

**ESF, Lord's day service message
6/16/2019**

**The Faith of a Father
Genesis 6:9-22**

This is the account of Noah.

*Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked 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. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ 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." ²² **Noah did everything just as God commanded him.***

In 1983, John Sculley quit his post at Pepsico to become the president of Apple Computer. He took a big risk leaving his prestigious position with a well-established firm to join ranks with an unproven little outfit that offered no guarantee, only the excitement of one man's transforming vision. Sculley says he

made the risky move after Apple cofounder Steve Jobs goaded him with the question, “Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?”

The vision of one man, Steve Jobs, has changed the world of modern computer technology. However, the faith of a Father, Noah, has changed the history of all mankind.

The word in verse 9 says: “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time.” It does not mean that he was a sinless person or morally faultless person. It means that he was a man of faith.

Hebrews 11:7 interprets the faith of Noah as following: “*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.*”

Through the example of Noah’s faith, God teaches us how we can have a genuine faith through which God blesses us, our families and changes the history of this world.

Faith comes from listening to the word of God

Genuine faith comes from nothing but listening to the word of God. To help us have faith in God, God may use visions, dreams, nature, all kinds of happenings in our lives. But the main and the most important source of faith is God’s word. Romans 10:17 says, *faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

To help Noah live by faith, God did not give him a vision, a dream, or any unusual phenomena of nature. God just gave him the “word.” Noah’s faith came from God’s word. In what situation did God give his word to Noah? What was the word? How did Noah have faith by the word?

Noah lived in a dark time. That's the whole point of the beginning of Genesis 6. Wickedness had grown to the point of no return. Every inclination of men's hearts was toward increasing violence and injustice. A plague of evil spread from home to home and heart to heart. With corrupt hearts, they did terrible things to each other: deceiving, hating, betraying, hurting, and killing.

At that time, God told Noah to build an ark. The ark was to be *450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high*. In today's way of measurement, it was about 4 stories high and as long as a football field and a half. Noah was also far away from the closest body of water! Until that time, there had never been any flood that required such a huge boat. When God told Noah to build the ark, there was no rain, and no sign of any flood.

Under these conditions who could explain a need for such a boat and the concept of a flood? People must have ridiculed Noah when he was building the ark. They must have called him "a crazy man."

If he had been afraid of the people saying he was crazy, he would not have built the ark. But Noah built the ark as God told him. Noah feared God rather than fearing men. God gave Noah courage when Noah feared God more than he feared men. With that courage he was able to go against the trend of the people in his time. How could he fear God more than fearing people?

By listening to the promise of God's word: *I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, ... 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* (verses 17-18).

Noah listened to the word of God not only with his ears but also with his heart. By listening to the word of God with his heart,

Noah could have genuine faith. What is the evidence that he listened to the word of God with his heart? His obedience to the word of God is the evidence. If you listen to the word of God with your heart, you will obey the word.

Noah gained his faith by listening to God. God spoke to Noah in every chapter of Gen 6-9, revealed to Noah His plans, and directed Noah about building the ark, going into the ark (Gen 7:1), and coming out of the ark (Gen 8:15). And Noah listened to all these words and did exactly as the words said (Gen 6:22, 7:5).

Faith by listening to God's word gave Noah the courage. With the courage Noah overcame all fears. With the courage Noah attempted the great task. When his family saw his courage they followed his leadership. His wife, his sons, his daughters-in-law, they all followed his leadership without raising any doubt or challenge.

When God calls you to be a believer, God has a plan for you. It is to bless you and people around you through your faith. To live by faith God can bless, you must keep listening to God's word with your heart. It means that you must obey the word you hear. Obeying one word is more crucial than knowing thousands of words. Only by obeying the word, will your faith become genuine faith.

Faith is tested by trials

Faith becomes genuine and strong when it is tested by trials. Father Noah's faith was tested by trials. What kind of trials tested his faith?

The first trial was to not follow the main trend of the world in his time.

All others except Noah and his family did not care about God's warning of judgment by flood. They spent their time, resources and

money for their own pleasures. But Noah had to spend most of his resources, time and money on building the ark. He sacrificed everything he had to build the ark. While he was building the ark there was no rain for a long time. The unbelieving people seemed to enjoy their lives although they don't honor God, although they don't sacrifice anything to serve God. In such a situation, Noah could have been discouraged. He could have heard voices that mocked his faith: *Stop sacrificing for God. Live as all others live. Look how many years, what you have believed would happen has not happened. You have been wasting your time and money.*

This trial tested him to make a choice between following the main trend of the world and standing against this trend to follow God. Noah made a choice to stand against this trend to follow God. He kept trusting that God's word was truth and the word would be surely fulfilled.

While we live by faith in God's word, we will face a similar situation. People who do not believe in God seem to live well, or to be better off than believers. It may make us confused. It may discourage us to give up on faith in God. However, we must keep trusting that God's word is eternal truth and God will fulfill his word. And our faith will become stronger by this trial. Romans 12:2 encourages us: *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

The second trial is sacrifice.

Noah had to work hard and long years to build the ark. It was very difficult for Noah to build such a huge ark. He was not a fisherman or carpenter, who would be familiar with a boat or ship. He was a farmer (Genesis 9:20). As a farmer, he did not have any knowledge or experience to build a ship. He did not have any carpenter to help him, because nobody in his time believed that building the ark was

from God's command. He had only his family of seven people-his wife, his three sons and their wives. His wife and his three daughters-in-law could not do much to build the ark. So he had to build the ark only with his three sons' help. It was a hard, long, painstaking job. It was a huge sacrifice.

Faith is a gift from God. Man cannot create faith. The foundation of faith is God's grace. But to make our faith grow and be strong, we need to sacrifice our time, our money, our comfort, and our preference. Without sacrifice our faith will never grow. Sacrifice is an essential element for our faith to grow. Sacrifice makes our faith strong. Jesus clearly says to his followers this truth: *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me* (Matthew 16:24). Here "cross" means sacrifice. It includes painful sacrifice.

Nobody likes sacrifice. Sacrifice does not come naturally. We want to be blessed without sacrificing or with a minimum of sacrifice. But Jesus encourages us to sacrifice intentionally and willingly. Jesus has set the example of sacrifice to follow God's will by suffering and dying on the cross. If we compare our sacrifice with Jesus' sacrifice, we will find that our sacrifice is far less difficult than Jesus' sacrifice. This helps us sacrifice willingly. Also Jesus' cross is not only an example of sacrifice, but also has power that redeems us. If we trust in the power of Jesus' cross, the power will enable us to sacrifice everything joyfully. And our faith will become stronger and be growing constantly.

"...when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also...It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand..." (1 Peter 3:18-22).

The third trial was to live in the midst of a horrible judgment.

After he finished building the ark and entered the ark with his family, God sent the flood to destroy every man on earth. The waters flooded the earth for 150 days (7:24). It was a dreadful scene. Although he and his family survived by staying in the ark, such massive destruction on earth gave him a dark feeling. He could have thought, *“Why were the people so stubborn? If God created man for his glory, why should he destroy them so tragically? If God loved them why could he not touch their hearts to repent?”*

However, Noah endured and overcame this trial. He endured staying in the ark until it was safe for him and his family to exit. How could he endure this trial?

Such endurance came from looking up to the sovereign God. He constantly looked up to God who promised deliverance. If he had looked at only the trials he was facing, he would have become depressed and discouraged. But he constantly looked up to God, who would surely fulfill his promise of deliverance. Noah was not looking down at the devastation. He looked up to God and trusted in God’s promise. He looked up to God who reigns the universe and the world with his sovereign will. And he was able to endure all trials and overcome them.

While we listen to God’s word and follow the word, we will face similar situations. All horrible things happening in the world today—natural disasters, brutal crimes, severe moral corruption etc., seem to deny the existence of God.

The devil always tempts us to look only at the ugliness, the disasters and the painful sufferings in this world. By doing so, the devil wants to destroy our faith in God.

But the Holy Spirit constantly encourages us to look up to God who is sovereign, whose will is higher than our understanding. The Holy Spirit encourages us to endure all trials with hope.

James 1:2-4 says, Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Refuse to surrender to the devil's nasty temptations to give up on your faith in God. Hold on to the encouraging word of God's Spirit. Endure trials by looking up to the sovereign God. Your faith will become mature and complete, not lacking anything.