

### ***In the Ark 10-7-01***

Genesis 6:3,5-14,22 7:1 Hebrews 11:6,7 Psalm 37:1-7

Last week we focused on Hebrews 11 verse 6. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Whoever comes to Him must believe that He is and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. We looked at the life of Abraham and how he illustrated a life that pleased God. Abraham sought God in his life experiences and grew in faith and faithfulness to obey God.

In Hebrews 11 there is one little verse between the verse six and the account of Abraham. Verse 7 is about Noah. *7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

In Genesis 6:9 we read that Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. That was in stark contrast to the world around him. God declared in the same chapter, in verses 5-7, that these people only thought of evil continually. They had become extremely violent. Disobedience to God results in a living hell. When man is given over to his appetites of selfishness, there is horror and pain on every side. In the midst of all that, is a man with a heart to hear God and obey in detail what he hears. What a contrast! What a light in a dark world!

God has a plan of redemption for mankind, but the earth was not going to make it at the rate wickedness was increasing in the earth. God had to intervene in judgement and stop the horror of what was going on with a cataclysmic disaster. The word in Genesis 6:6 'grieved' or in the KJV 'repented' catches some people off guard and has resulted in some misunderstandings. God knows the end from the beginning. He knew man would go this route and was not surprised by it. He did not second-guess his handiwork. The Hebrew word *nacham* could be translated "moved with compassion". When sin goes unchecked it causes such grief and pain that a sudden judgement that ended life was the mercy of God.

In that society, amongst all that evil, was a lone man that chose God, a man that was willing to hear His voice. God is always looking for hearts that are willing to hear. Today, in the time when the Holy Spirit has been poured out, He is more willing to supply in abundance than man is to receive. To accomplish His purposes He gave grace to this man who was willing to hear and respond. Noah found grace in the eyes of God. When God seeks a human instrument He looks for a clean vessel. Noah was clean because, like Abraham who would follow him, he trusted in God to provide a way for him to be made right with God. He knew it was not in himself. After the flood we see one of the first things Noah does is sacrifice and worship. He was looking forward to the provision of God.

Besides being a clean instrument, he was a man whose ears were open to the Lord. He heard an instruction that was so unusual that he had to get specific details on how to go about it. No one had ever seen a boat, and here, God tells him to build a gigantic one. Noah exemplified one who believes that God is and that He rewards

those who earnestly seek Him. He followed those instructions to the letter. That was faith that believed God knew exactly what was going to happen and that His instructions were for his good. 6:22 says that Noah did everything just as God commanded him. When God wants to lift his people above the judgement that He pours out on a rebellious world, He gives His people the way to pass through unharmed.

That was such an act of faith! Noah was a farmer. He let his business go to obey God, but his obedience would end up saving him and his family. People mocked and ridiculed him but he was not living for the kudos of men. He was living in a relationship with God. To walk with God means God is a part of his daily life, his work, his rest, his pleasure, his struggles. Noah is at peace with God and it shows in his life. People mock what convicts them, and what they do not understand. They could not understand his relationship with God. I hope that is true of those who know you. They know something is different, that there is a peace that defies logic. They know you act with integrity because your heart is the Lord's. That is convicting to them. If they have a hungry heart, they are drawn to God.

Noah followed God's blueprints by faith. With the help of his sons he built an enormous ship, 1.5 times as long as a football field and almost as wide, three stories tall with a skylight on top. The verse from Hebrews 11:7 says his actions condemned the world. How is that?

The ark is an incredible picture of salvation. It has one great door. All wishing to escape the wrath of God are called by God to enter that door. Jesus declared Himself to be the door through which we could enter. The prophets warned that the last days will be like those in Noah's day. In the next great destruction fire will purge the earth. (2Pt 3:10) If you want to be safe from the wrath to come you must enter the door. If you want to be safe during the White Throne Judgement, you must enter in.

Anyone could have heard from God and stepped into that boat. I'm sure Noah warned them, for he is called a preacher of righteousness. They were condemned because they would not yield the Holy Spirit that came in the words Noah preached to them. They were condemned because this man was obeying and they would not. In Noah we see another example of a life of faithfulness because he is expressing his faithful God. He was faithful to believe, obey by building, obey by living in his calling to preach. Noah was not politically correct!

Today, too, there are people willing to act in faith as Noah did. First, they are right with God by grace through faith. Then, they are willing to listen to God's direction for their life, to walk with God. Finally they use their gifts at God's directions, not fearing man's mocking insults, but seeking to please God first and foremost.

In the USA people are wondering how they can cope with their fear of another inevitable attack. I think that is a good fear, for it is a realization that they are not ready to meet their Maker. We have the answer, and I hope we are living witnesses of the answer, like Noah was. We are standing in the ark, and calling out for others

to come in before it is too late. I heard a great testimony from the outreach of Dave Wilkerson's ministry at Time Square. Someone walked up to where they are giving out food and tracts and asked, "I want to be saved. I need Jesus right now, tell me how to be born again!" They wanted in the ark before the door closed.

In the ark, life is not easy, for there is a lot of work to do. There is the daily care of all that God has placed in your realm of influence. You have waste removal. That is a very big job. I wonder if Noah and crew had waders. Walking in Christ does not mean there are no temptations or things in life that confront you that have no lasting value. There is still plenty of that. It needs to be tossed before it piles up and engulfs you. That is a continual job. I used to pray that my thoughts would never be confronted with garbage. Now I pray more along the lines of being able to recognize the garbage thoughts so I can toss them more quickly and with more conviction.

It is wonderful place to be. It is a place where trust overcomes fear. When fear confronts me I realize that if God meant me to face wrath I would not have received the grace of God by faith in Christ. From there He draws me into a life of faithfulness, into walking in Christ Jesus, living in the ark. I am riding in His hands, living daily in His will, by His marvelous grace.

Psalms 37:1-3 (NIV)<sup>1</sup> *Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;*<sup>2</sup> *for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.*<sup>3</sup> *Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.* I don't focus outside the ark, on the wicked, their prosperity, wondering why they aren't judged sooner, or if God's judgement is fair and just. I trust the Lord, both in dealing with them and with me. I trust that where He is taking me is so much better than anything the world, out there, could offer. It is better than what I could plan for myself. Notice the passage says to "*Trust in the Lord and do good...*" If I do evil I take myself out of the protective covering and invite the curse or consequence that particular sin brings with it. If I want to remain safely dwelling in Christ I must continue to choose the good which is His life in me. Consider what David brought upon himself when he decided to take Bathsheba.

When I come in contact with the world, its pain, the curse of sin in lives, the incredible violence, I am so thankful to be in the ark. I can only look up, for the only window is facing the sky. Here in the ark I enjoy so much I forget, for a moment, all the suffering sin is causing in the world outside. Psalms 37:4-6 (NIV)<sup>4</sup> *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.*<sup>5</sup> *Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:* <sup>6</sup> *He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.* Here in the ark looking up to heaven, my heart is delighted not in the creation, but the Creator. He places good desires in my heart, my newly created heart. I commit my way to remaining here in Him, to remain trusting in Him, and He guides the ship.

Where is He taking us? The dove returns with an olive branch, the symbol of peace. Violence will be gone from off the face of the earth. He is taking us to a place where

He rules and reigns in righteousness. His kingdom in my heart, will be a manifest kingdom upon the earth, and we will rule and reign with Him.

In Genesis 8:1 it is recorded that God remembered Noah and the animals that were with him. For you animal lovers that want your pets to be in heaven this as close a scripture as I can find for you. But the point here is that word remembered can be translated 'thought upon'. God dried up the water, preparing a new world because He thinks upon us and prepares a place for us. Jn 14:1 Ps 139 He has us in His thoughts continually.

The news is bombarding us with potential terrorist threats. There is a great deal of fear today in the world, but if you are in the ark, in Him, walking in obedience, then there is no need to fear. Look at that next verse in Psalms 37:7 (NIV)<sup>7</sup> *Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.* If there is some catastrophe, what do we in Christ have to fear? If you are doing good, obedient to His will, abiding in Him, death is graduation. If you are injured, the Lord will use it as a refining fire in your life to bring you even closer to Him.

If, however, you are compromising, and sin is a conscious part of your daily life, the curse of sin may bring difficulty in your life to encourage you to forsake that sin, and get in the ark. Where you are abiding spiritually has a direct correlation with your level of fear of the unknown. If you are right with God, in the safety of walking in Christ Jesus, He gives His angels charge over you to keep you in all your ways. If harm is allowed to come it is for the advancement of the Kingdom in you and the world you come in contact with.

Are you in the perfect will of God? Are you in the ark – walking in Christ Jesus? Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. He is the ship and in Him you are going to make it in spiritual safety through the storms that come upon the earth. The work He has begun, He will complete. The Holy Spirit is always at work revealing sin in our life so that we can shovel it out. (repent and forsake it) He is always at work revealing Jesus, Who so wonderfully takes up the void in our heart left by the forsaken sin. In Christ, we are constantly decreasing as He increases. Our trust in His Sovereignty and in His grace and love is continually growing. What an awesome God! How gracious of Him to live in and through us when we yield our lives to Him.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV) <sup>6</sup> *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,<sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

Sail on pilgrim. I hear the watchman cry, "Land ho"! Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.