

Northeast Church of Christ

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From the Pen of Paul: *Walking With God (5)*

AS WE CONTINUE TO OBSERVE HOW THE NEW Testament describes the Christian life as a “walk,” we learn that the Christian is to **walk as He walked**. John wrote in his first epistle, “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (I John 2:6). There may be a hint of a boastful attitude expressed here. John is saying that if a man represents himself as one who is abiding in Christ, he has a definite obligation to “walk even as He walked.” We walk as Jesus walked when we “walk in the light,” when we are in fellowship with the Father and Son, and when we keep His commandments. This is the only way one can demonstrate the correctness of the claim he is making of abiding in Jesus. To walk as Christ walked is to follow Him as the perfect model that He is. This *walk* that we are to imitate is obviously to be found in His activities while here on earth. Luke wrote to Theophilus “of all that Jesus began both to do and teach” (Acts 1:1). He left us “an example, that we should follow in His steps” (I Pet. 2:21). And Paul in urging others to “Be ye followers of me,” placed a limit on it by adding, “even as I also am of Christ” (I Cor. 11:1). There is no reference here to the miraculous powers exhibited by Jesus on earth. As Martin Luther correctly observed, “It is not Christ’s walking on the sea that we are to imitate, but his ordinary walk.” John also helps us identify the conditions for abiding in Him when he writes, “And he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him” (I John 3:24). So enter Christ through baptism (Gal. 3:27; Romans 6:3), settle down and make your abode with Him and by all means, “walk even as He walked!”

The Christian is also to walk in truth. John wrote in his second epistle, “Grace be with you,

mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received commandment from the Father” (II John 3-4). These children of “the elect lady” were “walking in truth.” The term, “walk” is often used in the Scriptures to describe a life or type of behavior. It is talking about actions that are habitual actions and actions that help us make progress toward our goal. Remember, according to Peter we are merely “strangers and pilgrims” on a spiritual journey toward our real home which is in heaven (I Pet. 11; 2:11). This commandment to walk in truth had come from the Father; this means that their lives as Christians were not molded by their own sentiments but were molded by the commandment from God Himself. We are not left to wonder what this “truth” is that we are to walk in. Pilate asked out of derision, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). But Jesus tells us plainly what the truth actually is in John 17:17 in His prayer to His Father: “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” The psalmist stated, “His truth endureth to all generations” (Psalm 100:5b). Speaking of God he also said that the Lord God “which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: *keepeth truth forever*” (Psalm 146:5-6). Since God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2), everything He says is truth and can be depended on. And it is because of these “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. 6:18). Is it any wonder that Solomon exhorts that we should “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Prov. 23:23)? Jesus said that we can “know the

“Jesus said to one of the malefactors, ‘Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ If today, then why the judgment? Why would the ones in paradise be re-called to be judged?”

PEOPLE IN GENERAL have trouble fitting in God's judgment. Many think the day of judgment is a day when God will find out if a man is guilty or innocent. This is not the case at all. God knows all things before they ever take place.

The day of judgment is not for God to decide where a man is going to spend eternity. It is a day when man will be able to plead his case to God (Matt. 7:21-23). It will be a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess Christ and His Lordship (Phil. 2:10-11). The day of judgment will be the day that the final verdict will be pronounced (Matt. 25:46). Do not take the day of God's judgment and make it like that of man's.

Man lives after death. When the spirit leaves the body at death, then the physical body is dead (James 2:16), but the spirit of man lives on. Jesus went to paradise at death (Luke 23:43). Paradise is in the Hadean world (Acts 2:27 ASV). Christ gave an un-get-over-able argument that man lives after death in Matt. 22:32. He said (1) God is the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; (2) but Jesus said, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; (3) therefore, we may rightly conclude that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive somewhere today, right now.

The spirits of the wicked are now in a place of punishment awaiting the judgment day (II Pet. 2:4). This also is seen from Luke 16:19-31. Lazarus died and his spirit was carried to a place of peace. The rich man died and was buried, but his soul went at death to a place of punishment. After death he was in punishment, he knew Abraham; he knew Lazarus; he knew he was in torment; he knew what water was; he knew what mercy was; he knew he had five brothers still alive on earth; and he knew they needed to hear the Word of God and be saved. There can be no doubt but that both wicked and righteous are conscious after death, and that the righteous are in peace and happiness and the wicked are suffering as they await the judgment day of God (II Pet. 2:4).

When the end of time comes, death and Hades will be cast into hell (Rev. 20:14 ASV). Hades is the place where departed spirits go to await the resurrection and judgment (the righteous to rest, the wicked to suffering). But when all things have been destroyed and everything is in the spirit realm, there will be no need for the Hadean world.

If you do not understand all the Bible says about life after death, then obey the gospel and live right and everything will be all right after death for you.

—*Malcolm L. Hill*

truth” (John 8:32). So study, learn, and walk in truth!

Another way of expressing this same obligation for the Christian is found in II John 6, where we learn that the Christian is also to *walk* after His commandments. John wrote, “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.” Love and duty go hand in hand throughout the writings of John. One leads to the other; love prompts us to keep His commandments. “For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments” (I John 5:3). Love, or any emotion without obedience is useless; and duty

without love is just cold formalism and is also useless (I Cor. 13:1-3). Where love exists the keeping of God's commandments “is not grievous” (I John 5:3b). To say that we love the Lord, to say that He is Lord and Master, and fail to keep His commandments is contradictory. Jesus asked in Luke 6:46, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Walk after His commandments; the reward will definitely be worth it! “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

—*Paul Wilmoth*