

Date: May 17, 2020
Series: *Heroes of Faith*
Title: *The Faith of Noah*
Preacher: Mark Adams
Scripture: Hebrews 11:7

This morning we are continuing our study of the Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11. Can anyone guess which hero we're looking at today, based on my current preaching location?

Hint, Hint, I'm in the middle of that part of our campus that is designed to FLOOD when it rains, so that other parts of our campus and our neighbors' yards DON'T flood.

RIGHT! NOAH is today's faith hero and I'm in the Storm Water Management system which WILL flood this weekend if the weathermen are right!

Now, Noah's story has been the subject of several movies; everything from *Evan Almighty*, to that silly film that starred Russell Crowe as Noah. The problem is these movies get Noah's faith story completely wrong. So, instead of going to Hollywood, let's go to the source of this TRUE story---the Bible---and see what we can learn about faith from this ancient mariner.

We find Noah's story in the book of Genesis chapters 5-9. It tells us a great deal about Noah.

For example, it tells us his grandfather was Methuselah—the man who still holds the record when it comes to the longest life span. Methuselah lived to be 969 years young! I'm thinking if he retired at 65 he must have had an AMAZING retirement savings account!

Well, Methuselah's long life apparently ended right before the world-wide flood hit. Genesis 7:10 says, "**after seven days, the floodwaters came on the earth**" and some say those seven days were days of mourning that God allowed Noah and his family after Methuselah passed.

Noah's NAME means "comfort" or "rest." Scripture says that his father, Lamech, gave him this name because, as a baby, Noah, comforted him as he labored to work the ground that had been cursed due to the sin of Adam and Eve.

The Bible also tells us that Noah himself was a father. He had three sons, named SHEM, HAM, and JAPHETH. Genesis 6:9 tells us something else about NOAH. It says He "**walked with God.**" You may remember that ENOCH, Noah's great-grandfather, also walked with God. In fact, in all history, Noah and Enoch are the only two people about whom this is said.

What does that mean? Well, walking with God means to move in the same direction God is going. It means keeping in step with God. Noah and Enoch didn't run ahead of God—nor did they lag behind—they kept step with God. We've all been walking a lot lately. It gives us relief from this quarantine to get outside. When you do that WITH someone; your spouse or your sibling or your parent, when you walk WITH them, you're not moving so fast that conversation is difficult. You walk side by side so you can enjoy each other's company. You can look together at the cloud formations, people working in their yards, the trees beginning to fill with green leaves. In short, walking WITH someone is a great picture of intimacy. Well, this kind of intimacy with God was a lifestyle for Noah. Year after year, for longer and longer periods of time during the day, he shared more and more of his life with God.

Notice another characteristic of Noah. He was OBEDIENT to God. In Genesis 6:22, it says, **“Noah did EVERYTHING, just as GOD COMMANDED him.”** Unlike many disciples today who pick and choose which commands of God they will apply to their lives, Noah embraced the kind of love for God that Jesus described in John 14 when He said, **“If you love Me, you will OBEY what I command.”**

Well, we’ve already learned a couple things from Noah, things we should emulate.

- The importance of an intimate daily walk with God.
- And that we show our love for God with a lifestyle of obedience!

But to really understand Noah’s faith we need to look at the culture in which he lived and Scripture teaches that it was a culture of unprecedented wickedness. Genesis 6:11 says, **“Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence.”** This chapter also mentions **“sons of God”** marrying human women and having children. Most of biblical scholars I have read over the years believe these words referred to fallen angels—demons who had children with the women of this day. But whatever it was, God SAW it as a great wickedness.

In fact, up until this point, any time God gazed upon His creation, any time the phrase, **“God SAW”** is used, it is followed by God commenting, **“It was good.”** or **“It was VERY good.”** But NOW, now God looks at the world and it is not good at all. It is totally corrupt. The human race was degraded almost beyond recognition.

Then, listen to the last part of verse 5: **“Every inclination of the thoughts of the hearts of men were evil all the time.”** That’s how bad—how totally corrupt—things had become. All evil, all the time.

R. Kent Hughes writes, *“Their depravity was not a temporary state. There were no relentings, no repentances, no hesitations. Lust was their medium, violence their method. This was total, inveterate depravity.”*

Corruption had become so thorough that there was nothing human left about these people. I get a mental image of the orcs in Tolkein’s, [The Lord of the Rings](#), for even their thoughts were a constant mental stream of evil. They had already drowned everything “human” about themselves in a kind of flood of immorality that had existed even before the rains began to fall. In short, mankind had already destroyed themselves.

But God wasn’t ANGRY about all this. No, look at verse 6. It says, **“The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.”** God’s heart ached because He had lost something extraordinarily precious to Him.

Well, God decided it was best to destroy all this evil, not only human life but most other life as well. That might seem excessive until we remember that human beings were made regents of earth, to have dominion over all created things. And human corruption had apparently spread so that it ruined pretty much everything else.

I can’t help but think of the mini-series, *Chernobyl*, where, after the nuclear disaster the Russians had to send soldiers into the radiated area to shoot dogs, any animal that could wander into other areas and spread the radiation. Thanks to the sin of man, that part of the world won’t be habitable for hundreds of years. Something like that evidently had happened in the days before the flood. Human fools had ruined life everywhere and there was very little left that was worth saving.

Genesis 6:9 tells us something else about Noah, something very important. It says he was, **“a righteous man, BLAMELESS among the people of his time.”** Now—the word “blameless” doesn’t mean “perfection.” It literally means “uncontaminated.” Noah was not “contaminated” by the wickedness of his day. He was the only human in a world of orcs!

Clarence MacCartney calls Noah, *“the SOLITARY Saint”* because Noah was the ONLY ONE of his kind. This tells us that SOLITARY goodness IS possible. I mean, with God’s help, it is possible to go against the flow—even if you’re the only one doing so. You may remember that Henry David Thoreau once said, *“If I seem to walk out of step with others, it is because I am listening to another drum beat.”* This is a picture of genuine faith because Christians who embrace a deep faith in God walk through life as though listening to another “drum beat.” Like Noah, they are out of step with the world. As Philippians 2:14-15 says, if we follow Jesus—if we live out our faith, ***“we will shine as stars in the universe, amidst a crooked and depraved generation.”***

Okay—as we continue to look at Noah’s story, let’s see what else his life can teach us about authentic FAITH.

(1) First—Noah helps us see that true faith has something to keep it GOING.

Parents, if you were to ask your little ones what keeps Winnie the Pooh going, what would they say? Sure--- HONEY! What would they say keeps Cookie Monster going? Spinach! Just kidding, COOKIES! I’m thinking of Pop-eye, someone they have probably never heard of!

Well the thing that kept Noah going, the thing that gave him the strength, the thing that motivated him to build the ark was God’s Word. Hebrews 11:7 says Noah did what he did, ***“...WHEN WARNED BY GOD about things not yet seen.”*** God spoke to him and told him what he should do to survive the flood and Noah did it.

This isn’t the only part of the Bible that teaches this faith principle. In Romans 10 it says, that, ***“faith comes by hearing and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD.”*** Listen, true faith is not based on our feelings or emotions. It is not based on our traditions. No, Like Noah, the basis of our faith—is the Word of God! It energizes us to live the way we live.

And remember, all Noah had to go on was God’s word. The Bible says God warned Noah of a thing, ***“not yet seen.”*** There was no visible sign of an impending flood. In fact, it was 120 years out there in the future. And what is worse Noah had never seen RAIN much less a flood. Genesis 2 says, ***“God had not sent rain on the earth but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.”***

I doubt if you or I would have trusted God under these circumstances but Noah had the faith to do so. For 120 years he worked on this huge ark on the basis of his faith in God’s Word alone! And in all that time, NOTHING HAPPENED to make him think a flood was coming. It might have been easier for Noah if every three or four days God had blown up some clouds and let some lightening flash and thunder roll. That might have been encouraging to Noah. But this didn’t happen!

Well, if Noah could believe and obey God’s Word for all those years under those conditions, then surely you and I ought to be able to do so with the fuller revelation that we have. We have an entire BIBLE. And, what do we say when I read the Bible? ***“THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD! THANKS BE TO GOD!”***

We also have the SPIRIT of GOD in our hearts telling us how to live. Do you hear the words to a famous hymn ringing in your heads? ***“How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is fixed for your faith in His excellent WORD!”***

By the way, like He did for Noah, God has told us He will destroy the world again! In 2nd Peter God cites the example of Noah and the flood and then in chapter 3 verse 10 it says, ***“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be destroyed.”***

This text goes on to ask us, in light of this—based on THIS WORD OF GOD—what kind of persons ought we to be? What kind of lives should we live? It says we should make every effort to live lives that are **“spotless and blameless”** lives that stand out in our culture. Our faith should get us going, KEEP us going; it’s our “life fuel.”

This leads to a second thing that Noah’s life teaches us about faith:

(2) FAITH GOES SOMEWHERE.

Noah’s faith led him to get up and go preach for twelve decades, warning people about the flood. And of course, it led him to get up and go build that ark. Well, we need to remember that this construction project was no small task. The boat was 450 feet long—one-and-a-half football fields. It was 75 feet wide and 45 feet high with three decks. Even today, it’s the biggest wooden vessel ever built. It was a monster of a ship. And it was covered with pitch inside and out. Can you imagine how much pitch that was? I bet Noah and his sons smelled like tar the rest of their lives!

Plus, Noah didn’t just call Home Depot and tell them to deliver the lumber for the ark! No, Shem and Ham and Japheth and their dad had to cut all those trees and saw them into lumber. Since they had no power tools, it is no wonder it took them well over a century to complete it.

- Every tree he felled shouted, FAITH.
- Every board he sawed, shouted FAITH.
- Every swing of his hammer, shouted FATIH.
- Every seam to which he applied the pitch shouted, FAITH.

Listen REAL faith, leads us to DO things. Of course, you and I haven’t been told to build an ark. But 1st Peter 3:20 teaches that the flood story is a picture of the second coming of Christ.

Let’s pause to note the parallels. First, there was no way to prepare for the flood other than to follow God’s instructions. Well, there is no way on our own strength to escape the problem of our sinfulness. We need a Savior just like Noah needed that ark. We need Jesus. We need Someone to gather us in and protect us.

Here’s another parallel. People in Noah’s day were just going about their everyday lives when the deluge abruptly came. Well, someday Christ will come just as suddenly. So, just like Noah, there is a lot of work for us to do. As Christians, we are called to “people” the ark. Jesus said, **“You shall be witnesses unto Me.”** Our job is to allow our faith to compel us to get off our couches and share the gospel so that more and more people come in to faith in Jesus.

Okay, authentic faith gets us going. It gets us going somewhere.

(3) And then Noah shows us that faith KEEPS going even when we don’t see WHERE.

Scripture says that rain fell for 40 days. Then there were months of silent floating. Remember, the boat was closed in everywhere. There were no portholes. I get the picture of a huge black coffin—covered with pitch inside and out. The door through which the animals and people entered had been closed by God. So, Noah couldn’t see out or if he could it was only through the opening at the top which means he could look only upward not downward. He couldn’t see where he was going, couldn’t see if the ground was dry.

Another thing I want you to notice is that Noah was told very little about what would happen to him after the rain began to fall. He didn’t know where his faith would lead him. He had obeyed God’s verbal instructions but now GOD WAS SILENT.

As Noah floated on the water all the months that followed, encased in this great wooden structure, there was no explanation, no prompting, no voice of hope from God. God had given him His word by saying, ***“I will establish my covenant with you and you will ENTER the ark...”***

But Noah didn't hear anything about getting OUT of the ark; nothing about where they were going, nothing about how it would all end. So, Noah goes through months of floating with no word from God, encased in a place where he couldn't see out or get information. This must have been hard.

This part of Noah's experience shows us that people with AUTHENTIC faith keep BEING faithful, keep going, even when we wait, wondering where faith is taking us. In all those months Noah kept faithfully feeding and caring for the animals in his charge. He kept repairing leaks, kept praying, kept on keeping on, even when there was no light at the end of the tunnel.

We need to embrace that same kind of faith; the faith that serves God, keeps believing in His promises, even when we can't see where we're headed. Listen to this description of the Heroes of Faith in Hebrews 11: ***“All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance...”***

I think we can all relate to Noah's situation; we've all been in our own “ark-like homes” for going on three months now, wondering when we can come out, wondering when this will end, wondering what our lives will look like when it's all over. I mean, there have been times when we have felt like we are stuck in the ark with no land in sight. But faith keeps us going in times like this. We believe our time of waiting will end. We trust God will lead us out to something better.

And God did that for Noah. The Bible says, ***“God remembered Noah.”*** Of course, God never forgot Noah and his family—this phrase is just a way of saying, the time for the end of his voyage finally came. God sent a wind to move the ark and the waters receded and the ark came to rest in the mountains of Ararat.

In times like we are enduring, we must have faith that God knows WHERE He is leading us. He hasn't forgotten our plight. He's working for our good and His glory. WE don't SEE where we're going, but God does, and we have faith in Him.

LET'S PRAY.