

## “Walk Before Me”

Genesis 17:1-5 says, “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 be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.” Although Abram was 99, he was not too old to enjoy fellowship with God. Age may shut us out from the joys and friendships of youth, but through grace it may ripen our friendship with God. The aforementioned verses can be divided into four parts, each teaching a previous lesson from one of the greatest servants in the Old Testament.

First, the revelation: “I am the Almighty God.” He is the all-sufficient God. This is a divine balm large enough to cover any human wound. A son had been promised Abram; he was now old, and no son had yet been given to him. But in this promise he had enough to brighten faith and kindle the flickering lamp of hope. Romans 4:19-21 says, “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara’s womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” This revelation of God, as our all-sufficiency, is revealed to us in Jesus Christ (John 14:8-11). There is enough in Him to meet all our needs. Discouraged Christians can hear Him say, “Look to Me; I am the Almighty God.”

Second, the commission: “Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Perhaps Abram had been walking too much before Sarah. Seeking to please her, guided by her counsel, he had already turned aside from the life of faith in God by seeking to fulfill God’s promise in Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 16:1-4). This was a call first of all that affected his life. God said, “Walk before Me.” In everything he was to act as one who lived in the immediate presence of God. This is not a life of dread and awkward restraint, but a joyful, divinely-satisfied life. It is, in fact, the life of faith. This is the high privilege of every Heaven-born son of God. Second, it affected his character. “Be thou perfect.” That is, be wholehearted, not having a double heart. Psalm 12:2 says, “They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.” The “children of men” (v. 1) seek to please both God and man. All perfection comes from Him who alone is perfect. The highest human perfection lies in a wholehearted life before God. James illustrated this with prayer by writing, “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (1:6-8).

Third, the submission: “And Abram fell on his face.” The best answer to God’s high calling is a humble and broken spirit. Abram did not arrogantly say, like some of his descendants, “All that thou sayest will we do” (Ruth 3:5). He bowed his face to the

ground, and “God talked with him.” A deep, conscious sense of ignorance and weakness adjusts our attitude to be instructed of God. God always talks to the heart of the self-abased (Matthew 19:30; 20:16). When John fell at His feet he felt the touch of His gracious hand, and heard His comforting, “Fear not” (Revelation 1:17). We all need that humbleness of heart and that calmness of spirit that is attuned to the faintest whisper when diligently searching the wonderful word of God.

Fourth, the transformation: “Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham.” Abram, the exalted, is changed into Abraham, the fruitful. He has bowed with his whole heart to the will of God, and his character is transformed. Is this not always so? Complete surrender brings a complete change of nature. Jacob became a prince, and prevailed when he yielded entirely to the heavenly messenger. It is when we are crucified with Christ that Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20; 5:24). It is by yielding to the Holy Spirit that we are transformed into His holy image (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

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