

Pastor Letter: Walking With God – 2 (1/29/23)

This week's scripture passages brought to mind a book I have read a couple of times. I discovered I had used this resource in another pastor's letter on July 4, 2021 highlighting a Mark 6:7-13 reference. You can research this document as background for this current pastoral letter.

The book I am referring to is *Walking with God* by John Eldredge. The author documents a year in which he learned to walk and talk with God. He teaches his readers how they can actually learn to hear the still quiet voice of God, enhance their communication with the Lord, and live their lives in accordance with God's will.

The prophet Micah, writes about how the Lord is taking Israel to court in our Old Testament lesson this week. The Lord is taking legal action because Israel has broken their Covenant over and over. Since nature has been around so long, God is asking the mountains to act as jury in this class action suit, "Hear what the LORD says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the LORD has a controversy with his people, and he will contend with Israel," (Micah 6:1-2).

The Lord questions Israel as to just how God has failed to keep their covenantal agreement and why Israel feels they have been wronged by their God, (vv. 3-5). An agent for Israel questions the Lord as to just what sacrifices would be acceptable to the Lord, (vv. 6-7). The offerings increase in severity until a child is offered as a sacrifice.

The prophet responds with an answer from the Lord, "He (God) has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?, (v. 8).

When the original hearers of the Book of Micah heard these words they would have been just as shocked, confused, and afraid as modern readers. God had walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they sinned and were banished from the Garden. (Gen. 3). The Hebrews believed if they looked upon God's face they would die. How could they then literally "walk humbly with their God?" How can modern Christians put this verse into an everyday practice as we walk in faith with our God?

John Eldredge masterfully describes how much God loves us and wants an intimate relationship with his children. For this reason, we were created in order to respond to God's perfect and divine love. Unlike Adam and Eve who hid from God and refused to repent, we must acknowledge our sinfulness, ask for forgiveness, and accept God's amazing grace on his terms. It has been proven that human beings cannot change themselves. It is only when we place God upon his divine throne and allow the Lord to remold us, can we hope to accomplish what the Lord requires of us.

The OT Law was a covenant of works which required the Israelites to obey God's ordinances or offer the proper sacrifices to atone for their disobedient sinfulness. What our OT passage suggests is the Lord is not interested in acts of ritualistic contrition but seeks a changed heart and a new obedient lifestyle. The Lord is waiting for us to crawl down from our self-appointed throne and allow Almighty God to ascend to the divine throne of grace. It is only when we abandon our prideful human spirit and accept God's divine authority, can we hope to humbly walk with our Lord.

Once we acknowledge God's divine authority, only then can we live a changed lifestyle that extends God's justice to a fallen world. We have the tendency to wish or pray for God's justice in our timid world, but the prophet is leading us to become

involved in a dynamic plan of action. The Lord is not interested in religious rituals or empty ceremonies but is requiring us to fight for justice for those individuals who cannot fight for themselves. In the same manner we are required to actively love our God as well as our neighbor by extending the same loving kindness we have received. Allowing God to transform our prideful characteristics into compassionate servanthood, enables us to extend those same blessings onto others.

The apostle Paul continues this theme of God's authority in his epistle to the church in Corinth in our New Testament lesson. Paul has already instructed his readers to come together in Christian unity within the separate house churches. This unity is realized through the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Paul suggests that God has orchestrated the gospel message of salvation through the obedience of Jesus Christ to die upon the cross and be resurrected from the dead. Paul writes, "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God," (1 Cor. 1:18).

Paul continues to address the acceptance of this message from different factions such as the Jews and the Greeks, "For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," (22-24). Not everyone is ready to accept the authority of God and his plan of salvation through Jesus Christ that enables us to "humbly walk with your God."

Paul writes, "He (God) is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord,'" (vv. 30-31). God's plan of salvation through Christ enables us to fulfill Micah's prophecy, "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (v. 8).

I would like to encourage you to obtain John Eldredge's book, *Walking with God*, prayerfully read his interesting experiences, and transform your own relationship with the triune God and your savior, Jesus Christ. I can attest to a changed lifestyle and an improved walk of faith. You can find more information on this resource and videos that accompany this book at (www.walkingwithgod.net). You can also find many other books and resources that this author has written.

May you be open to the authority of Almighty God and be open to the transformation that is awaiting in a changed lifestyle.

Pastor Larry