North Summit Church
Genesis 6:11–8:22
November 1, 2026

Through the Water

INTRODUCTION

We're continuing our journey through In the Beginning: the "Prologue" of the Bible that gives us the deep grammar of who God is, who we are, why we exist, and what went wrong. Genesis 1–11.

- Last week we got a glimpse into Noah's world: where the sons of God took the daughters of men, and while there is much speculation about this period of human history we can be confident of where it led humanity, to a world where they did "only evil continually," and God was grieved by the depravity that had become of His good creation.

- Then we turned the page — and we are given a glimmer of hope "But Noah." We were left with one question: *what will God do?*

- Today we find out. If all you know of this story is a cartoon boat and a rainbow, while it makes for fun murals on nursery walls, this is one of the most serious chapters in the Bible and at the same time one of the most hopeful, and it is meant to keep us in that tension.

- As we read, we are going to call out the verbs and notice who is doing the saving. God speaks. God designs. God shuts the door. God remembers. God promises. Noah builds, enters, waits, and worships.

- **Every verb that speaks to salvation is God's alone, and every verb that speaks to faithful response belongs to Noah.**

- **Here is the big idea for today:**

  The water that ended a world also carried the ark. God doesn't save us around his judgment—he saves us through it.

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1. God Saw, and Behold (6:11–13)

Genesis 6:11–13

"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.'"

The Last Time God Said "Behold"

- Look at verse 12: "God saw the earth, and *behold*." We have heard those two words together before.

Genesis 1:31
"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

- The thing that has changed is what God is looking at. In chapter 1 he looked at creation and called it very good. Here he looks at what we have made of it and speaks the truth about it.

- The Hebrew in these three verses hammers on a single root. The ESV spreads it across three English words: corrupt, corrupted, and then, in God's verdict, destroy.

- If we read it as one word the sentence sounds something more like:
    - *"They ruined the earth, so I will ruin them with the earth."*

- That is not a tantrum of a temperamental God, like the competing narratives of their day. It is judgment measured out word for word, a judgement fitted to the crime.

- We also see the result of their corruption, what ruined God's good creation: violence.

- Last week we got a glimpse at what is inside the human heart. This is now the world that has come out of their hearts. This is the fruit of their rebellion.

- And God in His love will not allow this kind of suffering and brokenness to go on forever. God is patient with those who have turned against him and turned inward to the point of becoming monstrous, but his patience with sin always has a judgement day.

Application: Judgment Is God Telling the Truth

- We mishandle this in one of two ways. Either we picture God as an angry deity looking for an excuse, or we quietly delete judgment and keep only the parts that make us comfortable. Genesis does neither.

- It gives us a God who sees clearly, names exactly what is wrong, and says it out loud.

- And think about what that means: **a God who cannot say "corrupt" cannot say "very good" either.** If violence did not matter to him, neither would the people it was done to.

- **God's judgment is not a mood, or a temperamental God having a bad day.**

    - It is God telling the truth about what we have done to his world—and he is the same God we trust when he says he loves us.

- **Here is the point I want to press.** Lying to someone to protect their feelings is not love. When a person is doing something that is hurting them, we do not ignore it, and we certainly do not encourage it.
- We speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), because we care about them more than we care what they, or the world, will think of us. That is what God does in Genesis 6, and it is what he asks of us as well as His image bearers.

- **[Prop 1]**

2. The Water That Carried the Ark (6:14–7:24)

God Designs; Noah Builds

- God does not say, "Build a boat and use your best judgment." He gives the wood, the rooms, the pitch, the dimensions—three hundred cubits long, fifty wide, thirty high—and the door in its side. Noah does not invent the vessel. He receives the plan.

- And he follows it: **"Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him"** (6:22). Genesis says it again at 7:5, and again at 7:16.
    - **The ark is built by obedience to a pattern someone else drew.**

- In the middle of the instructions comes a word we have never heard in the Bible so far: **"But I will establish my covenant with you"** (6:18). It is the first time the word *covenant* appears in Scripture. Hold on, next week we will hear what it means.

Genesis 7:16
"And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in."

The Door

- Noah built the ark, but he could not shut its door.
    - ***"the LORD shut him in."***

- Everyone inside was there at God's command and kept by God's own hand. Noah's safety did not rest on the strength of his grip. It rested on the hand that shut the door.

Genesis 7:11
"...on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened."

The Water That Kills, and the Water That Lifts

- Remember what God did in the first days of creation: he separated the waters—waters above, waters below, dry land in between—and held them in their places. Now the boundaries come off. The waters below burst up, the waters above pour down. This is creation played in reverse.
- And it reaches the breath of life itself. **"Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died"** (7:22)—the breath God breathed into Adam in chapter 2. What he gave, he takes back.
- Then the verb from last week comes due. In 6:7 God said, "I will blot out." Now: **"He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground... Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark"** (7:23).

Genesis 7:17–18
"The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters."

- Now look at what lifts the ark: "the waters increased and bore up the ark." The same water that was killing everything outside was carrying the ark.
- The ark was never taken around the flood. It was never parked on a hill or moved to a safer sea. It floated on the very judgment it survived. Noah went *through* the water, not around it.

How the New Testament Reads the Flood

- The New Testament returns to this story three times, and the apostles read it the way we are trying to read it.

- **First, Jesus.**

Matthew 24:37–39
"For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man."

- Jesus describes the days of Noah as ordinary—eating, drinking, marrying—right up to the day the flood came, and he uses the flood as the pattern for his own return: real, sudden, unexpected, with a way through already provided.

- **Second, Hebrews.**

Hebrews 11:7
"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."

- Noah's obedience was not a wage. It was faith, and the righteousness at the end of the verse is something he *became an heir of*—grace first, then a life that answers it, just as last week left him. And "by this he condemned the world": every board in that ark was a verdict on the sinfulness of the world.

- Every act of faithful obedience to the Lord is a verdict to a lost world. It is our light to the world. But for those outside of Christ it is a reminder of their sin and condemnation, and it is why they can't stand it.

- **Third, Peter.**

1 Peter 3:18, 20–21
"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God... a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

- Peter's word is *through*: eight persons "brought safely through water." Then he says baptism "corresponds" to it—the Greek is *antitypon*, and you can hear "type" inside it—and what saves is not the water but "the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
    - Christ's death, burial and resurrection, is our salvation. Christ is the ark, and if we are in Him, who took our condemnation, we will pass through God's judgement just like the ark passed through the waters.

- **This is the pattern:** God provides. We enter at his word. We are brought through the judgment, not around it—and the one who makes that possible is the one Peter names in verse 18: "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."

Application: Enter What God Provides

- We are often quietly convinced that salvation is a project—build it, manage it, hold on to it. The flood says otherwise. God draws the plan, God shuts the door, and what carries us through the water was provided before the first rain drop fell.

- That does not make us passive. Noah built, and Noah went in. It means our obedience answers a provision of Hid grace; it never replaces one. **Obey what God has commanded, and rest your whole weight on the one who shut the door.**

- If anyone ever wonders whether they are safely inside, look to the hand on the door, not the grip of your own. Where do you put your faith, in your own righteousness, or in the righteousness that is ours in Christ Jesus. It says that Noah was righteous, but his righteousness could not save him. His obedience showed that he wanted the saving.

3. But God Remembered (8:1–22)

Genesis 8:1
"But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided."

Remembering Is Not Recalling Something that was Forgotten

- The waters had prevailed for a hundred and fifty days. Then: "But God remembered." Last week the page turned on "But Noah." This week it turns on "But God." The whole story hangs between those two.

- **God does not forget and then recall.** In Scripture, to remember—*zakar*—is to act for someone on the basis of a relationship. When Israel groaned in Egypt, God "remembered his covenant" (Exodus 2:24), and everything that follows is rescue. Here the proof is in the very next sentence: God remembers, and a wind blows.

- That wind is the same Hebrew word we met hovering over the waters in the second verse of the Bible. The waters recede, the mountaintops appear, the ground dries. God is not merely ending the flood. He is beginning again.

Waiting for the Word

- Noah sends out a raven, then a dove. She finds "no place to set her foot" (8:9), returns with "a freshly plucked olive leaf" (8:11), and then does not return. Then Noah looks, and "behold, the face of the ground was dry" (8:13).
- Here is what he does with all that evidence: he waits, because the next sentence belongs to God.

Genesis 8:15–16

"Then God said to Noah, 'Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.'"

- Last week's pattern, reversed. The men of Genesis 6 saw and took. Noah sees dry ground and waits to be told: he enters at God's command, and he leaves at God's command.

Noah's name gives us the point of the story.

- **Now a Hebrew detail the English hides.** Noah's name is *Noach*—rest. Remember Lamech naming him in chapter 5, hoping for relief from the toil of the cursed ground. Watch how the narrator keeps returning to the sound of that name. The ark "came to rest" on the mountains (8:4)—*vattanach*. The dove finds no "place to set her foot" (8:9)—that is *manoach*, a resting place. And in verse 21 the LORD smells a "pleasing aroma"— literally an aroma of rest.
- Noah, rest, a resting place, an aroma of rest. The English scatters it; the Hebrew brings it to the center.

Genesis 8:20–22
"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. And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, 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. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.'"

The Altar and the Promise

- Noah's first recorded act on dry ground is worship. Before a house, before a field, before a seed in the soil, he builds an altar—the first one in the Bible.

- **In the Babylonian flood story, the gods "gathered like flies" over the hero's sacrifice, hungry for what only humans could give.** Genesis shows no hunger. The LORD receives the offering, and then he speaks.

- "The LORD said in his heart." Last week we heard that human sin "grieved him to his heart" (6:6). Same heart. Before the flood it ached. After the flood it makes a promise.

- And look at the reason he gives: "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." That is 6:5 all over again. The flood did not change the human heart. It removed the people; it did not remove the problem. Noah's own household stepped off the ark still carrying it.

- So God makes his promise knowing exactly who he is making it to. His mercy does not wait for the heart to improve. He will never again strike down every living creature, and the world will keep its rhythms—seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, day and night—not because of us. All because of His grace.

- **Which raises the question the rest of the Bible exists to answer:** if judgment can clear the earth but cannot cure the heart, what can? Next week we hear God say this promise out loud—and see what Noah's household carried out of the ark.

Remembered, and Remembering at the Table

- One more thing "God remembered" is doing, and it is right in front of us this morning. When Zechariah sang over the child who would announce the Messiah, he said God had come "to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant" (Luke 1:72). It is the same word, the same kind of remembering: God acting for his people on the basis of his promise. Noah in the ark. Israel in Egypt. And then, in the fullness of time, a child.

- On the night he was betrayed, Jesus gave his disciples a meal and a command.

Luke 22:19–20
"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"

- "Do this in remembrance of me." If remembering meant looking at a mental photograph, that would be a strange command to give at a meal. But if remembering is what God did for Noah—acting on a covenant—then we know what this is. Not nostalgia. A covenant meal. And Paul tells us what it does: **"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"** (1 Corinthians 11:26). We remember by proclaiming—looking back to the cross and forward to his return.
- That is what we are about to do. At this table we stand where Noah stood on the far side of the water: brought through, because someone provided the way—and handed us a meal of the new covenant.
- And hear how Jesus puts the invitation. Lamech named his son *Rest*, hoping for relief from the labor of a cursed field. Jesus says, **"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28).

Application: Rest in the Promise

- We want a fresh start to fix us—a new year, a new city, a new resolve. The flood gave the world the freshest start it will ever have, and verse 21 says the heart came along. Fresh starts do not heal hearts. Only God's remembering does.
- **Stop waiting to get better before you rest in what God has promised. He made his promise to people exactly like us, and he keeps it. And His promise is that He will give us a new heart, if we will put our trust in Him. that is where true rest is found.**

- So come to the table the way Noah came to the altar: not because our hearts are in order, but because we have been brought through by the blood of the New Covenant and given hearts of flesh in exchange for our hearts of stone. Let him do the reordering.

- That is the big idea we started with. The water that ended a world also carried the ark. God doesn't save us around his judgment—he saves us through it. He remembered Noah in the ark. He remembers us in Christ. So let us remember him.

Benediction

Psalm 29:10–11
"The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!"

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Small Group Discussion Questions

1. God Saw, and Behold

> Genesis 6:11–13 uses one Hebrew root four times, so that God's judgment answers the corruption word for word. A God who can say "corrupt" is the same God who said "very good."

Where are you tempted either to soften God's judgment or to resent it? What changes if you hear it as God telling the truth about what we have done to his world?

2. The Water That Carried the Ark

> Noah built the ark, but the LORD shut the door, and the same water that destroyed the world lifted the ark. Peter says eight persons were brought safely *through* water, and Jesus is "the righteous for the unrighteous" who brings us to God.

Where do you still treat salvation as something you hold together by your own grip? What would it look like to obey what God has commanded while resting your weight on the one who shut the door?

3. But God Remembered

> When God remembers, he acts: a wind blows, the waters recede, a promise is spoken over a heart he has already described as evil from youth. Jesus gives us a meal "in remembrance" of him, the meal of the new covenant in his blood. A reminder that He has given us a heart of flesh and taken our heart of stone.

Where have you been waiting to get better before you rest in God's promise? What does it mean for you that God made that promise to people exactly like us, desperately incapable of healing our hard hearts?