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WORD FOR THE WEEK 08 August 2004

Christian Fellowship Centre,

40 Da Costa Square, Bangalore 560084, India

<http://www.poonen.org/zac>

<http://www.cfcindia.com>

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**ENOCH PLEASED GOD**

Zac Poonen

In just three words the Holy Spirit records the testimony of Enoch's life: "He pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). There is no mention of wealth amassed or of earthly honours obtained. There is no record of sermons preached or of good deeds done, nor even of the souls led to God through his witness. Neither are we told how popular or famous he became. No, instead of all this his life is summed up in that one tense sentence, "He pleased God." It is indeed the only thing that will have value in eternity. The Bible tells us that God created all things "for his pleasure" (Rev. 4:11). It follows therefore that the measure in which we please God is the true measure of the effectiveness of our lives. In no other way is the cost of our redemption justified. Our very existence on earth is meaningless if God is not thereby glorified.

How subtle is the self-life, how deceitful the human heart! How readily does it lead us captive to this world's treasures! "Oh," it exclaims, "such wealth and pleasure are too precious by far to be given up for the doubtful satisfaction of following the Lord utterly. Surely this Christian race can be run on easier terms! Public opinion is against extremes. Let us take it easy. Let us live for God in moderation!" May God deliver us from such faithless thinking. He would have us lay aside every weight and go for the prize. He desires that we should turn from the world's base standards and be satisfied with nothing less than His highest. What matters the honour of men to the man whom God would honour? Of what value is this world's wealth when heaven's wealth is at stake?

Do you seek earthly security for your life? Do you hope somehow to insure it against the risks of faith? Then, believe me, you will most certainly lose it. You will have nothing to show at the end. Change your mind! Be prepared to throw away your life for Jesus' sake. Suffer hardship for His gospel. You will never regret the

decision. You will find there is no waste, no true loss at all. On the contrary you will discover that eternal fruits spring from the seed you have planted. The heavenly rewards will far outweigh the offering you lay at His feet. For "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17). In the day when Christ returns in glory and the present order of things is no more, they who have followed Him wholly will forget all the costliness in the unspeakable joys before them.

I have often thought of a picture of the day that is coming when we shall be caught up to the portals of heaven's glory to stand before our Lord. Then, in the presence of the highest dignitaries of heaven, redeemed men and women who on earth have been faithful to their trust will be rewarded by the King of kings Himself. I can imagine, in that day, Enoch walking forward when his name is called, and the citation being read: "He pleased God." Yes, he may have been mocked and ridiculed on earth for three hundred years and more but now amidst deafening angelic applause he is decorated with heaven's highest award for gallantry in battle.

I see, too, the apostle Paul step forward when his turn comes to receive a similar recognition. On earth he was a considered a fanatic and a fool; here there is laid up for him a crown of life. All the years of suffering are forgotten in that moment of time. The joy that takes its place springs from the knowledge that God has been pleased, and this is a joy that abides for all eternity.

And then your turn will come, and mine. What will the citation read, dear brother, dear sister? When we stand there stripped of all the religious veneer, all the outward sham and pretense that covered our lives on earth, what will be left? Will you know only sorrow at your emptiness in that day? Will you bitterly regret the worthless choices made, the opportunities lightly thrown away? Or will you take your place there alongside Enoch and Paul? These are urgent questions, for they relate not to something I have imagined up, but to stark reality. Something like the scene I have crudely depicted above will take place in actuality when Christ Jesus returns, and many, we are warned, will be ashamed before Him at His coming.

Let us, then, give earnest heed to His Word. Let us take serious account of priorities of life, for eternal values hang upon them. And let us determine from this day to give the supreme place to our Lord Jesus in all things. There is a life to be lived on earth, and a race to be run, that will call for everything we have to give. But the race has a goal, and the life has a prize, alongside which all that earth has to offer will seem but the vilest refuse. For when we enter the presence of the King, no

music will compare with His welcoming words: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." (Revelation 22:12)

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write to: Christian Fellowship Centre  
at the following e-mail address:  
cfcwfw@touchtelindia.net  
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