

NOAH WALKED WITH GOD

Genesis 6:1 - 7:24

Key verse 6:9

"This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."

Last week we reflected on God's absolute love for sinners. Cain envied the sacrifice of his brother Abel. Despite God's admonition to reign over sin, Cain followed his lust and murdered his brother. But God revealed His love for Cain by protecting him and even giving him the sign of the coming Messiah. Let us take to heart God's warning to reign over sin. Let us hold fast to the Word of God and offer our lives to God as a holy sacrifice pleasing to Him.

In today's text, we want to think about the heart of God that was broken because of man's sin and ungodliness. God decided the end of all flesh on earth. But there was one man of faith, Noah, who walked with God and found grace before the Lord. Like Noah, let us walk with God and build the Ark of Salvation at every campus for the salvation of the young people.

1. Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord (6,1-22)

Let's look at verses 1 and 2: "When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose." In Genesis chapter 2, we met God as the founder of the first family in the Garden of Eden. God blessed Adam as he lived diligently to fulfill God's purpose and prepared the woman for him and brought her to him. Adam rejoiced, "surely this is bone of my bone; and flesh of my flesh!" This first family lived in complete harmony. They cul-

tivated and preserved the garden of God. But when the woman was seduced by the cunning serpent, the devil, and the man also ate from the forbidden fruit, the Fall occurred. Immediately, the love relationship between man and God was broken. Finally, mankind had to leave paradise, lead a troublesome and burdened life, finally die and become earth.

Humanity spread and so did sin. It was through marriage that people revealed their godlessness. Instead of praying for God's guidance, the sons of God looked only at the external beauty of women and took whichever wives they wanted. God was no longer asked. Sinful man wanted to determine for himself. The consequence was disastrous. Even today we experience that people do not ask God. They marry whom they want. Some even marry as often as they want. They have even exchanged the biblical family image for "marriage for all" and are bringing spiritual destruction to an entire generation. Apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:24,25: "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen."

How did God react when people were so godless and lived only according to their lust? Let's look at verse 3: "Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a

hundred and twenty years." God here promised a 120-year period of grace in which people could turn to God, repent and be saved. God was waiting for sinners to repent; but the time of grace to repent is limited! God was very sad that man, whom God had created as a living being by His Spirit in Genesis chapter 1, lived only carnally. God's judgment was, "for man also is flesh." Because of sin, the image of God in man was completely distorted. God decided and said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever." God hates it when people live like flesh without the Spirit of God. In Isaiah 30:1 God says, "Woe to the obstinate children," declares the Lord, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin."

Let us read verses 5-7: "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." How much God's heart ached. The people whom God had created as the crown of creation and of whom God had once said "it was very good", they were corrupted and deformed because of the power of sin. Even the animals, which before the Fall cordially cooperated with humans, no longer enjoyed working with these sinful humans, who only exploited and even killed them. God made a momentous decision: to wipe out mankind from the earth. Even the cattle, the worms, the birds, even all life on earth, had to perish.

Let's look at verse 9: "This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God." In the midst of the godless and sinful world, there was one man who was different: Noah. Noah did not let his life be determined by his sinful nature,

nor by the general moral concept of his time. Noah had fellowship with God and listened to the Word of God. Thus, he knew the will of God and consistently walked in the way of God. Noah was the only one who lived a spiritual life at that time. His pious life was always the object of ridicule by the godless people. They could not stand the fact that Noah was living a pious life and walking with God. It was not easy for Noah. For almost 500 years he had no son. But Noah did not doubt the absolute love of God. So he was able to swim against the mighty current of that godless world. What can we learn from Noah? How was he different from the godless people?

First, Noah respected his ancestors and preserved their spiritual heritage.

Noah's grandfather's name was Metushelah. Genesis 5:27 says that he lived for 969 years. He died in the year of the Flood and outlived his son Lamech, Noah's father. This Metushelah had even known Adam. Therefore, he was a very important bearer of God's promise in these first generations of human history. He also planted the promise of God in the heart of his grandson Noah. Perhaps Noah always enjoyed visiting his grandfather. He was able to have much edifying fellowship with him and learn many things from him. Perhaps in the same way that Samuel Abraham and Peter Joseph liked to go to their grandfather, learn from him and grow up as bearers of God's vision, hope and promise.

Second, Noah was a pious man.

"Pious" means that Noah held fast to the Word of God and feared God. We can imagine how the godless people despised him again and again because of his pious life, declared him crazy and even persecuted him. But Noah lived devoutly before God because he held the Word of God with an absolute attitude. This reminds us of the devout couple Zechariah and Elizabeth in Luke chapter 1. Scripture says of them, "Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's command-

ments and regulations blamelessly." They were also constantly criticized and ridiculed by men because of their devout lives. Although they did not have a child in their old age, they served God in holy fear. God finally blessed them by bringing forth through them the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist. Like Noah, let us overcome the godless spirit of the age by living devoutly before God and taking God's Word as absolute.

Third, Noah walked with God.

Noah walked with God testifies that he entrusted his life to God day after day. He was willing to follow God's guidance and obey God's word and God's instruction until the end. Walking with God was a way of life for Noah, which he also taught his sons. He often sang the song to them: "Blessed is he who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, which bringeth forth his fruit in his season, and his leaves do not fade away..."

In our time, many believers have become helpless or fearful because of the spirit of the age. Many churches lost their direction because of godless humanism and experience that their next generation lives without spiritual identity or conforms to the world. God helped us by His grace to walk with God instead of conforming to the spirit of the age. God blessed the prayers and servanthood of God's servants for the Next Generation. God worked mightily among them especially through GLEF, Leadership Seminars, Master Course, Early Morning Prayer and Life Fellowship. Let us pray that the Next Generation will walk with God by holding their spiritual identity and being used as Global Spiritual Leaders.

Let us read verse 9 again: "This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God." From Noah we learn, in the midst of a godless world where judgment was inevitable, to hold fast our center of faith, to live godly, and to walk with

God. By living in holy fear before God, cherishing the spiritual heritage of those who have gone before us in faith, and holding fast to the Word of God, we may walk with God. By living a pious life, we also reject the lies of the spirit of the age and the godless world.

At a time when the church was spiritually corrupt, there were men and women of faith, such as the Waldensians and Huguenots. Also the reformers like John Wycliffe, Jan Huss, Martin Luther and William Tyndale lived a pious life like Noah, walking with God despite all persecutions. The founding fathers of Pietism, such as Philipp Jacob Spener, August Hermann Francke, and Count Zinzendorf, also built the Ark of Salvation in the midst of a spiritually corrupt time with their pious lives. Zinzendorf founded the Herrnhut Brethren Church, which sent more than 3000 missionaries to many countries. God's story is always the story of the remnant who lived piously and walked with God. This story continues and we too, like Noah, may walk with God and be used for the building of the spiritual ark in this generation. We are blessed to live a life with the calling and promise of God and to be used as Bible teachers and shepherds. We have the privilege of living a giving life for world mission. Through early morning prayer, campus prayer, and one-on-one Bible study teams, we prepare for God's work continuously. Through the upcoming 41st Anniversary Service at the end of September, we want to witness the mighty work of God and share our vision with our sheep, children and friends.

Let's look at what plan God revealed to Noah. Let's read verses 13-16: "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. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door

in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks." God commanded Noah to build a huge ship, the Ark. God gave him exact specifications for it. The ark was to be 450 feet long, 45 feet high, 75 feet wide, which is about 157.5 meters long, 15.75 meters high and 26.25 meters wide. This ship was unique and ingenious in every way. (If you are more interested in this, I would like to recommend a paper by Prof. Dr. Werner Gitt: "Das sonderbarste Schiff der Weltgeschichte". In it he writes, for example, that the Ark has the best possible dimensions with regard to the two most important design features, "high floating stability and at the same time economical use of materials".) It was large enough to transport all the animals, to store the necessary food and to prepare the required feed. Noah had to plan exactly where to place which animals. He also had to consider the statics, e.g. the heavy elephants, dinosaurs and giraffes would be placed in the hull of the ship. In a different place he had to store the clay jugs for the water supply; in another area all the birds, insects and amphibians were housed. And last but not least, there must have been living quarters and bedrooms for Noah and his family, for they had to work hard during the Flood and needed a room to retire and to rest.

What did God tell Noah about His plans for the world? Let's look at verses 17 and 18: "I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 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." While God would judge the corrupt and sinful world, God wanted to keep Noah and his family in the ark of salvation from God's wrathful judgment. Noah accepted God's direction, and by faith began to build the ark - for 120 years. Noah could have thought that the task was too big or too hard. He could have even quibbled, "why me of all people?" But here we learn about Noah's faith. Noah's faith is shown in his absolute obedience to God. Let's read verse 22: "Noah did every-

thing just as God commanded him." Noah obeyed as an expression of his faith. He was willing to obey God's instruction to the letter. Hebrews 11:7 says, "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."

What a great testimony: Noah honored God by his obedience of faith. We too may honor God by living a life of faith and obedience. By faith, M. Peter and M. Sarah have honored God by obeying Jesus' Great Commission to this day and selflessly giving their home church to the work of God for 41 years. By faith, our missionaries honored God when they chose world missions and established blessed God-centered and mission-centered house churches for the mission of God. By faith, our graduates honored God when they worked heartily together for the work of God this year and were able to achieve the victory of faith in the Baccalaureate.

Noah's faith encouraged me to live piously and walk with God like Noah. I used to live according to the pattern of the world, wanting to make a big name for myself that would shine day and night from many big stores. But in His grace, God led me to His living Word. With Luke 23:34a, God helped me to accept the unconditional and forgiving love of Jesus, with which He prayed for me on the cross: "Father, forgive him; for he does not know what he is doing!" God called me with Lk 5:10b to be a fisher of men for the intellectual students. Now I may be used by Him for the building of the spiritual ark of salvation among the students at the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, in Germany, Europe and all the way to the Muslim world. Like Noah, I may obey the Word of God, especially Ezekiel 37:10 and Hebrews 11:6, form one-to-one Bible study teams, and invite young people into the ark of Jesus with the Word of God. For my children, I pray that they may overcome the ungodly spirit of the age and walk with God by faith and be precious used by

God as a 21st century Noah, as a man after God's own heart, and as a woman of opportunity. A young man experienced the help of God to successfully complete his studies, which he could not finish by his own strength, through prayer and with the help of God. Now it is God's heart's desire that he walks with God like Noah in the midst of this sinful generation.

Noah did everything the Lord commanded him to do. By faith he obeyed and gave his best to God. He challenged the impossible and overcame the godlessness and depravity of that generation. He fulfilled the mission and task of God to the end.

Noah encourages us not to look at the godless sinful world, but to build the ark of salvation with Noah's faith and obedience at the 1,700 universities in Germany, Europe and as far as the Muslim world. The enormous size of the ark reveals to us the heart of God: God does not want one to be lost, but that all hear the message of God, accept it, repent and be reconciled with God and be saved. With this heart of God, we pray to form 10,000 one-to-one bible study teams with young people and invite them to the Ark of salvation.

Let's look at verses 19-22: "You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 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. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them. Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Clean and unclean animals - all were allowed in. This is already a picture that God gathers people from all peoples and nations (pure/impure) i.e. Jews and Gentiles, in his ark. Everyone who enters through the door, Jesus Christ, will be saved. There is only this one door! And only this one ark! In Jesus alone is salvation for the whole world!

In this passage, we have learned about Noah, who lived a godly life and walked with God in an ungodly and sincere world. When

God called Noah to build the ark, Noah obeyed without any ifs and buts with absolute attitude. Thus, he prepared the environment so that those who feared God could enter and be saved. May God grant us the faith and obedience of Noah to walk with God, and with the heart of God to call the young people to repentance and lead them into the ark of salvation.

2. God's judgment through the Flood (7:1-24)

When God commanded Noah, he went into the ark with all his household and with all the animals. Then God Himself closed the door of the ark (15b). After seven days it began to rain forty days and forty nights. On the seventeenth day of the second month, all the fountains of the great deep broke open and the windows of heaven opened. These words describe the mighty power of the waters. We have recently experienced how, due to about 24 hours of heavy rain, an entire region was destroyed with an unprecedented flood. Many people were swept to their deaths and their belongings destroyed. But the flood lasted 40 times as long. And not only that: the fountains of the deep, enormous underground pools of water and volcanoes, burst open. Also from above it rained incessantly. The windows of heaven, the water-haze of the second day of creation, rained down on the earth.

Let's look at verses 19-21: "They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished – birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind." The Flood teaches us who the God of Noah is. He is the righteous God, the God of grace and also the God of judgment. Noah and his house found grace before the Lord. In the ark they were safe from all the waters, storms, lightning, even from the judgment of God. But all those who ignored God's warnings and did not allow themselves to be saved had to

experience the right judgment of God and perish in the Flood. As then, so also today many people deny the judgment of God. Some say "God will turn a blind eye" or "I can always turn back to God".

Let us read the key verse (6:9): "This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God."

Without exception, all people are guilty of the judgment of God and must experience the wrath of God. Just as only those who were in the ark were saved then, only those who are in Christ Jesus will be saved at the coming judgment. Romans 8:1 says, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Those who have accepted Jesus as their Savior may confess as Apostle Paul did in Romans 8:38,39: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Noah worked very diligently in the ark. We, too, when we are in the Ark of Jesus, may work diligently to invite all those who are still outside. Soon the winter semester will begin and the campus will again be populated with young students. Through 10,000 one-on-one Bible study teams, let's prepare the environment for young people to encounter Jesus, who is the door to salvation and the life. Let us pray that all 1,700 colleges in Germany and Europe will be pioneered with the Word of God and three bases for the Mission will be established. May God bless and use this for the spiritual renewal and revival of this generation.

Today we learned who the God of Noah is. He is the God of righteousness. Then as now, many people live as if there is no judgment. But the Flood testifies that in judgment all perished and only those who were in the ark were saved. Let us pray to live a godly life like Noah and walk with God. Let us overcome the godless world and with faith and obedience lead the young people into the ark of salvation.