

What a great time of worship today, thank you EJ, Aaron and band. I'm Dustyn Vanzant one of the pastors here at Heritage. My focus at Heritage is working with students, and it's my privilege to open the Bible with you here today.

Andy kicked off a new series at the beginning of November looking at **legends of faith** taken out of Hebrews chapter eleven. There is so much depth of faith and wisdom with this chapter, the writer of Hebrews wanted to paint a picture for the reader that the path to God is paved with the faith of those who have gone before. Our faith is built on the faith of the saints who have gone before, and we can gain our strength through their example.

Before I get too far, I just wanted to make sure and remind you one more time to take a **look at this card** and think about someone you could invite to join us over the Christmas season. There are so many opportunities to make the Christmas season special for you and the people in your life. Whether its UberChristmas, Women's Christmas dessert, Christmas Eve services or any of the other options, there is something for everyone. **Students** make sure you mark your calendars: The middle school Christmas party is December 11, Maggie, the middle school director, has some crazy fun activities planned. High school students you don't want to miss the "Minute to Win it, White Elephant, Christmas Party, Holiday Special, ending in an epic snowball fight - Palooza" on December 8. Make sure to invite your friends!

Let me take a moment and brag about the students for a moment. Back in October during the Fall Retreat we started a 40 day Bible Reading Challenge. We had a goal of getting our student population to start reading the Bible daily and created a challenge for them. So starting October 14, our students have been reading through the life of Jesus in the book of Luke culminating this weekend. It's been incredible watching their responses in real time on the bible app, while they read and engage the Word of God daily. We're

excited to see students not just do it for forty days, but to then create space in their lives moving forward for the Word of God to enter their daily lives.

My mom had one of those big milestone birthdays this year. Now my parents don't travel too much, I mean when you live in the an apex of civilization like central Ohio why would you want to go anywhere else! But Niagara Falls has been on my moms list of places she wants to visit for her whole life. She's talked about going for as long as I can remember, and being only about 5 hours away, its crazy not to go check it out at some point. So this past September for my mothers birthday, my sister, my dad and my mom hopped into the car and drove up to Niagara Falls for an extended weekend. It's a nice five hour drive as long as your sister doesn't forget her passport at the house... Yeah... the ride was pretty uneventful, every time we did it...

Now my sister and I are both grown adults, married with kids and one very large dog - like her dog is really about three dogs in one. We haven't been on a family vacation like this, just the four of us, in 20 years. The last time it was just the four of us, I was learning to drive and they had me drive us down to Florida from Ohio to get in all of my driver's ed hours.

Since that trip to Florida when I was 16, I prefer to be the driver on these trips. Anyone else, you're like the designated driver on road trips? Anyone hate driving on trips? - Yeah you guys are weirdos. I'm joking - no but really your weirdos. You gotta be the driver.

Now when I drive long distances, I like to use cruise. I like it because it lets me move around a little bit, but it also helps keep my foot from getting too heavy on the gas. You know what I'm saying? I had a ten year issue with getting unwanted pit stops on trips with the local authorities. But I've been doing really good for a while now, no local authority pit stops for several years.

Now one of the issues driving long distances, is the flow of traffic. See I always do a good job setting the cruise control at the speed limit at the beginning of the trip. But as I go along, it seems like everyone is passing me like I'm standing still. You can be doing 70 miles per hour in a 65, and it seems like everyone else is doing 85. So what do we do? Well we hit that button for the speed increase. Just a little bit faster. Then after a little while, we hit it again, and again. Until eventually we're keeping up with and passing the other cars doing 85 until we have a date with destiny with a badge.

So often is really easy to get caught up in what everyone else is doing around you, and compromise. You never would have set your cruise control to 10, 15 or 20 over the speed limit at the beginning of the trip, but the trip gets boring and the power of the crowd is strong.

Maybe for you it seems that everyone else in the class is cheating on the final exam. They all have the answer key, someone passed out last years test. And you're left to decide if you're going to be the only one in the class getting the grade you deserve rather than the grade that you memorized for the night before.

Maybe for you, everyone you surrounded yourself with smoked pot and never had consequences. The crowd says it's just pot, its natural! It's not that bad and it calms me down after a hard day. And the pressure builds for you to try too.

Maybe you were at school and everyone was talking about something you had never heard about so you went home and Googled it. And now you know information you shouldn't know and you can't get those images out of your head. You had no intention to find what you saw, but everyone else is looking at these videos.

Everyone else at school has Snapchat and Tiktok. You know the family rules, but you're the only one with weird backward rules from your parents. You don't want to break trust, but it feels impossible to be the only one on the outside.

Finding and fitting in with a group of people is difficult. You didn't care about brand name clothes before, but now fitting in requires a certain look. You never would have spent that much on jeans before, but now you have a lifestyle you have to see up.

You've always had standards for shows you would watch, but this one show is so popular and widely acclaimed that you sit through content you wouldn't typically watch, just so you can know what's going on.

This book has been sitting on the best seller list for weeks so you pick it up because it seems everyone is reading it.

Maybe your life choices have been altered simply because everyone else you know is passing you by. You dated someone because you "needed" a boyfriend or girlfriend to feel like everyone else your age.

You went to college because of the pressure from the community you live in. Everyone else had a college beside their name at graduation. Then while you were at college you fell into a degree because that's what your friends were studying.

You rushed into unprepared marriage because most of your friends had already tied the knot. It's so hard to be the bridesmaid and never the bride.

As you've grown older, the constant barrage of the crowd asking about kids, and caused you to have kids when it wasn't in your plans.

Maybe you've bought cars because you don't want to be embarrassed in the sports carpool with the oldest SUV.

Everyone else is inflating their sales numbers...

Some of these things I've just mentioned are pretty harmless in the grand scheme of life. However others have the potential to permanently alter your life negatively. It's so easy to compromise our personal values and expectations in the onslaught and noise of the crowd. But what happens when the crowd and our faith collide? Who wins out?

Over the last several weeks Andy has laid the foundation for this Legends of the Fall series built around faith. Working from the definition of faith from Hebrews 1:1, it says:

**Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. - Hebrews 11:1**

From this verse the author launches us into a history lesson on all of the legendary examples of faith in the Old Testament. Explaining to the reader how this legend exemplified faith. So Abel showed that **Faith is choosing to do things God's way**. Enoch showed us that **faith is believing in God's abiding presence**. Then we saw that Abraham showed that **faith is responding to God's call** as well as that **faith is trusting in God's character**.

Today we're going to take a look at the legend of Noah. What we're going to see is that Noah exemplifies that **faith is doing what is right when everyone else isn't**.

Noah is a story that many of us are familiar with, and I don't have time today to read the three chapters in Genesis and walk through the story. If you'd like

to go back and read it this week, Noah's original text is Genesis 6-9. Today I'd like to remind us of his story by a little video. So here's some kids explaining the story of Noah. - **NOAH VIDEO**

That's so cute, I mean who wouldn't hit the like button on a cute story like that? I like that video because it gives some details, that you miss just reading it in the Bible. I mean who knew Candy Land was that old?

There are a number of stories in the Bible that are troubling for me. Last week's story of Abraham and Isaac is probably the number one most difficult story to explain and justify. It seems so distant from the God of the Bible, and specifically of the New Testament. But on the heels of that story last week, Noah's Ark has to be up there too.

I think we have forgotten the brutal nature of the story. It almost seems like a fairy tale at this point. It's been laundered into a "We Bought a Zoo", feel good story about a guy and his family, and the crazy antics of being on a boat with a bunch of animals. We have kids playing with Little happy figures and boats. We plaster baby nurseries with Noah's Ark themes.

I mean we're talking about a global disaster that wipes out every living thing on the ground and in the air. Can you imagine decorating a baby nursery with Hurricane Katrina? This story is incredibly brutal and for the most part we've neutered it culturally.

I think it's dangerous and disingenuous to gloss over these stories like a parent ending the movie early. Imagine watching Old Yeller until the last fifteen minutes. You go through life thinking wow what a great happy story about a boy and his dog. Ignorance might be bliss, but at some point it's going to catch up to you.

I think that maybe why I have such difficulties explaining and justifying it. I like the stories of the Bible where Jesus is the good guy. You those passages where he says things like, "Let the children come unto me." Where Jesus heals and forgives people. I don't like passages about God that are difficult. They make me think. Make me wrestle with a God that is outside of my understanding and reasoning.

Today we're going to wrestle through two spots of the narrative about Noah. You're familiar with the middle of the story, so we're going to focus on the beginning and the end of the story. To give the basis for today, let's start with what the writer of Hebrews said about Noah in Hebrews 11 verse 7. It says:

**By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. -Hebrews 11:7**

There's a few things I notice when I read through this short verse in Hebrews. Keeping with the definition of fear from verse 1 of chapter 11. Faith is the assurance of what we cannot see. Noah couldn't see the flood coming, but he had faith that what God said was true. Now imagine this, most people put the moment Noah knew about the flood to the time the flood came at about 75-100 years. That means Noah was acting on faith for 75-100 years without seeing a drop of proof. The only thing he based his faith on was a lifelong relationship with the creator. He knew God's voice, and had faith in His words. He took action and it saved his family.

I don't know about you, but my neighbors would have a problem with me building a boat in my front yard for 75 years. I don't know how many violations of the Home Owners Association manual that would be. Imagine what his wife might have been thinking... Any of you have projects you've

been working on for a while? And you get those “casual reminders” everyone in a while? When are you gonna finish the trim work? When are you going to paint that wall? Let me tell all the wives here today, when a guy says he’s going to do a project, he doesn’t need a reminder every 6 months! Noah had a long project and the pressure to prove his faith must’ve been great by the time something finally happened.

No one else is worried about a flood. Global flooding is just a myth Noah, the data doesn’t support it. C’mon! There’s no scientific data to support a global catastrophe is going to occur Noah! No matter what Noah did there was no historic data to prove manmade Global flooding was coming. Now before you go too far down a path I don’t want to go with global flooding remarks, we’re talking a manmade flooding not because of our consumption but by our corruption. Man was corrupt and God had to act.

Look what it says next in Hebrews 11:7,

**“By this he condemned the world”**

Noah following the prompting of God condemned the world for its own corruption. Now that is a curious way to say what happened. It leads us to think that Noah, acting on faith condemned the rest of the world. Here’s the moment we need to flip back to the beginning and see what’s going on here. Turn with me to Genesis 6. If you don’t have a Bible the verses are always on the screen, also the Youversion app is a great free app to look for in the appstore. So we’ll be in Genesis 6 starting in verse 5. It says,

**5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the Lord said, “I will blot**

**out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.**

Think about this, just a few chapters over, in Genesis one, God created man, and said it was VERY GOOD. And here only five chapters later God regrets the creation of man. Humanity had become wicked, and our only intention was evil continually. It's so bad that God decides he must blot out not just humanity, but also animals, creeping things, and the birds. The system needed rebooting.

We don't have a clear indication of how bad the earth was at this point, other than God felt he had to restart. Depending on how you're made, there may be moments today, when we think, how much worse could it have been? Watch the news one night, and you realize the evil within the world today. For some of us we look around and think yeah I see it. The world is so evil and we've lost all faith in humanity. If you were God you might reboot the system too.

Others of us look around and it's hard to see the depths of evil generally described here. It seems people are generally good, there's just a few bad eggs. We see the vast majority of people aren't breaking the law or murdering everyone, and in fact the society seems to be getting better. Vaccinations and technology have progressed and helping millions of people. We're working to eradicate hunger and made incredible strides in getting clean water to the remotest parts of the world. The greater good of society is strong.

Regardless of how you think of our society, it's hard to wrap our heads around this God in Noah's story. Who would wipe out everything. I mean

regardless how evil humanity is, it's hard to fathom removing the animals and birds too. It seems extreme. It seems inconsistent.

After condemning humanity, this passage gives us one slim glimmer of hope in this guy named Noah. It says that, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." Genesis 6 continues and says,

**Noah was righteous, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. - Genesis 6:9**

The crowd of the earth did evil and what was right in their own eyes not in God's, but Noah was different. He followed God because he realized **Faith is doing the right thing when everyone else isn't**. So God saved Noah and his family on the ark along with a contingent of animals while everything else perished in the flood.

The last thing to notice from the writer of Hebrews 11 verse seven is his conclusion of Noah's example of faith. Look at this last phrase,

**(Noah) became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.**

Now there's a shift from what we read earlier about Noah's righteousness. In Genesis it said that Noah was righteous, here the writer of Hebrews says Noah is an heir of righteousness. It's a slight change, but it's an important nuance to think about.

At the end of the story of the flood, Noah, his family and the animals disembark the ark. They begin getting back into their lives. Noah makes a sacrifice to God and God makes a covenant with Noah. God promises never to flood the earth like that again. He establishes the covenant between himself and Noah, Noah's descendants and the rest of humanity as well as

with every living creature. and he concludes his covenant with this, in verse 16 of Genesis 9,

**When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.**

First impression is that it's a little weird. It's obviously talking about a rainbow, in fact some of our translations, like NIV subbed out the word 'bow' for the word 'rainbow' - and rightly so. God chose a naturally occurring phenomenon to be a reminder. Notice however, it's a reminder to God, not to us. I mean sure we can look to it and be comforted that God isn't going to destroy the place. But it's really a reminder to God not to destroy the earth again. Why would God need a reminder? Is God forgetful?

The word rainbow comes originally from the thought that it looks like an archers bow stretched across the sky. The word the author uses in Genesis is literally the word 'bow'. Throughout the Old Testament it's used over and over to depict a weapon of war or a dispenser of wrath. It was one of the most devastating weapons of war at the time.

Here's the incredible part about God's bow in the sky. See it's God's reminder, notice who it's pointed at. The bow points into the heavens, God is not at war with us, with humanity. The bow points at Him. God is no longer at war with those needing grace. No matter how sinful man gets on the earth, God will not destroy us with his wrath.

God points his bow toward himself, not because we've figured it out and are no longer evil. God hasn't become apathetic to the destruction happening on the earth. And He hasn't changed his methods from the Old Testament to the now. God points this bow at himself. His wrath doesn't come after us, it comes

after himself and the innocent Christ. In an act of extreme grace God turns the bow on himself and accepts the wrath for our sin when He dies on the cross.

Noah was an heir of righteousness not because of a boat, or a flood, or because he was marginally better than the corrupt mankind around him, but because he had faith in the unseen event of the coming Christ. An event he would never see. An event that no one else believed.

Becoming an heir of righteousness requires some tremendous faith. Faith that pushes us to do what is right when everyone else isn't.

You know what's crazy Noah preached righteousness his whole life, including 75 years while building a massive boat in his front yard. In all that time he never made a convert - except his family. Are you willing to take a stand when no one else is?

Here's the issue, every day we're getting flooded with more and more pressures from the crowd around us. Everyday the people at school, the co-workers, our social media network, the television shows, the friends we surround ourselves are sending us signals and often they are opposite of what God is sending.

What if you became so good at resisting the pressure you became known as an heir of righteousness? How would your life look? How could your relationships work better? How could your relationship with God be more fulfilling? How could your relationship with your spouse

**Faith is doing the right thing when everyone else isn't**

Imagine a church that unlocks a culture trapped in the constant pressure of evil. Imagine a church that isn't simply about its own growth, and being the biggest, fastest growing church in America, but about stepping out in faith and doing what God has asked. Imagine a church that isn't worried about the latest trends in gets people ready for eternity with the creator of the universe.

Set up Offering

Pray