

The author of Hebrews reminded us in the last chapter that the righteous one will live by his faith (Hebrews 10:38). Then he told us what faith is in a brief definition: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). He explained that it is by faith that we understand God spoke creation into existence. Then he began showing us how it was exhibited in the lives of the Old Testament saints, starting with Abel and Enoch. We concluded last week's message with verse six, that tells us that faith is a necessity if we are to please God. We must believe that He is and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

While I was away on vacation I read Pilgrim's Progress. In regards to earnestly seeking Him, Bunyan has the pilgrims knocking and not getting immediate responses at the gate. It reminded me of my childhood nightly prayers for salvation. It seems God allows a pilgrim's knocks to go unanswered for a time to help them become even more earnest (Matthew 7:7). Then the reward of the answer is received with greater appreciation. Some of our journeys to the gate can be quite long and winding, but if we are earnestly seeking, we know He will reward us with Himself (Proverbs 8:17).

The next example of a righteous person living by their faith is Noah. *<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.* Hebrews 11:7 The account of Noah is given in Genesis 6. Without getting into the details of the debate over whether the account is plausible, allow me to give just a few of the issues. The vast majority of world cultures have a flood story. Even our local native Americans have a flood story that they say brought their ancestors here. Why would so many people groups around the globe have a similar story if there were no basis for it? Geologists, like all scientists, look at the same empirical evidence and come up with differing conclusions that fit their world view. Our own local brother, Guy Forsythe, has shown that the Coconino Sandstone layer was laid down wet over a short period of time as indicated by numerous places that evidence folding. Though there is evidence, I just accept the flood account by faith because I believe in the inspiration of Scripture. Jesus referred to Noah and the flood as actual events (Matthew 24:37-39). I'll take His word for it. The Bible is historically accurate in so many other details that an honest skeptic should consider the possibility that this account is historical as well.

Genesis introduces us to Noah with a brief description. *<sup>9</sup> These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.* Genesis 6:9 The previous person in Hebrews 11 was Enoch. The text says that he walked with God as well. We learn from hints in the Old Testament and a clear explanation in the New that righteousness is only credited to us by our faith in God providing a remedy for our sinful condition. Both Old and New Testaments declare that no one is righteous, so how could Noah be counted as righteous? How were he and Enoch allowed the privilege of doing what Adam and Eve had done in the Garden before they fell? The simple answer is faith in the nature and character of God.

**Commented [PW1]: Hebrews 10:38 (ESV)**  
<sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."

**Commented [PW2]: Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)**  
<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

**Commented [PW3]: Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)**  
<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

**Commented [PW4]: Matthew 7:7 (ESV)**  
<sup>7</sup> "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Imperative present active verb tense – iow Keep asking, keep seeking, keep on knocking...

**Commented [PW5]: Proverbs 8:17 (ESV)**  
<sup>17</sup> I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

**Commented [PW6]: Matthew 24:37-39 (ESV)**  
<sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.  
<sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark,  
<sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Today we have systematized how people come to saving faith. We have made a step by step process that you really can't find in one passage explained the same way. I'm not saying it is wrong or not based on the Bible. I'm just saying it tends to limit our thinking in how people come to God. The Apostle Paul explains in Romans 4 that the saints of old (he uses the examples of Abraham and David, a Gentile and a Jew) were saved by faith. They believed God's word to their hearts. In Abraham's case it was the belief in God's promise to multiply his seed into a great nation (Genesis 15:5-6). In David's case it was believing that God accepted a broken and contrite heart and desired to forgive (Romans 4:6-8). The cross is what makes believing faith acceptable to God, as sin must be punished (Ephesians 2:14-18).

Noah was walking with God by faith. Are you? We don't have an explanation of what that looks like, but since it comes just a few chapters after Adam and Eve walked with God, we can glean from their experience that it means communion, fellowship, a heart to heart openness to go God's direction at God's pace (Amos 3:3). When they sinned, that openness ended (Genesis 3:8). Enoch and Noah had an openness with God by faith. We see that openness restored in David's life after his confession of sin (Psalm 32:1-2). Many of us found this work of God began in our life after we acknowledged our desperate need for God. But then over time, we begin to hide like Adam and Eve did (Genesis 3:8). We hide by not coming to God in prayer or by neglecting His Word and by not asking Him to speak while waiting in His presence. We hide because we know what He would say. Hopefully we are bothered by this lack of communion, and we repent and return to walking with God.

The account of Noah begins with him walking openly with God. That is how he heard God's direction for his life. He was warned by God of a coming calamity and told how to prepare for it. In reverent fear, he obeyed.

As you know, I love God's incidences. Reading the books I read while I was away was the perfect preparation for this sermon and the next. I didn't plan it. I just grabbed what I had been desiring to read for some time, Pilgrim's Progress, and Heaven by Peter Kreeft.<sup>1</sup> God put a desire in my heart for his purposes, and I was unaware, until I read the books, what those purposes were. The books thrilled my spirit and fed me, but it was for you too. These Godincidences come about by the abundant grace of God who is more generous and loving than we are often willing to believe.

Noah was warned of God. In Pilgrim's Progress, a man named Christian was warned by the grace of God about the doom hanging over his town. His town is any town in the world, for the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Every town will one day lie in ruins. All towns will be judged. The conviction of the Spirit showed him his sins and how deserving he was to be judged with the rest of his town. He repented and then tried to warn his town that they must flee from the wrath to come. That was Noah's message as well. Christian was mocked and ridiculed for a message similar to that of Noah's (Matthew 3:7). Even Christian's wife and children would not listen. He left on journey of faith to go to Zion, the heavenly city, which is how the two books I read intersected.

**Commented [PW7]: Genesis 15:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

<sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

**Commented [PW8]: Romans 4:6-8 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

<sup>8</sup> blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

**Commented [PW9]: Ephesians 2:14-18 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

<sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

<sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

<sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

<sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

**Commented [PW10]: Amos 3:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> "Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?"

**Commented [PW11]: Genesis 3:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**Commented [PW12]: Psalm 32:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ... [1]

**Commented [PW13]: Genesis 3:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**Commented [PW14]: Disclaimer:** I am not recommending this book to everyone. Kreeft is Catholic, and I don't agree with some of his points. However, he is a deep thinker and brings out many Biblical truths in a profound way.

**Commented [PW15]: Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Commented [PW16]: Matthew 3:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Both books addressed the distractions that would turn us from the straight and narrow path that leads to our heavenly home.

Like Noah and Christian, we have all been warned. We will all give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:12). The author of Hebrews is telling us that we must exercise our faith and stay on that narrow highway to the end, like Noah did.

Noah heard God and obeyed. That obedience cost him a hundred and twenty years of labor to build that ship that must have housed a pair of every species that was to populate the cleansed earth. Surrounded by a world that could only think continually of evil (Genesis 6:5), Noah was surely mocked, threatened, and ridiculed. But his daily endurance of obedience, which was evidence of his faith, preached a message to the watching world. We are cities set on hill, observed by all.

Bunyan describes the effects of the stories of Christian's journey that make it back to his hometown. People heard of what he endured and how he finally made it to his journey's goal. Some emphasized the hardships and saw them as a reason not to make the same journey. Others, like his wife and children, were convicted. They repented and began the journey themselves.

In the real life story of Noah, only Noah's immediate family accepted the message. Peter tells us that Noah was a herald of righteousness to the world (2 Peter 2:5-6). The lives of the people that are walking with God proclaim a message to the world. They have not set their hearts on earthly things (Colossians 3:2). Their eyes are on Him who called them to something far greater, something enduring (Hebrews 11:10). And those who receive that message become a message themselves as they set out for that unseen world by faith (Hebrews 11:13).

By faith Noah built the ark according to all the details that God supplied. The ark is a fascinating picture of Christ. That is probably why Noah was included in the painting in our foyer. The ark is the vessel in which they entered to save them from the wrath that was coming on the world, just as we must enter Jesus to be saved from the wrath to come. It had only one door. Jesus is the one door we must enter to be saved (John 14:6; 10:9). God sealed the door, just as God seals us into Christ. Just as the ark carried Noah's family safely through the judgment and brought them to a new world cleansed of its past evil, so Jesus does the same for the family of God.

*By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.* Hebrews 11:7b Noah's obedience to God shouted out to the world that you can walk with God. To refuse to walk with God is a choice. If you seek Him, it is guaranteed that you will find Him. But if you refuse the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the conscience He put within you, then you will face the judgment you deserve. But there is an ark. God's grace has made a way. There is a door you can enter by which you can escape that wrath to come. Noah's life said to the world that you don't have to live like everyone else.

**Commented [PW17]: Romans 14:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

**Commented [PW18]: Genesis 6:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Commented [PW19]: 2 Peter 2:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;

<sup>6</sup> if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly;

**Commented [PW20]: Colossians 3:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

**Commented [PW21]: Hebrews 11:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

**Commented [PW22]: Hebrews 11:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

**Commented [PW23]: John 14:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

**Commented [PW24]: John 10:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

Surely Noah's sons were a blessing to him during that hundred and twenty years of construction. Again, Bunyan has a parallel in his story. Many of the people in his hometown, City of Destruction, did talk about the doom their city faced, but most did not believe it would really come and mocked Christian's journey. Mr. Pliable heard Christian's warning and had left with him but then turned back when the way went through a bog called the Slough of Despond. Another, whose name was Faithful, left the city later because he did believe the message and desired to escape the wrath to come. He proved to be a good companion to Christian as they helped each other on the journey (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Sometimes we have to walk our journey alone with only God as our companion. What better companion could we have (Proverbs 18:24)! At other times we are blessed to have the fellowship of another believer who realizes how transient is the world around us and how incomparably greater it is to labor for the world to come (1 John 2:17).

Obedience is evidence of faith. Faith obeys. If you believe God when He tells you a catastrophic event is coming, you will act. Noah wanted to save his family. If you believe there is a day of judgment, your faith will direct you to do all you can to see your family is saved from it. Theologians argue about faith alone or the necessity of obedience. The answer is simple. Faith results in obedience. The disobedient don't have faith. Obedience is a sign that faith is real, but it is obedience to the Spirit not the letter. That is because the faithful walk with God. The law never said, "Build an ark." It gives us moral realities, but it does not tell our heart how to love God or hear His voice. The failings of people of genuine faith only increases their desire to obey and please the One they love.

The life of faith that Noah lived was a message to the Hebrew church to finish the journey they had started. Don't quit when you are halfway down the road to Zion and then return to the City of Destruction. Go to the ark and ride out the coming storm. God will see you through it (Psalm 37:39-40; Matthew 10:38). Don't leave a half constructed ark in a field as a monument to your lack of dedication to God (Luke 14:28-30). That only encourages the skeptics to believe we are fools.

The entire book of Hebrews keeps telling us to endure, to finish well, to keep trusting God and go forward with Jesus. It's such a needed message, because like the characters in Pilgrim's Progress that turned back, we are all tempted to give in to the call of the world and live for its pleasures. Those passing pleasures can become substitutes for the Divine Lover. Like Noah, we are surrounded by a world of skeptics. They tell us this world and our short lives are all there is. Enjoy it while it lasts because you will die and that's it. In other words, worship created things. But the Gospel tells us things are temporal but you are eternal. It promises joy, not only in the future, but right now. You too can walk with God. You can see His glory in all the earth (Isaiah 6:3). You can rejoice in the midst of trials because you know we serve a loving, all-powerful God who wants more than anything for you to know how much He loves you (James 1:2). Do you think that is hoping for too much? Look at the cross. It is His declaration that His love is greater than you can fathom. It's His invitation to live a life of faith. We get

**Commented [PW25]: Ecclesiastes 4:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.

**Commented [PW26]: Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

**Commented [PW27]: 1 John 2:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

**Commented [PW28]: Matthew 10:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

**Commented [PW29]: Psalm 37:39-40 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

<sup>40</sup> The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

**Commented [PW30]: Luke 14:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

<sup>29</sup> Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

**Commented [PW31]: Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

**Commented [PW32]: James 1:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

to choose whether we will be citizens of heaven or remain citizens of the City of Destruction.

God walked with Noah because Noah had the faith to believe that God is and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. **God will walk with you if you will believe He is and that He will reward your wholehearted seeking to know Him.** And when you walk with God, He lets you participate in what He is doing in the earth. He opens your eyes to His Word and His ways (Psalm 119:18; 25:4). He invites you to be His instrument. You might not build an ark, but you might be an instrument to invite others into the ark of Jesus. Your very life, focused on Jesus, will be a message, a herald, to the world that there is more (1 Peter 2:12).

Jesus warned that the world would once again see days like that in which Noah lived. He warned us, *<sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* Matthew 24:37-39 History repeats itself. In this case, the sinfulness of man is so destructive to mankind, so insidiously deceitful, that God must put an end to it as He did in Noah's day. But God calls to those with ears that are willing to hear. He calls us on that pilgrimage of faith, to be citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). He calls us to be the pilgrims who see everything in a different light and in the process challenge the world around us to see it too (1 Peter 2:9).

Have you heard the Divine invitation to walk with God? *<sup>16</sup> What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup> Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, <sup>18</sup> and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."* 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 How awesome and fearful a thing it is to know He gives us freedom to accept or refuse such a gracious invitation to walk with Him and flee from the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7). Faith acts! What do your actions say about where your faith is placed? Are you in the ark of Jesus, or are you too caught up with idols in this world? By faith, see the unseen. Begin your journey of walking with God.

#### Questions

- 1 Review the preceding verses.
- 2 What made Noah different from others?
- 3 What does it mean to "walk with God"?
- 4 How did Noah hear God?
- 5 What was the message to Noah and Christian?
- 6 What was the result of their life's messages?
- 7 What is the result of faith?
- 8 What does the world say? Faith?
- 9 How can we know God's love is so great?
- 10 Have you accepted the Divine invitation?

#### Commented [PW33]: Psalm 119:18 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

#### Commented [PW34]: Psalm 25:4 (ESV)

<sup>4</sup> Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.

#### Commented [PW35]: 1 Peter 2:12 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

#### Commented [PW36]: Philippians 3:20 (ESV)

<sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

#### Commented [PW37]: 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

#### Commented [PW38]: Matthew 3:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"



**Psalm 32:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.