

“STILL HOPE”**Pastor Mike Corwin****TEXT: MATTHEW 11:1-6****GOD’S WORD: GENESIS 8:1-5, 15-19 & 9:8-17****I – THE RIDE:**

We come to the conclusion of our series on Noah today and I could sum it up by saying – Wow, what a ride. If I can say that about this sermon series, how much more could Noah say it based on his living the story? I can only imagine the ride he took on behalf of God!

First he had to gather the materials, figure out how to lay out the dimensions, and then spend a considerable amount of time putting it together and making it seaworthy so it would float and not sink. Then he gathered all the animals for sacrifice and for food, as well as other supplies they would need for themselves and for the animals. With only seven days to go before the flood Noah did all that God commanded him to do and the animals came and were loaded on the boat in pairs, two by two, as God had instructed.

Then the earth erupted and the skies broke loose and it rained. It rained like never before, it rained in torrents. For forty days and forty nights it poured and flooded in what we today would call “epic” flooding. When it finally stopped it was only Noah, his family, and the animals on the Ark that lived. But to me the worst part was yet to come. They were all stuck on that boat together. For 150 days, five months, that boat floated along bobbing in the water. I’m guessing that some, human and animal, became sea sick. I can only imagine the tempers and demeanor of humans and animals being together that long in a confined space. You can also imagine the odors and sounds inside the Ark, as well as the never ending work that had to be done to tend to the animals. I’m sure the main question on Noah’s mind was...WHEN WILL IT END?”

II – GOD REMEMBERED NOAH:

Then I get to the verse in the Noah story that says so much to me...”But God remembered Noah.”

This verse tells me so much about our God. Noah had just lived through 150 days of misery. 150 days of questioning his sanity for being so obedient. 150 days of thinking about those who

perished. 150 days of wondering how God could ask him to do all of what he did. 150 days of wondering if God was even still there, still in control, still listening, or still cared. And it answers it all with 4 words..."But God remembered Noah." And God sent a wind and stopped the waters. And the boat stopped upon a mountain. It took more time for all of them to be able to leave the boat, but as I read the story there was a sign of hope each day until finally the earth was dry and God told Noah to get off the boat and take the animals with him, so he did. Total time spent on that Ark from entering to leaving is somewhere between 370 and 377 days depending on which commentator you read. Suffice it to say he was locked up on that boat for over a year.

But he did not lose his faith and God remembered him. The first thing he did when he got off the boat was build an altar and worshipped God. God then gave Noah instructions on how to live going forward and then made a covenant with the creation, through Noah. He made a rainbow in the sky, in the clouds it says, to remind God and us of this covenant. That God promised that he would never again use a flood to destroy living life on earth.

III – BROKEN COVENANTS:

There were many covenants in the Old Testament such as the Noah Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Moses Covenant just to name three. It doesn't matter the number of them, or the names of them. What is important is to note is that humankind has broken every one of them. God always lived up to his end of the bargain...we never did.

As we looked at last week Jesus said that at the end time it would be just like it was in the days of Noah. The human race would become more worldly than Godly. That it would be wicked and consumed by evil to the point it would disgust God, then the end would come. I don't have to give you a list. You can't go through a day without seeing examples of it all. It seems the world gets crazier and more sinful each and every day. But the Good News is that there is still hope. There is still hope because "God remembered his children."

Just as God remembered Noah and his family, God still remembers his children. God made a new Covenant with us a little over 2,000 years ago. Jesus himself spoke of this New Covenant this way as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 11:25:

²⁵In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it."

And we need to be reminded that this Covenant will never end. No matter how wicked and evil the world becomes there will be no more covenants to cover our bad behavior. This one, brought in through the blood of Jesus is it. It will never end, as we are reminded of in Hebrews 9:28:

²⁸ so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.

Our Covenant with God is not marked by a rainbow with many colors, it is marked by the red blood of Jesus and a cross. God remembered us and holds out the hope that all of his children remember and turn towards him.

IV – WE MUST BE THE RAINBOW:

I've told you the last two weeks that we, The Church of Jesus Christ, is the new Ark. It is up to us to spread the news of this Hope which is still available. This is a privilege to be able to do. The Apostle Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 3:6:

⁶ He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

God enables us to spread the Good News of Salvation. Jesus has instituted the church, the Ark, and God has filled us with his Holy Spirit and given us all the gifts needed to build, float, and fill that Ark.

We are the rainbow, the light that is supposed to shine out for all to see and draw them to the safety of the Ark. I could quote passages all over the place that calls us to be that light. That calls us to "Carry the Light" to the world. To shine so brightly that everyone will be drawn to Jesus, the only light that cuts through the darkness of the world and shows the way to God for all of eternity.

There will be no new Covenant coming. This is the last safety boat that is coming. You either get on with Jesus or you perish in the end. Everyone needs to know this!

V – TEXT:

I'd like to end this series with this scripture...

Matthew 11:1-6 (NLT)

¹ When Jesus had finished giving these instructions to his twelve disciples, he went out to teach and preach in towns throughout the region.

² John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about all the things the Messiah was doing. So he sent his disciples to ask Jesus, ³ “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?”

⁴ Jesus told them, “Go back to John and tell him what you have heard and seen— ⁵ the blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.” ⁶ And he added, “God blesses those who do not fall away because of me.”

Jesus had just finished giving instructions to his 12 disciples as he sends them out on their own to do ministry without him. And we get back to the person of John the Baptist. The prophet who came before Jesus to tell everyone that Jesus was coming and they needed to prepare the way for him. To repent of their sins and be baptized.

John has heard about all the things Jesus has been doing and evidently being locked up in Herod’s prison because he condemned him for his choice of wives, caused John to question his belief a little bit. He sent his own disciples to Jesus to ask if he was the real deal. If he was the one who would deliver them all, or if they should still be looking for the real Savior.

I love the answer Jesus gives. He tells them to go back to John and tell him what they witnessed:

- The blind see
- The lame walk
- Leprosy is cured
- Deaf people hear
- Dead people are given life
- And the Good News is proclaimed – even to the poor

Here’s what I want to end on? If someone came here and asked if this church was real, if the Jesus we follow is real, what would be the litany we would give them to show it was?

If we are followers of the New Covenant then I believe we should be able to give a similar list, if not this same one, as proof that Jesus lives and not only lives, still works through us!

We need to stop worrying about rainbows and just concentrate on carrying and shining the light of Jesus to everyone.

AMEN