**VOLUME 10; CHAPTER 04 - THE PREACHING OF G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

**HOW CAN A MAN WALK WITH GOD by G. CAMPBELL MORGAN**

*Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?*

*Amos 3:3*

THE SERMON TONIGHT IS A SEQUEL TO THAT OF LAST SUNDAY evening, and the text is a starting point. In that sermon we considered what God requires of a man as that requirement is revealed in the message of Micah: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" The Divine requirement, then, is to walk humbly with God, loving mercy and doing justice.

The text this evening, taken from the prophecy of Amos, is the first of a series of seven questions which the prophet asked in order to illustrate the relation between cause and effect, each of them showing that an effect demands and demonstrates a cause. These are the questions:

Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?

Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey?

Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him?

Shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all?

Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid?

Shall evil befall a city, and the Lord hath not done it?

The force of the illustrations may thus be summarized. Communion proves agreement. If you see two people walking together you know they have agreed. The lion roaring demonstrates the prey. Do not forget that Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a man used to the desert and the hills, to vineyards and to sheep, living the agricultural life of the time; and almost all his illustrations have that desert background. He was accustomed to the sound of the roaring of the lion, and so he says, I know when I hear the lion roaring that the prey is in sight; the cry of the young lion proves that the prey is caught, possessed; the fall of a bird into the snare proves the setting of the gin; the spring of the snare proves that the bird is taken, the trumpet in the city proves the alarm of the city; calamity in the city proves that God is acting.

The purpose of the prophet was to vindicate the authority of his own message. He went on to declare that his prophecy proved that the Lord had spoken to him. Let me say immediately that with that application of my text I have nothing more to do. As I have said, the text is a starting point.

We begin by admitting the principle: an effect proves a cause. Two people walking together proves that they met, that they agreed ere they started. Consequently, the text is intended to show that you cannot have an effect without a cause; you cannot have two people walking together unless, in the sense of the text, they have agreed. If we change our text from the interrogatory form we may read it thus: Two who walk together must have agreed. Therefore, we may once again change its form and get at that phase of the truth that we desire now to emphasize, as we read it thus: Two must agree if they are to walk together. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" The Lord hath shewed thee what is good; to humbly walk with thy God. "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" God and a man must agree if they to walk together.

That brings us to our special theme. Granted that God requires of a man that He should walk with Him, we inquire, How can a man walk with God? How is the necessary agreement out of which such walk proceeds to be insured?

Eliphaz, that wonderful old Easterner, gave Job the highest and best advice when he said: "Acquaint now thyself With Him, and be at peace"; but Job's answer was very pertinent, coming out of human experience: "O that I knew where I might find Him." Our business for this evening, then, is to investigate what is necessary if a man is to begin to walk with God, and to continue to walk with God.

In attempting to answer these inquiries, How can a man walk with God? How can agreement be insured? I will, first of all, consider this conception in itself a little more fully, that of walking with God; and, second, I propose to deal with the condition which is revealed in the question, agreement between God and a man if they are to walk together.

With the general conception we need not tarry for very many minutes. The thought is persistent in the Biblical literature. It emerges in that radiantly beautiful and comprehensively final biography, one of the greatest biographies in all the Old Testament literature, found in that apparently most uninteresting chapter in Genesis, the fifth chapter, the chapter of the long names, and the perpetual, monotonous tolling of the knell of death. Right in the heart of the chapter is the briefest and most inclusive biography, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." That is all we know about Enoch, and there is more in it than we shall discover, even if we give all the remainder of our life to careful thought on the subject. There the phrase emerges in Biblical literature. It often recurs in the apostolic writings, especially in the writings of Paul, who was constantly thinking of life as a walk with God. It finds its fullest and richest interpretation and expression in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, that being a theme with which I am not going to deal at any length; but we will come back to it, God willing, on a subsequent occasion. While we need not tarry long with the conception, there are some of the fundamental suggestions of the phrase of which we do well to remind ourselves. Let us first take the words *walk together*, and consider them. The word walk is perfectly simple, yet it is full of suggestiveness. Walking implicates life, volition, effort, direction. Apart from life, there is no walking, and there can be no walking which is not preceded by volition. We have never walked anywhere without willing so to do. Although we may not wish to go, we will ere we do so. Walking is the simplest exercise; there seems to be nothing in it - until we have ceased to do it for three months and then try again, when we find there is much in it! Walking implies effort. It always means direction. We walk toward somewhere. Even if you walk in a circle, you are ever going round toward the starting point. These are simple things, but they are fundamental to our meditation.

The word "together" is a more arresting word, quite simple, quite common, yet here almost startling. Literally, it means, as a unit. I might read my text like this: How shall two walk as a unit, except they have agreed? That is the root meaning, and the use of the word shows that it suggests a walk of perfect unity in all the fullest, deepest senses of the word. The question which the prophet asked was not, How can people walk together in an occasional or casual way, except they have agreed? Even in such cases there must be a measure of agreement; but if there is to be continual walking, perpetual walking, consistent walking together, there must be agreement which is profound and deep. This word "together" will help us to understand the word agreement presently. It is to walk as a unit, two persons to walk as though they were one.

What, then, is the conception? We all recognize that this is a figure of speech. What is the fact for which the figure stands? What is it that we intend to suggest, that Micah intended when he spoke about walking with God, that the Old Testament historian intended to suggest when he declared that Enoch walked with God, that the New Testament writers intended to suggest when they declared that we were to walk with God? What is the fact suggested by the figure? The conception is of God and a man moving together as a unit, in perfect time and perfect rhythm. Two lives, the life of God and the life of a man, united in volition, willing the same thing; united in effort, putting out strength toward the same end; united in direction, moving toward the ultimate goal. A man walking together with God is a man willing one will with God, working one work with God, journeying toward one goal with God.

Therefore - for the moment leaving out of thought the Divine save as it influences the human - it is the picture of a man going toward the Divine destination, but it is infinitely more than that. It is a picture of a man moving toward the Divine destination along the Divine pathway, not choosing his own way to reach the ultimate goal, but marching along the pathway on which God Himself is marching. It is a picture of a man moving toward the Divine destination along the way of the Divine procedure in the power of the Divine fellowship. Therefore it is a picture of God and a man having identity of interest, having combination of resources, having fellowship of effort; God and a man having identity of interests, the master passion of the man that which is the master motive of all the Divine activity; God and a man having combination of resources. Let me use the word that is haunting me, and which I want to use - and I halt only because it seems almost irreverent, and yet I trust it will not be so - God and a man *pooling* resources. We have become used to that phrase in recent days as we heard of three great nations pooling resources in order to reach one great issue. God and a man pooling resources! God bringing in all His infinite resources and placing them at the disposal of a man with whom He walks! That is the amazing thing. Never forget that if that is an amazing thing, there lies within it the claim that man shall place all his resources at the disposal of the God Who walks with him. Again, God and a man having fellowship in effort. This is a value full of wonder. A man making his effort with God; God making His effort, toward the ultimate goal, with a man.

One other thing is suggested, the last I am going to mention. The figure suggests finally mutual humility. The necessary humility of God, necessary, or He never could accommodate His goings to a man's slow footsteps; the necessary humility of man, necessary, or a man could never hope to keep pace with God. "Walk humbly with thy God" was the word of the text last Sunday evening. From the New Testament, in its most stupendous passage in some ways, comes this great word, "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross." It may be that if I were discussing mutual friendship with a man I might not emphasize this so strongly, yet even in human friendship there must be mutual humility. If I am to walk far along life's pathway with you, my friend, my comrade, there must be humility in my heart and in yours. The very simplicity of the figure enables us to see that this must be so in the case of God and a man, God stooping, humbling Himself, accommodating His steps to the faltering, trembling walking of a man; a man humbling his spirit in order that he may walk with God along the pathway.

So we pass to the second matter, which, after all, is the supreme one in our present consideration. In order that there may be this walking together with God there must be agreement. Let us try to understand this condition.

The root idea of the Hebrew word is to fix upon by agreement or appointment. The marginal reading in the Revised Version runs: "Shall two walk together, except they have made an appointment?" I believe it was Dr. George Adam Smith who translated it, "Shall two walk together, except they have kept tryst?" That helps us, but it is altogether too narrow, it does not include enough. The idea of agreement is infinitely more than that of meeting at a certain point; it is that, but it is infinitely more. I take this word and trace it through the Old Testament, and see in what different ways it is used. It includes far more than our word "agreement." It is translated, to meet; that is what the margin suggests, to meet at a stated, fixed, time or place. We never use our word "agreement" in that sense. If I were going to make appointment with you for tomorrow, using this word in this sense, I might say, We will agree at the British Museum twelve o'clock. That would be in harmony with one Hebrew use of the word. It includes the place appointed, and the time fixed, and the fact of meeting there. The same word is used to indicate a summons in a legal sense to a fixed tribunal, and the thought is that of a judge who meets at an appointed place a person summoned to appear before him. It is translated also to direct, the idea being that of authoritative marking out of place and way by consultation, which consultation, when it has come to decision, is to be the binding law of the journey. Once again, I find the Hebrew word is translated to betroth, and within it lies the idea of that mutual surrender of life to life and love to love which creates the marriage relationship. All these things lie within the Hebrew word. As Amos used it, it was a far fuller word than our word "agreement" suggests.

What, then, is the general and inclusive conception of this word "agreement"? Ideally it refers to that perfect affinity and adjustment which makes one unit of two. That perfect affinity, not necessarily perfect likeness, it may be complementariness in nature, which brings two persons together into unity. That is the ideal conception. Initially the word suggests a method by which that is brought about; a place where those two persons come together; a time when they come together; and all that responsive habit of soul to soul and life to life that makes the coming together a perfect articulation, agreement, unity. So that when Amos asked his question it was no surface question. He did not mean merely, How could two persons walk together, except they met? He meant that, but something far fuller.

When we apply this idea to man and God, we see how deep this question is, and what profound things it suggests. Apparently it suggests a difficulty, for an insuperable barrier exists between man and God that never can be broken down or overcome by man himself. How can God and a man meet together, agree together, walk together except they have agreed? If I have said it seems to suggest a difficulty, let me now say something else concerning man. I am not now using the word man as it applies to myself, or to any man in this house; I am using the word in its ideal sense. I am using the word as I find it in the Bible: "Let Us make man." No man here is fulfilling the ideal that lay within that great word of Deity. I am now speaking of man ideally, as the idea emerges in the account of the creation, with all it there connoted. Then I make this declaration: man ideally, according to the first Divine intention and purpose, was in perfect agreement with God. The ideal of humanity that came out of the Divine mind, the thought that was in the mind of God when He said, "Let Us make man," was an ideal, a thought, of a being in perfect agreement with Himself, having closest affinity with Himself, being perfectly adjusted to Himself, being in absolute articulation with Himself. That is the meaning of the phrase that follows the words I have quoted, "In Our own image, after Our likeness." It may be that someone is challenging me and saying, You are basing a great deal on that word in Genesis. What right have you to say that was the meaning of that word in Genesis? I reply, Once in the process of the centuries and millenniums a Man walked across this human stage. Once one little part of this world was illuminated by the presence of a Man Who fulfilled the Divine ideal; it was the Man Jesus of Nazareth, Whose incarnation was not the incarnation of God only, but also of God's ideal in humanity. In Him alone we have seen what God meant when He said, "Let Us make man." It is because of that I say that man ideally is in perfect agreement with God, has affinity with God, is adjusted to God. The capacity for that affinity, that adjustment, lies within every human being. That is not the last thing to be said at that point; but it must be said and insisted upon. The trouble with our England has been that we have been thinking of ourselves, not as those who think too much of ourselves, but as those who think too little of ourselves; and the very selfishness which has been the root inspiration of so much of our living, leading us along pathways of childish triviality into things that have cursed and blighted and blasted us, that very selfishness is born of a low, ignoble, conception of life. O may it not be, may we not pray this prayer among our other urgent prayers today, that out of this darkness and this hour of calamity men may be brought back to a larger understanding of the tremendous dignity of their own manhood and womanhood! The Man of Nazareth is the revelation of that for which God makes man. So that if a man shall tell me that if he becomes a Christian he will have to run counter to all his natural propensities, I say, No, the propensities which lead him away from God are unnatural, things of evil, distortions, abominations, because they spoil him. A young man from Oxford once said to me, I am going to be a Christian because I believe it is right; but everything will go against the grain. I replied, No, sir; everything will go with the grain; you have been going against the grain all your life. The word of Augustine is sublime truth: God has fashioned us for Himself, and therefore the human heart cannot find rest until it finds rest in Him. When the prophet demands, and when we insist on the demand in a higher relationship than that in which the prophet made use of it, that there must be agreement, we are insisting that a man must come to himself, and in coming to himself he will discover that there are within him by Divine creation capacities for affinity, for adjustment, for articulation with God, for thinking with Him, living with Him, moving with Him; for being one with Him in a fellowship that is perfect.

To leave the matter there, however, would not be to be true to experience. Man actually is alienated from God, dislocated, in every way divorced. I said that a man walking with God is one who has identity of interest with Him, combination of resources, fellowship in effort. Take the life of any man today, apart from the regenerating work of the Spirit of God, and you find there is divorce of interest, divorce of resources, divorce of effort. Man naturally - and now I use the word in its doctrinal sense, in its Pauline sense - is not in affinity with God, is not walking with God. It may be that he sings about God, that he never takes the name of God in vain, that he worships externally in the house of God; but he is not seeking first the Kingdom of God; he is not placing the resources of mind, body, and estate at the disposal of God for the accomplishment of God's will; he is not moving in effort along the same line with God.

Therefore, what do we need, what does a man need? He needs some method by which he can be brought into the agreement for which he was made, but which he has missed. He needs some place where he and God can meet and meet anew. He needs a time of coming together. That is what every individual needs, and I pray you remember the message is an individual one. If I have used the word "man" generally, I have not intended to use it generically, but in the sense of the text of last Sunday evening, "He hath showed thee, O man" - always the individual man. My own soul is in review as I speak. Verily I am made for God. Yea, verily, I have not known God by my nature or by my choice, or by my will. Yea, verily, therefore, if I am to walk with Him must find some trysting place where He and I can meet, and meet, not merely in a superficial, casual way, but in some profound action by which I can be again adjusted to Him in will, in thought, in purpose, in pattern, in life, in all the actualities of my being. "Shall two walk together, except they agreed?"

I am going to say again as I close what I said last Sunday evening: This is not the Gospel. There is no Gospel in my text. It is investigation, it is inquisition. The whole time of our meditation on the text has been time - if there has been any true meaning and value in it - in which we have been finding out the need for the Gospel. The Gospel is not here. But we have a Gospel, and the Gospel begins with emphasizing the truth revealed in the investigation, for the Gospel begins with Jesus, of Whom I have spoken, Whose name we know so well, of Whom we thought in a passing moment as the one ideal and perfect Man. That is where the Gospel begins. But Jesus merely as Example brings me no Gospel. If you tell me that is the perfect Man among all the ages, and that if I will conform my life to His, then I shall walk with God, I shall say in answer, I cannot do it, I cannot conform my life to His, I cannot copy Him I love, I cannot reproduce in this life of mine all the fair and wondrous strength and beauty that shone and flashed and flamed in His life. I emphasize that further by declaring that if this Jesus of Whom men speak so often today, this perfect Example, has done no other than reveal that example, He has done no other for me than mock my impotence as He reveals my degradation. I cannot stand in His presence without knowing how entirely, utterly unworthy I am. Can you? Are you among the number of those strange men who write and talk of Him, and whom I sometimes meet, who admire Jesus and patronize Him? Whenever I meet Him I am compelled, as by comparison I look in on my own soul, to say I am unclean, I am a leper. I may have many things in which to boast if I compare myself with other men. I think I could compare myself with some of you quite advantageously; but, so help me God, I have given up the business, because I have seen the light that shone in Judaea and Galilee, and through all the centuries, and I am ashamed. There is a Man walking with God. There is a Man moving in the Divine direction, one with the Divine will, co-operative with the Divine purpose, in the Divine strength. God and a Man walking together! There is a Man in perfect agreement with God. All that He was in the deepest truth concerning Him I find that I am not. There is no Gospel in my text. There is no Gospel in Jesus as Example.

But we have a Gospel, for remember that the One on we looked and grew ashamed, did not consummate His human life as He might have done if all He had sought to give the world a perfect example. If Jesus had wished only to give the world an example He would never have descended from the Mount of Transfiguration. That was where perfect human life was consummated. There in the light and glory He was prepared for entrance into the life that lies beyond, without death. The Sinless One had in Himself no reason to die. By transfiguration, metamorphosis, complete change, He might have passed out into the strange, wonderful, mystic life that lies beyond. But He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration. He trod the way of the valley where the lunatic boy was in possession of a demon, and He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, and gave Himself with all the strength of His purity to the buffeting and bruising of sin and malice and evil, and in a mystery unfathomable, and, therefore, blessed be God, sufficiently deep for all my sin to find in it cancellation and oblivion, He went by the way of the Cross and the way of Resurrection to the eternal and supernal heights. That is the Gospel!

Consequently, that Cross, my brother man, is the "trysting place where heaven's love and heaven's justice meet." That Cross is the place where I may come into agreement with Him, be reconciled to Him, discover anew the meaning of my own life, and receiving from Him absolution for all my sin, may receive also the energy and the life which will enable even me, tremblingly but yet surely, to walk with God.

Where shall I meet with Him? You may meet with Him right where you are. When may I meet with Him, in some special evangelistic meeting? This is an evangelistic meeting. In the after-meeting? There is no after-meeting; this is the after-meeting. Then by coming out? No, by sitting still. By signing a card and sending it in? No, by doing nothing that other men may see. There where you sit you may at this moment have direct dealing with God in Christ by saying to Him what I venture to declare you have sung hundreds, perhaps thousands, of times; but now by saying it and meaning it as you never have before, the central actuality of all your life:

Nothing in my hand I bring,

Simply to Thy Cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress,

Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

Foul, I to the fountain fly,

Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

If some in this congregation at this moment will make that the language of their inner life, then they will reach the trysting place, and presently, down these aisles and through yonder doors and along the darkened streets of London they may walk with God. And you also, young man, my brother, whom I honor as I see you wearing the King's Regimentals, presently in France, in the trenches, you may walk with God. But there is no walking with God unless there be agreement. There may be agreement through Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us.