in God what he can find nowhere else. The Loneliness of the Christian (From man - The dwelling place of God, CH. 39) By A.W. Tozer

Brothers and sisters value above all else that sweet moment by moment fellowship with the Lord. He is to be found - it is to be found – seek Him afresh now, today. Your feet will be restless until you are walking with him.

⇒ Lord help us to walk aright with you today.

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