

“THERE’S ALWAYS HOPE”

Pastor Mike Corwin

TEXT: ROMANS 5:6-11

GOD’S WORD: GENESIS 6:1-3 & 5-8

I – LOST HOPE:

In the 1472 book by Dante named “The Divine Comedy,” more commonly called “Dante’s Inferno,” comes the much quoted line “Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here.” Dante’s piece of literature was all about what happens to people after they die and all the different levels of hell. It has come to mean that once you pass this point, there is no return, there is no help, no happy ending...no hope! You are doomed to a life of suffering and you can’t get out of it. You see it a lot at Halloween as it is painted above the doors of haunted houses and other decorations. It obviously has an evil connotation.

As I look around the world today I have to wonder if this line needs to be displayed in the sky. Probably in bright lights against the dark night sky. And in such a way that it would be in different languages and displayed so that every nation on earth would see it and be warned.

I mean come on...have you looked out there lately? Have you been paying attention? It’s hard to find hope in our world these days:

- Covid
- Politics and rulers
- Invasion and genocide
- Hunger and famine
- Gun violence and abuse in all its forms
- Death and disease in all its forms

It is certainly easy to lose all hope in our world today.

II – GOD’S LOST HOPE:

So I want to start our series on Noah's Ark by considering what happens when God loses hope. There are those who would say that God could never do such a thing, but I certainly see that in the beginning of the Noah account. I see that he looks down upon his creation and loses all hope that they will ever be the way he hoped they would be, the way they were created to be. It starts out in verse 3 of the morning's reading where God says:

"My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh."

I don't know about you but that certainly sends a chill down my spine about how God looks down upon me! In this verse he's talking about shortening our lifespan.

But it gets much worse. In verse 5 & 6 it says:

"The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the Lord was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart."

Just imagine this for a moment. God spent the time to create the whole earth and everything in it. His crowning glory was to create man and woman in his image. He had children. He was extremely happy. He gave them everything they could ever ask for and how did they treat him? They broke his heart. They disappointed him. They made him regret that he had ever even taken the time to create them and love them in the first place.

And then it goes on to tell us that he pronounced judgement and said:

"I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth."

Is it any wonder that God. The God who is just. The God who is Holy and demands us to be the same. Any wonder that the rampant evil and wickedness could cause him to take the action he did in the flood?

III – US:

In my office is a wooden sign that asks the question:

I WONDER SOMETIMES IF WE EVER GIVE GOD A HEADACHE

It reminds me that I must stop sometimes and ask if I'm a part of the problem that faces this world in the modern day and age. Am I helping to again cause God to look down upon his creation and pronounce it wicked and evil once again? Do my actions disappoint God? Do my thoughts make him sorry he ever breathed life into me and put me on this planet?

I'm in no way predicting the end of the world. Jesus didn't know when it was going to happen and he's in management. I'm only in sales. But one has to sometimes stop and ask how near are we. We look around and question how much more of this God will tolerate before he again pronounces judgement and takes action.

Then you have to examine yourselves as I do and ask...am I part of the problem, or part of the solution.

IV – TEXT:

Now the Good News! Although God was angry, although he was fed up with humanity, this morning's reading tells me that God still had hope. The last verse, verse 8, says:

“But Noah found favor with the Lord.”

And through Noah he kept humanity alive.

After the flood, life went back to normal and that meant wickedness and evil lived again. Not only lived, but flourished. And God again held out hope and wanted his children to love him and live again. Not just on earth, but for all of eternity. So instead of sending a disaster he sent his Son. This morning's text says...

Romans 5:6-11 (NLT)

⁶When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. ¹⁰For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his

Son. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

Just as in the days of Noah, humans were helpless to save themselves from the flood. Only Noah and his family who followed God lived. So in the days following Noah it became obvious we couldn't live without covering ourselves in sin. We were utterly helpless it says. Even if we were capable of being good we were unable to get out from under the penalty of our sins.

But God loved us greater than we will ever understand. Loved us so much that he made a blood offering to gain us freedom from that sin and the death penalty that it results in. He sent his Son, Jesus, our Lord and Savior to save us from ourselves, it's by his blood that we can be forgiven and made right in his sight. And he did it while we were actively engaged in that sin!

It is only by the grace and love of God that restores us to a right relationship with our God and Creator. It's only through Jesus that God can look down upon us and say:

Mike, (ETC.) has found favor with the Lord. They will live.

V – REJOICE:

In the text this morning it tells me that I am supposed to "Rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God" because of what Jesus has done for us.

As I look around on Sunday morning I don't always see rejoicing. I see people who are here out of duty, people who are only here because there's something they want, people who need a place for a good nap, people who are more worried about the music or how others are dressed. I've noticed this has gotten worse since Covid shut us down for a while.

I want you to follow God's leading and rejoice! Turn yourselves loose. Take your little white Jesus out of the box you keep him in and turn him loose in your life and the world. Let's make God happy instead of giving him a headache or disappointing him. We can make a difference.

AMEN