

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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NOAH: AGAINST THE FLOW

Genesis 6-7

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Today, we are in Genesis to look at the story of Noah. I have three points to my sermon:

- Noah was righteous in spite of the culture.
- Noah was obedient in spite of the odds.
- Noah's obedience paid off.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:5-13

The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹ This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

ILLUSTRATION: Tennessee Ernie Ford sang a song about Noah. One of the verses goes like this:

The Lord looked down from his window in the sky
Said "I created man but I don't remember why.
Nothing but fighting since creation day,

I'll send a little water and wash 'em all away."

NOAH WAS RIGHTEOUS IN SPITE OF THE CULTURE

EXPLANATION: A whole lot of things happened from creation to the time of Noah. Before chapter six, you can look at the important genealogy that's listed and you'll see the many generations between Adam and Noah. Sin entered the human race in the Garden of Eden and from there it went downhill. In the genealogy listed, there are probably righteous people, but by the time of Noah they were all gone except for Noah and his family.

To put this in perspective, we need to consider the population of the day. If you take the names listed and consider population growth equal to our times, it's possible there were 750 million people on earth. But if you consider the fact that people lived much longer back then and the fact they were able to have children much older than today, it is possible that earth could have been completely populated with several billion people. Some skeptics might consider my figures ridiculous, but since the scripture says the flood covered the entire earth, it goes to reason there were people all over it.

Consider many, many people and consider the sinful nature of men and women – so sinful in fact that God was sorry he created them and wanted them gone. He saw no possibility of redemption. Noah's family, however, had remained faithful to God in spite of the culture around them.

I've taught you there are three ways to engage culture: become enthralled by it, withdraw from it, engage it. Noah's family could have easily been soaked in the culture of the day, but they were not. Noah could have taken them to a far away, distant land to shelter his family from the sinful culture of the day, but he did not. As far as we know, they lived among the culture and engaged it. There is no mention that Noah built the ark in seclusion.

APPLICATION: How do you engage today's culture? You have a choice: be enthralled by it, withdraw from it, engage it. What did Jesus do in his day? He engaged it. What did the apostles do? They engaged it. What did the Apostle Paul do? He engaged it. For you to engage the culture, you must be strongly rooted as a

strong believer. This is why I preach and teach the way I do. I don't spend my sermon time telling stories or telling jokes. We don't do a lot of repetitive liturgy that occupies the hour. Why? Because I want to equip you to engage the culture around you.

In a sense, if you are a follower of Jesus, you are building your own ark, because you know there is a judgement day coming. You want your family and friend to be on board, don't you?

Let's move on. Verses 14-17 tell about the structure of the ark itself, then...

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:18-21

But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

Clearly, we see the tall order from God and we think that Noah must have been some type of super human, some type of body builder to accomplish what he did. But no, he was no Samson. We have no record that Noah had any super powers, other than simple obedience.

Not only was Noah righteous in spite of his culture, but...

NOAH WAS OBEDIENT IN SPITE OF THE ODDS

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:22

Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Stop...there you go. There's Noah's secret.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 7:1

The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation."

EXPLANATION: Not only was Noah righteous before construction began, he remained so. Now we see Noah and his family entering the ark before the animals came. I wonder why? Probably so they could learn how to live on the boat. Friends of mine who live on a boat attended church here last October. They drove their boat from Florida, up the Mississippi, docked in Clarksville and drove here, just to hear me preach! Before they began living on the boat, they had to divest themselves of things they thought they needed and get down to the bare necessities.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 7:2-4

Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³ and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴ Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”

What are the odds that a man could build the first-ever ark successfully?
What are the odds four couples could get along together living on that ark?
What are the odds that the animals would come in pairs to board the ark?

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 7:5-10

And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

EXPLANATION: During the years that Noah built the ark, did he every question God? Did he ever think, “Wow, it’s probably a 50/50 chance all this will happen?” No. The scripture is clear that Noah did all the Lord commanded him. So what were the odds? The odds were 100 percent because God was in it.

ILLUSTRATION: What if Noah took on the attitude we hear a lot. Well, if God wants it, it’ll happen. If God doesn’t want it, it won’t happen. Sorry for all my

“what-ifs” here... but what if we said this morning... If God wants music week or VBS to happen, it’ll happen – if he doesn’t, it won’t happen. I can tell you clearly what would happen. If we sat around on our rear ends waiting for God to make music week or VBS happen, there would be no music week. There would be no VBS!

Susan and I have raised three kids. We never taught them to lie around on the couch to see where God takes them. We never said, “If God wants you to have any success in life, then it will happen. If he doesn’t want you to have any success in life, then it won’t happen.” NO! We said, “Get yourself in gear, learn, take risks, do your best, and trust God all the way.”

ILLUSTRATION: If you don’t have a specific calling from God like Noah had – apply yourself, seek God’s will, and take action. Here’s a personal testimony. Do I believe that God has called me to this church? Absolutely and without any question. Did I know it before I came here? Did I know specifically that God was calling me here? No. In fact, in the beginning, I thought I was just here for a few Sundays filling the pulpit for Brother Harold Allen. I knew that my active duty tour with the Air Force was coming to a close. Then I got a call that I could be extended for a year in Florida. I was also talking with another Christian organization. Here’s what happened. In a time of uncertainty, I said, “Lord please lead me.” Out of nowhere, I had three ministers contact me and say they heard I’d been preaching here and suggested that I be open to whatever happened. In time, I believed this is where I needed to be. After I accepted the call here, I said “Thank you but I know where I’m supposed to be” to the other employers.

Those who sit around saying, “If God wants it, it’ll happen. If God doesn’t want it, it won’t happen”... they are people who want others to do the work.

Let’s review:

Noah was righteous in spite of the culture.

Noah was obedient in spite of the odds.

And...

NOAH’S OBEDIENCE PAID OFF

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 7:21-24

Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³ Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

²⁴ The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

CONCLUSION: I struggled putting this message together because we've reduced Noah's story to the level of a child's fable. Sometimes I have a hard time thinking of Noah outside of the construct of a children's book or a craft that has animals boarding the ark. But I believe Noah was a real man with physical limitations and emotions.

In the entire story, we have no record of even one convert. Noah labored for years. No doubt people laughed at him. No doubt they thought he was mentally ill or whatever they called it back then. No doubt he told them a flood was coming some day and they needed to be ready. But there was not even one convert. Had he pastored a church, he would have been fired. Had he turned in the Annual Church Profile year after year with no baptisms and no new members, he probably would have received invitations to attend new evangelism strategies.

But when it was all said and done, Noah was obedient from the beginning. He did not waiver. And God shut them in. Why did God seal the door? So no one else could get in. His patience had run out.

The Lord came down to look around a spell
There He found Noah behavin' mighty well
That is the reason the Scriptures record
Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

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