

ESF Lord's day service message
6/19/2016

The Faith of a Father, Noah
Genesis 7:1-13

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. ² Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³ and also seven 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." ⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

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

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹² And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³ On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark.

There is a story about a sixteen-year-old boy that approached his father and said, "Dad, I'm sixteen now. When I get my license, can I drive the family car?" His dad looked at him and said, "Son, driving the car takes maturity, and first, you must prove you are responsible enough. And one way you must do that is to bring up your grades. They are not acceptable.

Second you must read the Bible every day. And finally, I want you to get that hair cut; it looks outrageous.” The son began the task of fulfilling his father’s requirements, knowing that the last might be impossible.

When his grades came out he came to his dad with a big smile. “Look, Dad, all A’s and B’s on my report card. Now can I drive the family car?” “Very good, son. You are one-third of the way there, but have you been reading the Bible?” the father replied. “Yes, Dad, every day,” said the son. “Very good, son. You are two-thirds of the way there. Now when are you going to get that hair cut?” The son, thinking he could outsmart his dad, responded, “Well, I don’t see why I should get my hair cut to drive the car. Jesus had long hair, didn’t he?” The father looked at his boy and said, ‘That’s right son, and Jesus walked everywhere he went.’”

Today’s word is story of the faith of a father, Noah and his family. The book of Hebrew in the New Testament summarizes the key point of the story of Noah and his family as this: *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* (Hebrews 11:7).

According to this word regarding Noah and his family, Noah and his family were saved by Noah’s faith.

Salvation is to be received individually and personally. But it is also connected with family. When a jailor in a prison in the city of Philippi asked Paul and Silas, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*” They replied, “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household*” (Acts 16:30-31).

God wants to save a family through the faith of one person in the family. God wants to bless a family especially through the father of the family.

Fathers! Know this: you are the key person in your family through whom God wants to build up a blessed family.

Through the example of Noah, God teaches all fathers how they can lead their families to receive God's blessings.

Righteousness by faith

God told Noah that he would save Noah and his family from the flood through an ark, because God had found Noah "righteous in this generation." Noah was a righteous man and led his family to righteousness.

Here the word "righteous" does not mean "morally right." Although it does not ignore moral rightness, it mainly means being right with God. To be a blessed family, the family should be right with God first of all. When a family is right with God, the family can be protected and blessed by God. But when a family is not right with God, the family will live without God's protection and blessing.

How can man be right with God? Only by faith can man be right before God (Romans 3:22).

Noah was a man of faith. He was living in a right relationship with God by faith. He led his family to a right relationship with God by faith. Noah and his family were able to be saved not because they were morally good people, but because they lived by faith.

What is faith that makes man right with God? It is accepting God's word as the only truth. Noah was made righteous by believing the Word of God, as Hebrews 11 tells us. He believed what God said about judgement by a flood and he prepared for the flood, even though there was little evidence around him to support it. He believed God's word, and "*became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*"

Faith is also believing in God's grace. Faith is believing that God's grace is the undeserved favor of God. "*Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of the LORD*" (Genesis 6:8).

Faith is believing that we can be saved not by our own merit, not by our own perfection, not by our own good works, but by God's grace.

Noah was not a perfect man. He made mistakes. One day he became drunk and lay naked (Genesis 9:21). Noah was a sinner as all other people were in his generation. But he believed in God's grace through which man can be forgiven and saved from judgment. The salvation of Noah and his family was by grace through faith. It is still the same today as Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

Noah was saved from the wrath of God in the flood by faith in God's promise of mercy and grace. Today we are saved from God's wrath by faith in God's grace given through Jesus Christ. "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him*" (John 3:36).

Earthly fathers can never be perfect in every sense. There is no perfect father on earth. There is no father without a defect. But God favors a father who believes in His grace and mercy.

Fathers, although you are not perfect, you can still lead your family to God's blessings if you receive God's favor through your faith. When you feel weak and downed by your own mistakes and sins, hold on to God's mercy. Believe in His grace through which you can receive His favor. With God's favor lead your family and build up your family in righteousness.

Obedience by faith

Noah was a man of obedience. When God first gave Noah the instructions to build the Ark, the size of the ark was, 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. He should build a such a huge ark with his own hands. It was going to be up to him to build the enormous ship, to bring all kinds of animals into the ship, and then to store all of the food to feed the animals and his family while the earth was covered with water. Noah must have felt overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the project.

Also he had never seen a flood that covered the whole earth. Would God do something that had never happened before? When God told him to build an ark at the place where there was no sea or river but in the middle of dry land, at the time when there was no rain, no sign of any flood, not even clouds, he did not understand. There were no physical signs of a coming judgment. The skies were clear overhead, the sun was rising and setting, as it had been for generations. As Jesus said, "Men were marrying and giving in marriage " (Matt 24:38b). Business was going on as usual and there were no signs of impending destruction.

While he kept building the ark with his three sons for many years, there was no evidence or signs of the flood. Other people must have thought that he was out of his mind and laughed at what he was doing. Imagine the mockery of the people as he built his ark on the plains, far away from any river or ocean in which it might float.

It took many years for Noah to build it, with all his resources invested in it and the labor of his sons as well. By doing so, he preached to the people about God's coming judgement and encouraged them to listen to God. But nobody listened to him. Although his sons were standing with him and helping him build the ark, from time to time, he must have been tired of the people's stubborn rejection and discouraging comments.

Yet time and time again we find the simple statement contained in Scripture that Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.

Genesis 6:22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Genesis 7:5 Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

Faith without the act of obedience is dead faith.

Have you ever heard the story of the man sitting on top of his house in the flood waters.

Before the water got too deep, a large four wheel drive truck came along and the driver said, climb in the back, we will get you to safety. And the man on the house replied

No thanks, I am going to wait on God to save me.

Later, as the water got deeper, a boat came along, and the operator of the boat said, climb on, we will get you to safety.

And the man said , no thanks, I am waiting on God to save me.

Then the waters had gotten up to the roof of the house, and a helicopter came along and lowered a basket to the man, the helicopter pilot said, climb in , we will get you to safety.

And the man on the house said, No thanks, I am waiting on God to save me. And the man drowned. And when the man got to heaven to meet God, he said, God, how come you did not save me but let me drown?

And God said, I came by three times, once in a four wheel drive, once in a boat and once in a helicopter, and you refused my help every time.

Noah demonstrated his living faith by constructing the ark in obedience to the word of God. He made the ark against the ridicule and contempt of his generation. While Noah was obeying what God told him to do, he also led all his family in obeying God's command. His entire family- his wife, his sons, his sons' wives followed his example of obedience. They built the ark together with Noah. Noah's family was a family of obedience. God blesses a family of obedience by giving it strong unity and peace. God saves a family of obedience from destructive rebellion and chaos.

Fathers, if you obey God, God will bless your family as the family of obedience, and He will give you authority to bring unity and order to your family.

Wives respect the leadership God has given to your husbands even if they are imperfect. Although there is no specific mention of the attitude of Noah's wife, we can conclude that she was obedient to God and to her husband. Because she did not complain to Noah when all the people laughed at him and his faith. She must have stood with him all the way to the completion of the ark and entering of the ark.

Children respect and honor the leadership God has given to your fathers. When father Noah taught his sons God's word of judgement, and of building an ark, his sons obeyed the word. They honored their father's leadership and worked together with the same faith. Even when their father made a mistake- becoming drunk and laying naked- they did not reject their father. They still honored their father as God's ordained leader of their household (Genesis 9:18-23).

Entering the ark by faith

Noah led his family into the ark by faith. They entered the ark "together." The ark was the only place where they could avoid the flood of judgment. There was no other way.

So by leading his family into the ark, Noah led his family into salvation. By following the leadership of Noah, his entire family was able to be saved.

The ark represents the way of God's salvation for everyone who believes in it. It signifies the way of God's salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 24:37-39, Jesus says, *"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in*

marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

Jesus is our "Ark." He is the ark. God will do the same thing for us through Jesus which He did for Noah's family by the ark! In Jesus, God will watch over us and keep us from harm! Jesus is the only way to protect us from all judgment. His cross is the only way through which we can be saved. Jesus claims, in John 14:6, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

To come to Jesus and to be in Jesus is to be in the safest place in the world.

Fathers God has not called you to save your families by yourselves. God has called you to lead them in obeying God, instruct them to put Christ at the center of their hearts. You may not be as rich as others. You may not have as many things as others have. But if you lead your family to Christ and instruct them to honor Christ, you can give your family the best gift in the world.

If you want your family to be blessed by God, a family in God's salvation, put Jesus at the center of your home. Let him be the Lord of your home. Let him be the only one who has final authority to govern and take care of your home.