

Noah

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Well, Lord willing, we're going to pick up with Noah this time. The idea, as I mentioned, is to make these characters real, not just, you know, pieces of information about somebody like a history book or something like that. The idea is to learn a little bit about their walk with God and their walk without God. And to learn what we can about that.

We know a lot about Noah, in the sense that there are almost three chapters devoted to his work and his situation. But for all of that, not very much is said about him. We know a lot about Noah, in the sense that there are almost three chapters devoted to his, his his work and his situation. But for all of that, not very much is said about him. We know that he lived in a time when things were getting worse and worse and worse. And so, if you'll go with me back to Genesis chapter 6, we'll kind of pick up some things.

One of the things I think that we don't realize about Noah. We know that he had three boys: Ham Shem and Japheth, okay yeah. But, if you look at chapter five, the text says there about Noah, like it does several other of the people, that it mentions in this list in chapter five. It says that he begat sons and daughters. So my thinking is, that Noah was just like all of these other patriarchs of that age, pre-flood, because they were having children, just left and right, left and right, left and right, fulfilling God's command to them to fill the earth. Now, that's an important stage setting for Noah and understanding a little bit about him. Because we all recognize that essentially, God said, "You and your family," being his wife, his three sons, and their wives. That's it. What happened to the rest of Noah's family? Noah did not have a good time of it. What Noah was dealing with and what he was doing was a tragedy from the top to the bottom. And it's important to realize that about Noah.

Now notice here, in verse seven, "The Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I've created from the face of the earth, both man and beast creeping thing birds of the air,' for I'm sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." What do you think that grace means? Well, it means "favor," of course. In this case grace here is the idea of favor with God.

The thing that I have to really think about when I think of grace, is: why did Noah need grace? Because he was not perfect. He was sinful. I don't mean he was a rank sinner. But he was not a perfect individual. But what he also was someone who tried, tried to be faithful. And so perfection is not within our realm of possibility. Faithfulness is. And that doesn't imply perfection. And you can begin to see that right here.

If you'll notice over here, He says in verse 18, "I'll establish my covenant with you. You, your sons, your wives, and your wives, sons wives with you." So the idea of grace, the idea of a covenant. Now, what does Hebrews 11 say about Noah. Does anyone remember that? So, the idea of grace, the idea of a covenant. Now, what does Hebrews 11 say about Noah? Does anyone remember that? Hebrews 11 says, "By faith, Noah built a save an ark to the saving of his house." Do you remember that? Okay, so here you have right here in the beginning, you have grace, you have faith, you have covenant. All three ideas right here at the very beginning.

Now, look over here when he begins to call down the rain. The verse says that “Noah walked with God.” Do you remember anybody else who walked with God? Enoch, in chapter five, Enoch walked with God. And then it says that Enoch was taken. He just didn't die, he was just taken. So here's what you have: two people who walk with God, one of whom we know was not perfect.

What does that say about you and me? You and I sometimes just beat ourselves up with the continual problems that we've got, with our own sinfulness. Whatever our own character flaws are. And we don't need to do that we need to work on them. But God is giving us grace, as long as we keep his covenant, as long as we keep his faith.

Now, what does it mean to walk in faith? One of the things when you ask yourself how to define these important terms, is you make, got to make sure you're not defining things in a loop like this. I can remember one time when I was at school, I was reading something, I don't remember what it was. And there was a word there. And it was a key word in the sentence. And I, so I got my dictionary, and I looked that word up. Well, a key word in that definition was another word I didn't know. So I go to look that word up. And a key word in the second definition was a third word I didn't know, or it was by this time, or whatever it was. So I went and looked that word up, and guess what? A key word in that definition was the first word I didn't know. And so I had looked up all of these words, and they had made themselves into a circle where I didn't know anything more after I finished than when I began.

And so you and I need to make sure when we think about what faith is, walking by faith, living by faith, we don't define it with another term that is vague. It's important for us to realize that walking by faith is really not anything less or more than walking faithfully. We all know what faithfully is. It's doing a good effort.

Now, let me ask you this: Is walking faithfully the same thing as doing the best you can? Let me kind of come at it from a just slightly different perspective. How many times do you do the best you can? Have you ever watched football, baseball, basketball, tennis, any of these things where they have these sports athletes, you know, track and field, whatever it is? These are the best of the best of the best. But some days they have what? Bad days. And some days they have good days. And you know, their performance is always better than mine would be. But their performance is seldom the best they can do. Even that is rare for them. It's rare for me as it is for them. It's as rare for you, I suspect, as it is for anybody else. So being faithful is not the idea of doing my best. We all know the difference in our hearts, don't we? We all know the difference between making a genuine effort and just kind of hitting at it and saying to ourselves, "I did it. I made an effort." Is there a difference between those two things?

I'm going to give you an example of this with Noah. Let's go back now to the end of his time. With chapter nine. This is after the flood. Noah comes out with his family. They're doing everything that they're supposed to do. He gets the rainbow covenant and so on. Now, look at verse 20, chapter nine, verse 20. “Noah began to be a farmer. And he planted a vineyard.” "He drank the wine, and was drunk and became uncovered in his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father told his two brothers outside. Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on their own shoulders, went backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. So

when Noah," or rather, "So Noah awoke from his wine," and then on and on it goes. How drunk did Noah get? He passed out, he absolutely passed out.

Now, I want to ask you a question. How could a man who walks with God, how is the man who is upright in his generations (that's the other way he's described in this text)...how could he do this? He had to know it was wrong. What does that tell you about him? He's fallible, and he's got issues. Do you have issues? I'm not asking you what the issues are.

What I want you to think about here is, is we sometimes take Noah's sin here like we do a lot of other people's sin. And we say, well, it was a one off. It was a, it was something that they just were overwhelmed. And why would he not be overwhelmed?

Well, this is why I pointed out to you all the family that he lost. He lost all his family, he lost all these friends. He lost every town, every village, every house, every road, every everything he'd ever had. He gets this, he lands with this boat. And the animals, you know, they all get out and he's got, you know, there are eight of them. That's it! What would you do? I'd break down in tears. And I would have been breaking down in tears from weeks and months before that. Thinking of all of these people. How old was Noah? Over 600 years. How attached do you become to a place and to people in that length of time? How attached do you become in our lifetimes? Noah was in a terrible situation.

And then think about what he had to do. He had to build from everything. Who's going to make the metal tools that he needs? Who's going to make the wooden handles he needs? Who's going to, you know, skin the animal? Who's going to hunt the animals? Who's going to herd the animals? Who's going to turn those animal skins into clothes? On and on and on. Who's going to do every little thing that has to be done? Noah and his people, and it is overwhelming. I think Noah was suffering from a deep depression and deep grief. Now, I'm not a psychologist and don't have enough information if I were, but this seems to me pretty obvious.

So now he plants this vineyard. He grows these grapes. What are you going to do with grapes? You're either eat or are you going to juice them. Now granted, there are ways to produce, to preserve the grape juice, even back in those days, without refrigeration. There are some ways to do it. But again, think of the technological level here. Who's going to do all this stuff? Who's going to produce the wax that's needed to seal these things? Who's going to produce the skins that have to be just specially made to keep that juice from fermenting? Who's going to produce the smoking that maybe can do that? You see what I'm saying? It's a technological thing to do. Who's going...? They got to do it, or they don't. And think about the all of the other uses for wine. What do you... medicinal, right? We all know that in ancient societies wine was medicine for everything. And all kinds of alcohol was medicine for everything. Think about food. Any of you all enjoy pickles. Guess what you can't have pickles without. Wine. Do you know why? Because they are made in vinegar. What is vinegar? Vinegar is soured wine. You don't have any wine, you don't have any vinegar. You don't have any pickles. You don't have any preservation. You see what's going on here?

So, his making this, this vineyard and making this wine was intentional. And let me ask you this: how easy is it to make drinkable wine? It's not that easy. That's why they call it an art. It's not something impossible. It's done all over the world by all kinds of people with very little education. But it takes intention. Okay, it doesn't just happen.

And so here's Noah doing all of this, all of this, all of this, all of this. And I don't know, if this is the only time he ever drank the wine, I kind of have no way to know that. I don't want to speculate one way or the other. Don't want to say something I don't know. But I do know, no one knew what he was doing. And it was a long process. Noah, a walked with God. Noah received grace. Noah walked by faith. And yet Noah had...

If you could imagine a leader of our congregation here, who for some reason, just got, you know, found out that his wife was in trouble of some sort, cancer or something. Grandkid got in a car wreck, or something like this. And then he gets pulled over DUI, what do we do? Do we just immediately think this guy has been a hypocrite all these years? No, no.

You and I have got to cut each other slack. But the most important thing for me to help you realize is, you and I have to cut ourselves some slack. Because you know what your problems are. And God doesn't expect them to be vanishing [snap], just like this. As long as you and I are faithful, which means we're making a genuine effort. And a genuine effort isn't always our best effort. But we know the difference between making a genuine effort, and then just kind of hitting a lick at it and saying, "I did it."

That's really about the extent of all I had in mind with Noah here, was to show he was a human being. And this idea of grace and faith and covenant, that is so much a part of our relationship with Jesus, was exactly a part of his relationship with God, also.