

Surviving, After the Flood

Genesis 8:20–10:32 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION: We can, at times, relegate the heroes of scripture to a flannel graph reality that is entirely different than a normal human experience. Yet scripture reminds us, like a broken record, that men like Noah were vividly ordinary... not all that different from you or me. Next week, we are going to see this man who, in a sense, really did save the world, laid up in a cave drunk. For today, just understand - Noah didn't glow, he was old man "noi" that lived at the edge of town, who was always working on a boat.

That guy, that Noah, had just been through the most traumatic experience of anyone ever, save Jesus Christ. Imagine if you had survived a year on a boat with every sort of animal, as the liquid wrath of God was poured out on everyone and everything you knew outside of your own family.

CONTEXT: Before the flood, life had rhythm. Familiarity. People lived long, family ties ran deep, and the world—while broken and deeply sinful—made sense. Noah knew the smell of cedar, the sound of laughter down the road, and the feel of the sun on a normal day. Then suddenly, at God's word, the sky broke open.

Perhaps Floridians understand the terror of a true storm more than most. ***Funny thing about storms...It's not the storm that gets you, it's what comes after—figuring out how to live again in a world where everything has changed.***

That's where we find Noah. Stepping off that ark and into a world that didn't feel like home anymore. Sure, he had his family, he had his faith. But let's not romanticize it—everything else was gone.

The door of the ark creaks open after over a year of confinement. The air is still. The world is silent—not a peaceful silence, but the silence of absence. The only sounds he hears are those coming from the Ark behind him.

Your instinct is to check on everybody you know, but there is no one to check on - they are all gone. You have been displaced, and you are left with that eerie sense that you are the last of something.

Noah takes his first steps onto dry land, but this isn't the land he remembered. The hills are unfamiliar. The soil is raw and reshaped. There are no cities, no neighbors, no laughter from children playing down the road. Just wind and wilderness. Everything is radically different. Even the blue of the sky has changed; the very air he breathed is thicker now than it was before. Off in the distance, dark clouds still spilling rain onto the landscape.

Everything that made life familiar was gone. Every friend, every cousin, every craftsman he once traded with, every road he'd ever walked—washed away in judgment. Sure, he

had tried to prepare himself for this reality, but could a man be truly ready for this kind of loss?

371 days he had been on that boat, to emerge to a world altogether different from the one he had left behind. Imagine the nervousness, the anxiety. He likely wept till all that remained was numbness.

When he could sleep, which wasn't often, he would be awakened by nightmares as he could still hear those awful cries outside the ark as the unrelenting Judgement of the Creator fell.

The world had changed, and so had Noah. In fact, each member of his family was processing what they had experienced in their own way. Noah had, at least, heard directly from the Creator - the rest of the family had to take Noah's word for it.

It was by far the worst thing Noah or anybody else had ever been through.

Comparing traumatic experiences is not always helpful; there is always a bigger storm, unless you are Noah. The truth is - ***the worst thing you have ever experienced, is still the worst thing YOU have ever experienced***, whether it is a small boy having his bicycle stolen or a grown man facing the diagnosis of some unrelenting disease.

Surviving the storm is not what gets you, it's what comes after— figuring out how to live again in a world that has changed and that has changed you.

That's where stories like the one before can be helpful. They are ***descriptive***, not ***prescriptive***. In other words, they do not command us to do exactly what Noah did, but rather they let us eavesdrop on Noah's situation, and we are responsible for making application to our own.

How did Noah press on after the storm? The first thing he did was...

1. Noah Expressed Worship

Genesis 8:20 ²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

The first thing Noah builds is not a shelter, not a business, not another boat, just in case. The first thing he builds is an altar, a place of worship. What is in the cup comes out when it gets shaken. Noah was deeply shaken - what came out? Worship. Tragedies serve us in that sense - they show us what we are truly made of.

Notice the elements of True Worship -

a. True Worship Declares Faith

Noah takes something that is in very limited supply (clean animals) and sacrifices them to the Lord. Remember, the clean animals are the ones he could eat. Yet, like Able before him, his act of worship demonstrated that he trusts God for the future.

Perhaps the Lord would speak to some of you about making a financial sacrifice today. But your brain will object and say, “I can’t afford it”. Listen - God knows what you can afford.

- **Elijah** knew that Israel couldn’t afford water after three and a half years of drought, yet Elijah said, Pour 12 buckets of water on the altar until the trench is full.
- **Elijah** knew the little widow of Zarephath couldn’t afford to cook a meal for the Prophet, but he commanded her to do so.
- **Abraham** couldn’t afford to sacrifice his son, his only son, but God told him to do so.
- **That little boy** he couldn’t afford to give Jesus his sack lunch, yet the Holy Spirit moved him to give it.

*Listen, you can afford what God says you can afford. He is responsible to **provide** where he **guides**. Afford is none of your business - obedience is your business. Afford is God’s business. **Don’t allow your mind to rob your heart of a blessing.***

Noah trusted God, so he put the limited resources of those animals on the altar.

King David said, “I will not offer to God that which cost me nothing”. How much did your worship cost you today? Did it demonstrate faith? Noah’s worship did..

b. True Worship Involves Consecration

20b. offered burnt offerings on the altar.

The sacrifice pointed to two things - it pointed to a future sacrifice, Christ, the lamb who would take away the sin of the world. It also pointed to a living sacrifice - Noah, who was dying to himself in order to walk with God.

Later in the law of Moses, the whole burnt offerings were offered twice daily by the Priests. The purpose was general **atonement** and **consecration**.

Our worship must do the same - it must point back to the cross of Christ. But it also must point to the reality of us becoming consecrated unto the Lord - living sacrifices, which is our spiritual service of worship.

c. True Worship Pleases God

²¹ And when the Lord smelled the **pleasing** aroma.

There is a word in the New Testament called “Propitiation”.

ILLUSTRATION: A Propitiatory gift is a gift that assuages the anger of another. Example: Your wife is mad because you forgot it was your anniversary, and to assuage her anger, you buy her a diamond bracelet.

The aim of Noah's worship was not to entertain Noah but to please God. It had nothing to do with Noah's particular taste in worship. This was a propitiation.

If my wife were upset with me, I wouldn't take her bass fishing. Why? She doesn't enjoy that. The gift is not about me, it's about her.

Worship is similar in that respect - the pleasure of God is the essence of genuine worship.

LISTEN: Did you come to church today with the pleasure of God as chief among your concerns?

You say, "Preacher, why should I worry about that?" Noah might tell you - "when you recognize that the only thing standing between you and the liquid wrath of God is a few inches of Gopher wood, His pleasure becomes your chief concern".

True worship declares faith, involves consecration, pleases God...

d. True Worship allows God to Minister to our Need

Notice how, in the midst of Noah's worship, God ministers to the chief concern on Noah's heart. Namely, is all of this going to happen again?

21b. the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²² While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

When true worship occurs, there should be a sense of ***giving*** of worship and ***receiving*** of grace.

One of the things I've been tossing around is adding a time of altar ministry during our worship set that allows time for you to seek prayer, or to just kneel before the Lord in your seat or at the Altar. But here's the deal - when we worship God is present, when God is present, the things Jesus did in His ministry happen through the Holy Spirit now. When Noah worshipped God, God ministered to Noah.

Not only did Noah Express worship...secondly, Noah...

2. Noah Embraced Blessing

How will God give Noah assurance and direction in the days ahead? How will God make it possible for Noah to sleep at night? In Chapter 9 God gives Noah **4 messages concerning 3 blessings** that would be for him in the days ahead. I say four messages concerning 3 blessings, because he will repeat one twice at the beginning and the end, which may lead one to believe that it is significant.

a. Family

Genesis 9

¹ And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

First major blessing? Family - men, go out get married, make babies, raise them into a family. That is the first way God is going to get Noah and his family through the anxiety and stress that followed the flood - lean into family.

There is something about having a baby that requires your full attention.

ILLUSTRATION: I noticed with Julie and me, each time she was pregnant, she sort of went to a new level of maturity. No longer can you sit around worried about yourself; this little creature is entirely depending on you to get your act together, go kill something, and bring it home.

Not only family...

b. Opportunity

² The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. ³ Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.

So, previously, the animals came to Adam so he could name them. They came to Noah to get on the Ark. Not anymore - now the animals would fear and flee from man. God says, that's ok - you can catch them, kill them and eat them. So God gives meat to man for food.

JOKE: I thank god for Vegans, that means more steak for me.

But here's the deal - the animals aren't going to lay down for you - they will avoid you like the plague. You will have to hunt the food or farm the food.

That's why I used the word “**Opportunity**” for this point. Scripture says God feeds the sparrows, but God doesn't toss the seed into the nest; he provides opportunity for them to eat. The same is true for you - God will not spoon-feed you, but you will have as much of an opportunity for success as you want.

God blesses Noah with family, with opportunity...

c. Law

⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. ⁵ And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. ⁶ “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

Some people misread the 10 commandments and think that it says, “thou shalt not kill”; therefore, it forbids Capital Punishment. It doesn't say that; it says thou shalt not

murder. What's the difference? **Murder** is killing an innocent person; **capital punishment** is killing a person guilty of murder.

Part of what would help Noah and his family stay on track would be a clearly understood set of expectations, morals, and laws. If you have been in a traumatic experience, don't run from the truth; lean into it.

God blesses Noah with family, with opportunity, with law...

d. Family

⁷ And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."

God reminds Noah again of the priority of family - listen, if you don't have a **physical family** that you know loves you, let us give you a **spiritual family**. It takes time, but let us be that for you. Get in a group, volunteer, get connected.

Noah Expressed Worship, Embraced Blessings...

3. Noah Entered Covenant

Covenant was the safest place for Noah to be after the flood, and it's the safest place for you to be now.

A covenant is a sacred promise that God makes to a person or people.

Depending on how you understand the scriptures, there are either 5 or 6 formal covenants in the Scriptures. This is one of those.

a. Covenant is God Initiated

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him,

This wasn't Noah's idea; this was God's idea. God is a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God.

b. Covenant is Relational

⁹ "Behold, I establish my covenant with you **and your offspring after you.**

Notice, God expects Noah to obey the command to be fruitful and multiply.

¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth.

So the Covenant is not simply with Noah - it's with you, his offspring. That is how God thinks. We tend to think in an **individualistic** way, "what's best for me personally." The ancients thought **corporately**. The Ancients would ask, "What is the right thing for my family, or tribe?". You see? Covenant builds up the whole.

c. Covenant Holds Promise

¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

Noah, you don't have to worry every time you hear thunder. You don't have to sleep on a raft. You can rest assured, I will never do this again.

One of the best things you can do to process trauma is to dive deep into the promises of God. What is true, what is guaranteed, don't lean on the things that shift and change... lean into the rock solid foundation of God's promise.

d. Covenant Provides a Sign

¹² And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ 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." ¹⁷ God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

There is always a covenant sign, something to attest that the terms of the covenant still stand.

ILLUSTRATION: Julie and I are in a Covenant - not just with one another, but with God. The sign of the covenant is a ring. It serves to remind one another that we meant what we said.

ILLUSTRATION: Jeremiah 31 tells us of the greatest covenant that God ever initiated with those who would believe. He promises that whosoever puts their trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, they will not perish but will have everlasting life. What is the sign of the Covenant? The Body and the Blood - in just a moment, we are going to celebrate the Lord's Table. It is, in a sense, a COVENANT RENEWAL ceremony. Like the Rainbow, it is God's prescribed means of reminding us what happened on the cross.

The safest place you can be is not in a place, it is in a covenant relationship. God initiated it... It is relational. It involves a promise. It has a sign.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: The truth is, every single one of you has experienced your own kind of flood to one degree or another.

- The sudden loss of someone you loved.
- A marriage that didn't survive the storm.
- Abuse that left scars no one else can see.
- A diagnosis that upended everything.

- A war zone you can't leave behind—whether it's one you fought in overseas or one you grew up in at home.

Some of you have processed it and moved on. Others have dodged it, hidden from it, maybe tucked it down deep inside somewhere, and pretended it didn't happen. But there's a problem with that - you see, it takes on a life of its own. If you react that way, you must do so on its terms and not your own. A better path is the one Noah took. ***He built an altar, received a blessing, and entered into a covenant.***

- What are you building? An altar of worship or a list of complaints?
- Have you leaned into your family? Allowed them to love you even though you may be different from who you were?
- What about Covenant? Did you know that FBC is a Covenant Community? We enter into this fellowship with a promise to look after one another and point each other to Christ.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: The Rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral (1940)

On the night of November 14, 1940, the city of Coventry, England, was bombed by the German Luftwaffe in one of the most intense air raids of World War II. Flames consumed much of the city, and at its heart, the beloved Coventry Cathedral—a symbol of worship and faith for generations—was reduced to a smoldering skeleton of charred stone and twisted metal.

The next morning, with smoke still rising and rubble everywhere, the provost of the cathedral walked the ruins. And instead of despairing, he picked up two burnt timbers that had fallen in the shape of a cross.

He had them bound together and placed on the altar of the ruined sanctuary. Beneath it, he had these words inscribed:

“Father, forgive.”

Not “Revenge.”

Not even “Restore.”

But “Father, forgive.”



In a world changed by the trauma of war, he built an altar. To this day, the charred cross still stands. What are you building today? What is building you today?