Save Your Family From The Flood — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 6:9–22 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, May 14, 2023 · *Living Right*

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Which reminds me, if you haven't told your mother that you love her, you should probably tell her that today. If your mother is no longer with us, you can tell the Lord that you're grateful for how well she loved you. And if you're not able to reach out to your mom, not because she's gone on to be with the Lord, but she's separated herself from you, I know in God's providence he probably brought someone into your life to play that role of mother and you can tell that person that you love them as well.

We're going to be in the book of Genesis this morning. My intention was to preach a special Mother's Day sermon and to share about the trip to Israel the last 12 days. I took 1,652 photos and videos while I was there. And my intention was to kind of edit it all down on the trip home and pick one of the great moms of the Bible and preach a sermon on that mom and do like 15 minutes and 15 minutes on either end and call it good. But instead of doing that I watched a video and fell asleep on the 24-hour—felt like—plane ride back to Abilene.

And honestly, I joke about that. Honestly, as I was meditating on this passage that we're going to preach this morning, which is next in our series—and by the way, if you're new to our church, our church preaches through books of the Bible. We're committed to what's called expository preaching, which means the main point of a Sunday sermon is the main point of the Sunday text. And the way that we get to our Sunday text is we just preach through books of the Bible. And that way it's not the preacher choosing what the church hears, it's God choosing what the church hears.

I might pick the book, but ultimately God's going to pick the topic. And in God's providence, as he oftentimes does, this passage that we just happen to arrive at next in our series is perfectly suited for Mother's Day. And so instead of preaching a kind of unique Mother's Day

sermon on a mom of the Bible, I think there's some real application and encouragement for you as a mom in this passage. And it also applies beyond mothers, obviously. All of God's word is profitable and applicable not just to your season as a mother but to any person to any season of life and that will be the case this morning.

If you like taking notes, the first thing I'd like to mention before we get into our text is that every mom is born with an instinct to protect their children. You've heard the phrase mama bear. You can take a woman who's otherwise pretty pleasant and peaceful and then you threaten her children and she turns into a bear. I mean, she's going to take you out. And sometimes mothers are able to sense things that most men are not. They're like, "Oh, it's fine, there's nothing there." And then it turns out, oh, they actually were a predator trying to destroy your children.

They had some kind of foresight to be able to see things that you couldn't see as a dad. That's a gift, I think, from the Lord given to moms about their children to protect them. And that whatever that is, that instinct I think is heightened for your children when your children are in an environment of risk. The greater the risk, the greater the awareness you are of those risks. And so you are on all fours, you are paying attention, the hair on the back of your neck is standing up. And the reality is our children are being born into a world that is becoming riskier and riskier if they are going to follow after the Lord.

We live, I know, in Abilene, Texas; we're in the buckle of the Bible Belt. There is a sense in which there is still a general Christian culture in our city and the Big Country, but that is decreasingly becoming the case. We are getting further and further away from a Christian worldview, certainly Christian virtues, Christian worldview of how things are generally understood that is becoming less and less in our schools and our young people and your children are being born into that climate. And so what do you do as a mom who wants to protect your children from a world that has gone wrong?

How can you deliver your children from that kind of chaos? That is what our text is ultimately about, because it's a passage about Noah building an ark to save his family from the flood of God's judgment on them. And so I hope you'll be blessed by what I think God wants to share, particularly to our moms. If you're new to the book of Genesis, essentially the book of Genesis is a book of beginnings and it lays out answers to some of our big questions, such as how did we get here, what is here, and what went wrong with our world?

And the basic premise of Genesis chapter 3 is that what went wrong with our world is this thing called sin. When sin was introduced into the world, it brought about a curse. That curse separated us or it alienated us from our Creator, God. And therefore there's a wall of hostility and enmity between us and God that needs to be fixed. There is also a brokenness in our relationships with each other because of sin. In our marriages, in our parenting with children and dads to sons and daughters to moms, there's this brokenness in those

relationships and that kind of trickles down into every little crevice of society, and there's just this general brokenness in the world, all because of the curse of sin.

And if you read Genesis three, there's this promise given by God that one day from the seed of this woman Eve will come a deliverer who will crush the head of that serpent and will reverse the curse of sin. But that deliverer to that point had not yet come. And so when you read Genesis chapter 4 and Genesis chapter 5, you just see the impact of the curse of sin on people's lives. You see it in their relationship with God. They become increasingly more wicked. They choose to rebel against God and reject God in increasingly larger ways.

You see in Genesis chapter 5 this contrast between those who follow after God and those who don't. You have Seth and his line, which is kind of this righteous remnant. But then you get to chapter 6, and even that righteous remnant had gotten smaller and smaller and smaller until chapter 6, verse 5,[1] says that basically, wickedness had gotten so great that every thought of every person was only evil continually. And so the world had broken bad to this incredible degree. And God essentially says, I'm going to destroy the world as a result.

It is beyond repair. And so we have got to start over. Except this time in starting over, he does something a little bit different. There's actually a little wordplay on this word destroy when God says he's going to destroy the world. If you're taking notes. What had happened in their culture is essentially what's happening in our culture. They had increasingly dishonored God, they rejected God's design, they had increasingly defiled themselves by living lives outside of God's design, and as a result of that, they were destroying the world in which they had inhabited.

They were called by God to cultivate the creation, instead, they were destroying the creation. So, what God basically says in verses 12 and 13 is, since you've destroyed my world, my world is going to destroy you. Since your character and virtue has been destroyed by the sin that you refuse to repent of, I'm going to use this creation to destroy you and the world in which you inhabit. And there's this play on words. This verse 12, it says, "God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt"—you might circle that word *corrupt*—"for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." "[An] end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them.

Behold, I will destroy them with the earth." So God is taking the destroyers. This little word *corrupt* is the same Hebrew word down here for *destroy*. So it's as if God is saying, your character has been destroyed, your virtue has been destroyed because of sin and brokenness in your life. And so now because of that, I'm going to destroy you. And I don't think this is God being vindictive. I don't think this is God being kind of like vengeful and angry. I think this is an act of love on the part of the Lord.

In the same way that if you had a loved one who was stricken with cancer and that cancer was eating them and destroying their body, you would do whatever it took to liberate them and deliver them from that cancer. And that's essentially what God is doing with his creation. You are so sick. It is so bad. It is beyond the scope of little changes here and there. We've got to go nuclear, we've got to go radioactive. We've got to give you the chemotherapy of a worldwide judgment in order to rid the earth of this disease called sin.

And so he starts over. Except he doesn't start over by creating a new heavens and a new earth and a new Adam and a new Eve and kind of a Genesis 1 to 2, Part B. He picks one person, one family named Noah. And he decides, I'm going to save you. And this is where we ended last time we were together in Genesis chapter 6, verse 8. It says, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." And God warns Noah of the impending judgment, and God instructs Noah to build an ark, and so that's what Noah does.

Noah builds an ark to save his family from God's judgment. And his life sheds light on how we can save our children from the same. And in this way, I think it's a wonderful Mother's Day sermon because if you are a mom, you have an instinct to want to protect your children. You want to build an ark to save them from this catastrophe that we call this broken world. And Noah's life gives a template, kind of a blueprint for what those decisions need to look like and how you need to go about that process.

And so let's pick it up in chapter 6, verse 14, and we'll read down to verse 22. God says to Noah, you need to make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Some say that's cypress, some say that's oak. Nobody knows for sure what gopher wood is. The instructions are to make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and out with pitch. That's like a tar type of material to make it waterproof so that water doesn't get through the wood. You're to make it "the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits.

Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above," and set the door in the ark on the side. "Make it with lower, second, and third decks." So this is the big wooden box that's built to survive a worldwide flood. Verse 17: "Behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth" will die. "But I will establish my covenant with you, and you" will "come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife," your "sons' wives with you.

And" every living thing "of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you." They'll "be male and female." The "birds according to their kinds," the "animals according to their kinds," and the creeping things "of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive." And "also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up," because it'll "serve as food for you and for them." And so "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him."

And so the way I'd like to set up the message is to lay out from this text three commitments that I think you can make, particularly if you're a mom, three commitments you can make as a mom to build an ark to save your family from the flood of God's judgment, to deliver your family from the chaos of this world gone wrong. And it applies to those who are not moms, obviously. You can be a dad, you can be someone who doesn't have children whatsoever. If you want to live a life of spiritual significance, if you want to seek the welfare of the next generation, this is how you live right in a world that has gone wrong?

And the first commitment is actually more underneath the text than it is explicitly inside the text. And it's what we saw in verses eight and nine. And it is that you need as a mother or as a child of God to acknowledge your own need for mercy and receive God's grace for yourself. The main problem going into Genesis chapter 6 is that the world had grown wicked, that the thought of every person was only evil continually, and the reality is not much has changed. We all have sinned against God. We all have hearts that are desperately sick.

We don't even understand sometimes why we do the bad things that we do. There is no sense in which we can save ourselves or deliver ourselves from this wicked age or our wicked hearts. And so we've got to come to a place where we acknowledge our need for God's mercy and receive his grace as a gift in our life. And it's easy to read, I think, verses eight and nine, and it says that Noah found favor with God and that he was righteous and he was blameless in his generation because he walked with God.

It's really easy to read this and go, well, he must have been a good man. And the reason God chose him must be because he was the one righteous guy on all the earth. And sometimes when we tell this story to kids, I wonder if that's not how we tell it. Like the whole world was bad. Except Noah. He was a good man. But I don't believe that. Number one, because he's not a great man. As soon as he gets off the ark, he basically almost destroys his family with his drunken escapades and nakedness.

And number two, before Noah finds favor in God, right before this and right after this, there is commentary on how bad the world had gotten. All flesh was corrupt. Violence through every person on the earth. I think that includes Noah. The reason that Noah was righteous, the reason that he found favor in the eyes of God is 100% because of God's mercy and grace. What made Noah righteous is the same thing that makes you and I righteous. It's not our moral effort, it's not our virtue, it's God's amazing grace and our willingness to recognize our need for grace and exercise faith in God's provision for our sin problem.

And that's what Noah does. God comes to him, he warns him of judgment, and Noah says, "I recognize I'm sinful, I recognize our world is messed up, and I believe in your provision. I believe that you're going to judge us, and I believe the ark is going to save us, and so I'm going to put my faith in this ark, and I'm going to build it according to your word." And so it

is by grace through faith. By grace, Noah was chosen by God. By grace, he was spoken to by God.

By grace, he escaped the judgment. By grace, he built the ark. And by grace, his family was delivered through the ark. By grace through faith. Everything good that happens to Noah and everything good that happens through Noah for his family is because of God's grace. And the application for you and for me is if you want to accomplish something of spiritual significance for your family, if you want God to do something big through your life, that spiritually significant act will only ever be accomplished by grace through faith. God is not impressed with your moral record.

He's not impressed by your virtue and character. The Bible says our righteousness on our very best day is like a polluted garment before the Lord. So just stop playing that game. And come to a point where you recognize it is by grace and grace alone that God is pleased with me. And it is by faith and faith alone that I can be pleasing to the Lord. The book of Hebrews, chapter 11, says, "Without faith it is impossible to please" God. The old hymn "Amazing Grace": it is through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come.

It is by grace, God's grace, that's brought me safe this far, and grace will lead me home. One of my favorite passages in the New Testament about blessing the next generation and discipleship to the third and fourth generation is in 2 Timothy chapter 2. In 2 Timothy chapters 1 and 2, Paul instructs his little protégé Timothy to take what you've received from me and entrust it to faithful men who will then entrust it to others also. And so you get this basic what we're talking about here in Genesis. I want you to take the ark that you got from me that helped you escape God's judgment.

And I want you to build an ark for the next generation so that they can escape God's judgment. And then I want those people to take that ark and entrust it to the next generation. Okay, that's generational discipleship. That's building an ark for your family. But before Paul tells Timothy to do that, the very first thing he says is to "be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus." In other words, this act of spiritual significance cannot happen, will not happen outside of you being a person who lives by grace.

You need to have a culture of grace. You need to have a family that has a culture of grace. When you wake up in the morning, it's not about you. It's all about him. It's not about yourself. It's not about the flesh. It's not about moral virtue and striving. It's all about God's grace in Jesus Christ. Live in that domain. And when you live in that domain, God will be pleased with you and He will use your life to a significant degree. The most important thing you can do as a mom, the most important thing you can do as a parent is to teach your children what it looks like to walk by grace, to have a grace-based home, a grace-based life.

The mom and dad are sinners who need God's grace, and you're a sinner who needs God's grace. And it's not about what we do, it's about what Jesus Christ has done. It's not about our striving and moral effort. It's about resting in what God has already accomplished for us through Jesus Christ on the cross. And when you demonstrate that, God will use your life in significant ways. You see this in the epistles, in Paul, in Galatians, when he talks about how he lives his life as a Christian. He says, "I have been crucified with Christ."

So the old Paul is not alive anymore. The new Paul is Jesus Christ living in me. So you say, well, Paul, how does that work? How do you have Jesus Christ live in you and through you? He says, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by" what? "By faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Everything I do, every decision I make is by grace through faith. A little bit later in Galatians chapter 5, verse 6, he says, in Christ Jesus, circumcision, uncircumcision, doesn't matter.

That old covenant, that old law, that old system, irrelevant to the Christian life. What matters in the Christian life is faith expressing itself through love. This is Christian spirituality. This is how you set your family up for acts of spiritual significance. This is how you build an ark for your family. You teach them to live by grace through faith, resting in what Jesus Christ has done on the cross, and living a life of obedience based on every day getting up, receiving the grace of God for your life, being strengthened by God's grace for his calling on your life, and demonstrating obedience through acts of faith at every point along the way.

That's the first thing. And if you don't have this thing, the other two things are largely irrelevant because this is the foundation for everything that follows. Acknowledge your need for mercy, receive God's grace for yourself. And if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian, you've never received the gift of salvation, that's where it begins, but it doesn't end there. Every single Christian in this room, your entire Christian life is by grace through faith. The faith that saves you is the faith that sustains you is the faith that glorifies you to the very end.

Every step of the Christian life is by grace through faith. That's number one. Number two: count the cost and embrace God's calling for your life. This is what you see with Noah in verses 17 and 18. He gets a difficult word from the Lord. I'm going to destroy the earth. I'm going to destroy all flesh in which the breath of life is under heaven. Everything on the earth is going to die, but I will establish my covenant with you. You're going to come into the ark, you, your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

I don't know about you, but if I was Noah, I would not want to hear what God was saying in this moment. I want you to just imagine if you were Noah: you just received this word about judgment and deliverance, but as soon as you get appreciative of the fact of God's salvation, you recognize the reality of his judgment, and he's going to destroy everything you built your

life for. That house you had been building, those friends that you had connected to, those hopes and dreams that you were clinging on to for the next 10, 20, 30, 40 years, all of it gone.

And that's exactly where Noah is. One of my favorite remakes of this story is a show with Steve Carell named *Evan Almighty*. Has anyone ever watched *Evan Almighty*? All right. I said that in the first service and they're like Evan who? They didn't know what I was talking about. So there you go. *Evan Almighty*: he's—Steve, is it Steve Carell? Yeah. He's a U.S. Congressman, he just got elected as a U.S. Congressman,[2] and then Morgan Freeman, who is God—who, by the way, has a great voice for God— he comes to Evan and says, "I want you to build a boat and build an ark."

And he's like, "I can't do that. I'm a U.S. Congressman." And, oh, Fred Flintstone guy—he's one of the chief congressmen, and he's putting pressure on Evan to stop being crazy and building this boat, but Evan can't help it. He wakes up every morning and his beard's growing and he's got all this stuff. He can't help himself. He has to do what God's called him to do. And he loses friends. He loses his wife. He loses his children. He loses his respect. Everyone thinks he's crazy. That's essentially what Noah's going through.

Again, remember, I don't think Noah was this super righteous dude beforehand. I'm sure he had lots of unbelieving friends who thought to themselves, this guy's gone cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs. He's lost his ever-loving mind. He's talking about the world going to be destroyed. And we said a couple of weeks ago Noah was a preacher of righteousness, so I don't think he was just building the boat, I think he was preaching the message, and it was going to cost him. And so if you want to experience God's will for your life, if you want to deliver your family from the flood of judgment, you need to know God does have a call on your life.

He does have a will and a way. He has a hope and a future. But oftentimes I would say almost every time that hope and future will cost you greatly. And you've got to be willing to count that cost and obey God's word, embrace God's call for your life. I can remember easily in my own life. I was growing up as a kid. I was—let's see—junior, sophomore year of high school. And I remember my parents coming to me saying, "The Lord has asked us to do something you're not going to like."

And I remember hating their guts for the decision that they made. Now I was a teenager, teenagers hate their parents for all sorts of reasons that don't make any sense. And so I was just a normal teenager in that regard. But I remember I made my parents' lives extremely difficult, especially my mom. She would wash her dishes with her tears. That's how bad of a child I was. And I remember they didn't buckle, they didn't cave. They were getting pressure from their so-called friends, they were getting pressure—I mean, you live in Roby, Texas, and you do something, everyone knows about it, but they don't just know about it.

They get the coffee shop spin, which is a perversion of what's actually going on. And so they had all of that fake news they had to deal with as well. They were getting pressure from all sides. I was threatening to leave the house. I said, "I'm going to move out, I'm going to move in with so-and-so." And they didn't cave. And to this day, I don't know if they really heard from the Lord. I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt that they did. But I have incredible respect for them because they stuck to what they believed God called them to do.

They counted the cost and they embraced God's call, even though it was extremely hard. And if you're going to be someone who delivers your family from the flood, you have to recognize that oftentimes God's call is going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be inconvenient and untimely and almost always it is going to be unpopular. Just like it was for Noah. I'm sure Noah's friends thought he was crazy. And when he was preaching that message of righteousness, I'm sure they thought he was arrogant and pig-headed and holier-than-thou, and "Who are you to say?"

And many times when you walk in obedience to God's call on your life, it'll be the exact same thing. The darkness does not like the light, because the light exposes the things that are done in darkness. I remember this last week I was in Israel and I was talking with a pastor. There was like 30 people who went on the trip and ten of those people were pastors. And one of the pastors' names was Gregory. And he pastors outside of Texas and he was talking about being obedient to God's will for his life and that God had called him to this church and the assignment that he was at was a very difficult assignment.

The church was very sick. And I said, "Well, how did you know it was God's will? Why did you put yourself through that pain and misery? It sounds terrible." And he said, "Well, I just knew it was God's will because all the other doors were shut and this was the only door open, and this was the most difficult assignment, the furthest away from our family for the least amount of money, and I thought it had to be God." And I laughed and he laughed and it's halfway joking, halfway not. Sometimes God's will is the most difficult decision.

Sometimes it's not. Sometimes it's wonderful and great blessing. But oftentimes it isn't. And if you're waiting for this peaceful, easy feeling and this warm fuzzy and it's all going to be wonderful and Cocoa and Sugar Puffs and all of this that may not come because God's will oftentimes is unpopular and uncomfortable and untimely. And you've got to be ready to embrace the fact that's what you're headed towards and be willing to live with a little bit of pain and be willing to tolerate a little bit of pushback. Just like Nehemiah: when he was building the wall, Sanballat and his friends, they come up and "You've got to come down.

You've got to stop building that wall. You're wasting your time." And Nehemiah said, "No, I'm doing a good work. It's an important work. It's God's work. I will not come down." I'm going to live with the pushback. And sometimes you've got to hear the words of Jesus when he said that when people persecute you and they malign you and they say all kinds of evil,

false things against you on my account, rejoice, be glad; that's how they treated the prophets who came before you. You've got to remember what Paul said to Timothy, that if you "desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus," you "will be persecuted."

You will suffer. It's part of the territory. It's part of the Christian life. Embracing God's call for your life will often require you to pay a price that you don't want to pay. You maybe were not expecting to pay. Just because it's inconvenient, just because it's hard, doesn't mean it's not God. It doesn't mean it's not good, and it doesn't mean that he won't accomplish things in your life through your obedience to his call. And so expect a little pain, expect a little pushback. One of the most important things you can know as a Christian is to not let the temporary pain of faith cut you off from the long-term blessing of obedience.

I can't tell you how many times I see this in the scripture, and I've seen this even in my own life. The immediate choice of faith is hard. It's painful. It hurts. There's lots of unanswered questions. It's fuzzy, it's not clear. You're questioning God, you're questioning yourself, you're questioning everything. That's part of the territory, that's part of faith. It's God doing something in you in that season so that you can experience the blessing, the long-term blessing of obedience, but you'll never get that blessing if you don't persevere through the pain.

So don't let the temporary pain of faith cut you off from the long-term blessing of obedience. There's a rich blessing when we fully embrace the call of God on our life. It might require us to reorient our priorities, to put up with a little bit of trash talk, to loosen our grip on the things of this world. But that is not God's punishment. That is God's goodness setting you up for a blessing on the other end. So acknowledge your need for mercy and receive God's grace. Count the cost and embrace God's call.

Finally, obey God's word and trust God's provision. Obey God's word in every single thing and trust in God's provision in every single moment. You see this commitment in this text a lot of different ways. I think it's explicit in the instructions that Noah receives from the Lord on how to build the ark and how to fill the ark both have very minute details that are odd. I think the only reason they're spelled out for us is to kind of highlight the specificity of God's commands and the comprehensive nature of Noah's obedience.

If you go back to verse 14, the material of the ark is mentioned. It's gopher wood, which is just a transliteration of the Hebrew. We don't know for sure what kind of wood it is. He had to build individual rooms in the ark, enough for his family and enough for the animals. I'm assuming some animals could share a crib. But you know, you wouldn't want the alligators with the turtledoves. He had to cover the ark in pitch on both sides. If it was Daddy Bob building the ark, it would just be one or the other, but here's Noah specificity, both sides to waterproof the ark so that it can really withstand the storm and the flood.

It was to be 300 cubits long. A cubit is two of your spans. A span in biblical measurements is like the space between your pinky and your thumb if you stretch it out as far as you can. And if you do that twice, you take it from the tip of your middle finger down to your waist, and then you flip it again, it should go to your elbow. If you're a proportional, normal human being. So you got two spans is a cubit. Okay, this is a cubit from your elbow to the tip of your middle finger, as you can see from the room.

Some of you have bigger cubits than others. So we don't know for sure what length the cubit was. Most say about 18 inches. So if we just go with 18 inches, it would have been about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, 45 feet high. And then he said to build the roof, one cubit above the frame, all around the frame of the ark. So think of this 18 inch gap in the top of the ark and this roof. And so that would let in fresh air for the poopy smell, and sunlight and stuff like that.

Why is all this mentioned? I think it's the specificity of God's commands and the comprehensive nature of Noah's obedience. The door was to be in the middle, not on the front or the back. The ark was to have not one floor, not two floors, but three floors. And then if you skip down to verse 19, you have specific instructions on filling the ark. He says to bring every living creature, two of every sort, into the ark. And we see in the next verse, not only are they to be male and female, it is according to their kind.

And so some say, if you go to the next verse, some say that's like the difference between the genus and the species. And so maybe he didn't get every single bird there was to get, but he gets certain kinds of birds, like the genus of peacocks, and then from there microevolution kind of does its thing over the hundreds and thousands of years that are after the fact. The other thing that's specific is that the animals were to come to him, not him go to them. This is where it comes to trusting God's provision.

I wonder if Noah maybe missed this part up front. And he's out there trying to wrestle alligators, you know, getting them into the ark. And then one day he wakes up and the crocodiles are on his front porch graciously, willingly going in of their own accord, and him thinking to himself, "Wow, look at God's provision. When I was at my wits' end, when I didn't know what I was going to do to finish out God's call on my life, it is at that moment that God demonstrated his great faithfulness." That's what you see in this text.

Noah does everything. He does everything the Lord asked him to do. If you go to the next verse, he talks about the food. Getting the different kinds of food, storing it up for them and for his family. Go to the next verse. Noah does everything the Lord asked him to do. He does the weird things, the expected things, the hard things, and the weird things and the unexpected things. And that's the same thing when it comes to your life. If you want to deliver your family from the flood, sometimes God's word will not make sense.

You say, "What is God's word?" It's revealed in the New Testament, it's revealed in the Old Testament. He has very clear designs on how you are to parent and how you are to raise your children. And sometimes it will not make sense. And sometimes it will be inconvenient. And sometimes it will be hard, especially in a culture that rejects God and wants nothing to do with God's designs for life. Do it anyway. Obey God's word. And then when you get to the end of your rope and you're thinking to yourself, "How can I move forward?

I've made a mess of everything. My children think I'm crazy. My friends think I'm lost and out at sea," it is in those moments when obedience is most difficult that you will find God most eager to provide. Just like when the Israelites were coming out of slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt and they get to the tip of the Red Sea and "We're doomed. We're about to die. We did what God told us to do, and now it looks like all is lost." And it was at that moment that God said, "I'll split the sea."

He was eager to provide at that moment of extreme difficulty. That's when God provided in supernatural, powerful ways. And I see this all over the Scripture. I've seen this in my own life. I've seen it in the lives of people I love. When you are faithful to do what God's called you to do, walk in the light that you have, even when it's challenging, even when it's inconvenient, even when it doesn't make sense. When you're at that end of the rope and you feel as if all hope is lost, in the darkest night, the worst point of the storm, that's when God shows up and provides in ways that are supernatural unbelievable.

We recognize it had to be the hand of the Lord. God is most eager to provide when it is most difficult to obey. And the case in point, I think, is those animals coming to Noah and willingly going into the boat themselves. Ordinary obedience paves the way for extraordinary provision. And so as you go through this Mother's Day, moms, I know this is not some big aha moment, but it is just a reminder to encourage you to maintain your faith—a long obedience in the same direction. To do so in the strength that God provides through his grace, through Jesus Christ, to persevere, to keep owning that calling on your life, even when it's challenging and difficult.

And keep walking in the truth that you have, even when you don't know how you're going to take the next step, believing that God will be faithful to provide and demonstrate his faithfulness when you set up a platform of your abiding, ongoing faith. That's the way the kingdom of God works. It is our display of faith that invites God to display his faithfulness. And it looks a certain way when your kids are young, it looks a different way when your kids are old. The design never changes. Acknowledge your need for mercy.

Receive God's grace for yourself. Count the cost and embrace the call. You can't begin unless you own it for yourself. And then obey God's word and trust in God's provision. Trust and obey. Trust and obey. There's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey. So I know a lot of you moms, you raised your hand earlier about you're at a point in your life

where you really need God to deliver you and we're going to spend some time during this invitation praying for you and with you again.

You may be here this morning and you're not a Christian and you need to invite Jesus to be the Lord of your life. And if that's the case, there'll be a time for you to come and respond. We don't have a lot of time. We're already a little bit late in the game, but I want to encourage you to take these moments and to receive God's word into your heart and to put into practice what he's called you to do. If there's a way I can pray for you, I'd be happy to do that.

You can also scan the QR code and respond to the Lord in that way as well. But let's take these few moments as Taylor leads us to respond to God's word.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "chapter six verse seven or eight"; the statement that "every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" is Genesis 6:5 (verses 7–8 are God's resolve to blot out man and "Noah found favor"). Source: Genesis 6:5–8 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "a U.S. Senator" (also "I'm a U.S. Senator" and "one of the chief senators"); in *Evan Almighty* (2007) Steve Carell's Evan Baxter is newly elected to Congress (a U.S. Representative), and John Goodman plays Congressman Chuck Long. Source: Wikipedia, "Evan Almighty" (plot and cast). ↩