

The Rainbow

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[0:00] Let's do the scripture reading first. Can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord? So we're covering Genesis 8 and 9 today, but for our reading will be in Genesis 9, starting in verse 8.

! So starting from Genesis 9, verse 8, it reads, Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, 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.

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. 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.

I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh.

And the water shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 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.

[1:20] 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. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, Alex.

We've been going through Genesis, and it reminds me that we live in a broken, a dark world.

My two news sources that I go to the most is the BBC and the SEMP. And every day I look and I have a glance across the whole screen and say, Well, how is everything today? And it rarely is completely good, right?

In fact, most of the time it's mostly bad. And then it makes me think, Well, what hope do we have? What hope do we have as we live and exist in this fallen world? And why does it just keep repeating?

Why is it just the same stuff over and over again? And it's been helpful for me to go on this journey. Genesis is hard, what we just said here. But you go right back to the beginning, you'll see a lot of the reasons why we are where we're at.

[2:21] And actually, if you're like me, I've found myself in Genesis a lot as well. If I could take us all the way back to the beginning, Genesis chapter 1, you see the Spirit of God just hovering above the waters. And then he starts to speak creation into existence, right?

He creates the waters divide, the dry land starts to appear, the vegetation starts to come out, and then animals swarm creation. And then, of course, the finale, the climax, man and himself.

Everything else was good, but the creation of man and woman ended up being very, very good.

Because God said, I want to make man in our image. And then this man is going to have dominion over creation, have dominion over the animals.

And then from there, they're going to be fruitful, and they're going to multiply. Of course, last week, we went into Noah, and all it took was 10 generations, 5, 6 chapters, and suddenly we're now in a place where the whole land is completely corrupt.

Where did that come from? Of course, it came from Genesis chapter 3, where it came from the mistrust of God. Did God really say that? There was doubt. There was deception. And then the fruit leads to Genesis 4, leads to murder.

[3:29] And then from murder, it leads to polygamy. And from there, it just leads to generations just continuing to multiply. And we're in a pretty bad place as mankind. But then, there was one.

There was one guy, one family, that found favor in the eyes of God. And last week, I said, hey, don't look at that in the sense of this was a perfect man, so therefore, that's why he got saved. That's not what the scripture means. The scripture means is he was blameless.

He was pursuing holiness. He was righteous. But he wasn't perfect. And today, we find out that Noah wasn't really perfect. But that wasn't the point.

The point was that he found favor. He found grace. And by God's grace, he obeys, completely obeys. And I went into talking about, when was the last time we got an instruction from God to go do something that was completely crazy, that would put our career in jeopardy, that would make our friendship circles or laugh at us, and you'd commit to it for 100 years?

When was the last time we had the courage to do anything like that? Yet Noah, without any word at all, we actually don't hear him speak until later here, he just does it. And Noah obeyed all that God commanded.

[4:39] And in chapter 7, it said this in verse 16. He finally builds the ark. Remember, his granddad Methuselah, his dad Lamech, they were hanging around. They were still with them, cheering him on. Of course, Lamech, his dad dies five years before the flood comes.

But Methuselah, Methuselah, his name was, when he dies, it shall be sent. So he lives all the way to 969. God's kind of showing us how patient he is. But the year he dies is the year the flood comes. And Noah now is without his dad, without his granddad, just his three kids and their wives. And so the eight of them get on the ark. They get on the ark after 100 years of building it. And then it doesn't rain for seven days.

And I felt as though those were the seven longest days of his existence. People just laughing at him, wondering, why are you still on the ark? But then lo and behold, it starts raining.

It starts raining. People, no doubt, start screaming. They start drowning. They run onto all the animals. They run onto the ark. And then the Lord shuts him in.

[5:40] And then I said, if any of us is feeling as though we're the ones trying to cling on to God, if we're the ones trying to save ourselves, we're the ones trying to shut the door of judgment, we have to remember it is not us.

It is salvation belongs to the Lord. Only the Lord has the strength. Whatever door he shuts, no one can open. Whatever door he opens, no one can shut. That's what it says in Revelation, right? And so what we see here is the Lord shuts him in and saves Noah.

And then, but God, chapter eight now, Genesis chapter eight, but God remembered. You see, this flood was judgment, but it was also salvation through judgment.

God creates in Genesis one. And then actually he sees it go wrong. So then he actually decreates. So when the flood comes, they actually, the ground opens and the waters come out.

And he basically says, we're going to press reset. So he creates and then he decreates. And now what we see in chapter eight and chapter nine is he recreates and he starts again.

[6:36] And there are some parallels that I'm going to talk about. And there are also some differences. Genesis chapter one, verse two, the spirit of God hovers above the water. Genesis chapter eight, verse one, and God made a wind, ruach is the word, blow over the earth and the water subsided.

So the spirit of God blows over the world and the water starts to subside. And then from there, what happens? The mountain tops appear. And then what happens? The water recedes.

And then what happens? Vegetation comes up. Why? The olive leaf. The olive leaf comes. And you see God starting this whole process again. But just before we move into all the excitement about moving into a new home, Noah is about to become the richest and really kind of the one who owns the most real estate in the whole of the world.

But before that, I want to take a little pause and go, can you imagine how Noah was feeling? First of all, it says it rained for 40 days, but he actually, him and his family ended up staying on the boat for a year.

Remember, all Noah heard from God was it's going to rain for 40 days. God did not say that it was going to be flooding for another 150. God did not say that he was then going to have to wait until a year passes before they can get off the boat.

[7:51] Can you imagine being Noah and his family? They're probably asking Noah, hey, what's happening? The rain's gone. Now we're alone. When can we get off? And Noah said, I don't know.

He only said 40 days. But now it's 150 days. I don't know. He only said 40 days. Can you imagine? Maybe I'm reading too much into this, but I don't think it's that far-fetched.

Can you imagine the PTSD that probably Noah is going through? Everything that has happened up until now, all the people, all the faces that he knew, all the faces that were ridiculing him, everything that he was doing, everything that he ever knows, he looks out now and he sees a vast expanse and he sees nothing.

PTSD, depression, loneliness for sure. Imagine staying on one boat for a whole year with your family, with the family that you love.

But one whole year on a dark and dingy boat without Wi-Fi. Sometimes when we say God rescues us, we think it's going to be great.

[8:57] It's going to be so comfortable. It's going to be luxury. I'm going to be healthy. I'm going to feel so good about myself. And yet salvation rarely actually looks like that. Sometimes it looks like being trapped on a dark and dingy boat for a year without truly knowing what is going to happen next.

What we hear and what we see from this story is that there is a lesson about waiting. Chapter 8, verse 1. So I'm going to fly through the two chapters, so please do bear with me and follow along if you can.

But God remembered Noah. Now, just again here, this isn't, oh, God was preoccupied with other things. Too busy watching the Game 7 NBA Finals. And so then he decided, oh, oh, whoa, whoa. I forgot about the guy that I left on the boat for a year. That is not what it means here. What it means here is actually God is now starting to move and act decisively and fulfilling the promise that he gave Noah.

That's what it's saying here, okay? So it's not a forgetful God suddenly remembering, oh, my goodness, I need to go save this guy. No, it's, okay, it is now time. So there's this waiting that happens. But again, it's not comfortable.

[9:57] How many of us feel truly comfortable in this world right now? Living a life that is completely filled with blessing and health and wealth? Rarely. Let me stop that right now. If you're new to the faith and you think at the moment that the reason why I should pursue God is because he's going to give me good things, he's going to keep me healthy, then I'm going to stop you right here and right now.

You look at the scriptures, you look at the Bible, you look at Jesus, that is not the story. That is the prosperity gospel. What we see here is salvation comes, but there is a lot of waiting. There is a lot of darkness.

There is a lot of pain. There is a lot of uncertainty. We sit back here and go, wow, a year was a long time, but at least it was over. Can you imagine being on day 200 on the boat? Okay.

The flood's starting to subside, but we're still just on the boat. Noah, is this it? We were saved, but is this all it's going to be? Maybe you've been waiting.

Maybe you've been waiting for something. Maybe you are, we're all waiting for something, right? It's from the moment we start studying. We wait till the day that we can graduate so that we can then go and get a job.

[11:02] And then we can get a job. So then we're waiting for someone to share the financial resources that we now have. And so we're waiting for a relationship. We're waiting for a spouse. And once we're waiting for a spouse, then we're waiting to get married. And once we wait to get married, then we're waiting to have kids.

And then once we're waiting there, then we wait for the kids to graduate so that they can get a job and so they can get married and so they can have kids. We're just constantly waiting. We are all waiting for something. But there's a message here. The message here that there is something actually special about the waiting.

There's something precious about the waiting. There's something precious about the suffering. Romans talks about the suffering that leads to endurance, that leads to character, that leads to hope.

I don't know about you. I'm a very impatient person. I like to buy things as quick as I possibly can. These last few years, I've been buying from Amazon, which takes forever because it's shipping from other parts of the world.

And then, of course, Taobao got English. And then suddenly things got a little bit faster. But still, if I could, I would just go out and buy it straight away because I have that in me. I'm just impatient. I

hate waiting.

[12:04] But there's something about the waiting that really molds who we are. Imagine if we gave our next generation everything that they could ever want immediately. There's something about the waiting that is the most precious.

When you're waiting for that career to change, when you're waiting for that relationship to come, when you're waiting for that family to start, what we see here in Scripture is God says, wait. There is something precious about the waiting.

Because when we wait, we humble ourselves and go, it's actually not in our control. So often things are not in our control. We think they're in our control, but they are not in our control. And so Noah here waits.

And he waits. Remember, God says, I want to reign for 40 days. He doesn't say anything else. So in this whole year, God doesn't talk to Noah. It's not as though they're having a weekly debrief meeting going, hey, everyone.

Hey, Noah, how's it going? How's your family? How's the rooming situation? Nothing. Nothing. Some of us have been waiting for God and he's not saying anything. And it's painful.

[13:07] I hope you find comfort in Noah that actually Noah also got through the same thing and he learned something from it. But just because we're waiting, it doesn't mean we don't do anything. So Noah does actually do something here.

And it's actually quite interesting. Let's have a read. Acts chapter 8. So whilst we're waiting, there is an element of resourcefulness that happens. At the end of the 40 days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven.

It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. He waited another seven days. And again, he sent forth the dove out of the ark and the dove came back to him in the evening and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf.

Olive trees would not grow on high ground, which means the flood has now subsided back to lower ground. Vegetation was starting to come out. Creation was being recreated. So Noah knew that the waters subsided from the earth.

[14:05] At that moment, if that was me. So Noah, or brackets, so James knew that the waters subsided from the earth. He packs his bags, opens the door and runs out with his family because it's time to start their new life.

That is not what scripture says. Scripture says, then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove and she did not return to him anymore. And then he waits. And then he waits.

There's something about the resourcefulness that I do like. First of all, he sends a raven, which is actually this large bird that actually preys on the dead. And so he sends out this large aggressive bird and he goes and he looks basically to see if there is anything that the scavenger can find to show him that actually creation has begun and it is safe to go off the boat.

But the raven does something really interesting. The raven doesn't come back. Then the dove goes out. The dove this time does come back. What does the dove represent? It represents peace. It represents rest. I think there's a parable right here.

I think some of us are ravens who are going out, scouring the land, looking to see, desperate to find food for ourselves and refusing to go back home to rest. And all we're doing is preying on dead things.

[15:13] I think some of us here might actually even be those ravens that are just desperate to find our own way. And the ravens just stays out. But then there's the dove. The dove goes out and doesn't see a home that's worth settling and so comes back.

Which one are you? Which one are you as you wait for whatever it is that you're waiting for? And I'm here saying it's okay to desire and yearn for those things that you're yearning for.

Waiting for those things. It is completely okay. But the whole point of the waiting, lovingly, respectfully, is that actually you would point to God. You would be pointed to God.

You would trust in God. Because there is always something to wait for. It's a good time for us to search our hearts and go, actually, why is it that I want this thing? And often it's just to satisfy and fulfill our own fleshly desires.

But when we wait, we start to ask God, actually, can you mold my heart? Maybe there's something here that actually, maybe I want this just for my own glory. Maybe I just want this for my own good. Maybe I want this just because everyone else is wanting this.

[16:16] There is something purposeful about the waiting. Let's not be that scavenger. Let's not be that raven that just goes out and says, I'm not going to go home until I find this. And I'm desperate for this. I'm just going to keep scavenging on dead things.

Can we be the dove that goes, actually, it's not here, so I'm going to return home. God's timing is perfect. You may be waiting. You may be frustrated. But God's timing is perfect.

I think that is a word for someone. In fact, that is a word often for all of us. God's timing is perfect. You can be resourceful. You can go and test the waters. But trust him. And even when you think it's about time, wait on him.

He will be the one that says it. Because what happens here is finally, finally, God actually speaks to him. In verse 13, in the 601st year, in the first month, the first day of the month, and the waters were dried off from the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

In the second month, again, he's still waiting. And finally, in verse 15, then God said to Noah, go out from the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives, bring with you every living thing that is with you, all of flesh.

[17:19] Can you see God recreating here? So he uses his spirit to blow the waters away. Then vegetation starts, land appears, and then the animals, the creation, swarms into creation again.

They go off the boat. Everything is starting again. It is so exciting. What is the first thing that you would do if you got off the boat? Can you imagine one year floating?

Just floating. Who gets seasick here? Floating for one year. And finally, you get and touch dry land. Again, if it's Noah, if I'm Noah, I'm running out.

I'm doing all kinds of races on the ground. Look, guys, no floating. It's really fun. Let's start building. Let's get to work. Let's start building civilization again. No. What does Noah do first?

First, he waits on God. The moment he gets off the boat, the second thing he does is he worships God. You can see here, verse 20. And 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.

[18:24] Straight away, he gets off the boat and then he builds his altar and he worships. Know what he worships it with. He worships it with clean animals. Those are the animals they could have eaten. Listen, can you imagine getting off the boat, not seeing anything and just going, okay, guys, we have to be careful with how we use our food because we actually don't know what this world is going to be like.

So actually, his family might have looked at him and, why are you sacrificing those perfectly good animals? Because something else has happened here that's different to the first time around. Now they can eat meat. Praise the Lord. They can eat meat now because in Genesis 1, it was only vegetation.

But now, God says to him, later, I'm going to find it in a minute, you can start eating things that move around. So that means this is where the steak was introduced.

This was where pork belly, crispy pork belly was introduced. And it is good. And God says, this is how I am glorified, that you can eat these things. But there's one disclaimer. You can eat all the animals, but you cannot drink the blood.

You cannot drink animal blood. Why? Because blood represents life and only God can give life. That's why blood is off the table. But now you can eat all the different creatures there. But he doesn't do any of that.

[19:34] He uses the animals and he worships. Can you see what's happening here? Genesis 4, when Cain and Abel gave their worship, Cain did not give his best. Cain gave his leftovers and said, God, here's my worship to you.

Noah is here saying, I'm going to worship you, God. You're the reason I got on the boat. You're the reason I built the boat. You're the reason I survived the flood. You're the reason I'm getting off the flood. And actually, I'm just going to say, my future is in your hands.

So I'm going to give you these animals because who knows? It's not those animals that are going to say me. It's you, God. So I'm going to use these and I'm going to worship you. I'm going to give you the best of my worship. How many of us give God the best of our worship?

Saying, God, if I don't give you this, then I'm not going to get through the day. For Hong Kongers, what's the thing that we can use to worship God the most? Time. Time.

Time. Yes, you've got money. Great. Use it. Give it to the poor. Give it to charities that are doing great work. But you've got to. But I tell you what, please, can you just start with giving God time? [20 : 36] And you might say, well, James, I really do want to give God time. But did you know how busy I am? And I'm saying it's because you're busy. Give God your time first.

And maybe it's just five minutes in the day. Maybe that's your worship. Maybe the moment you get off your bed is just like Noah getting out of the ark. And the first thing that you do is build an altar. You see in the Old Testament, they keep building altars.

They keep worshiping him. It goes into Abraham. It goes into Jacob. It goes into Isaac, Gideon, Moses. Everyone is building these altars. Why? Because it's the moment where you stop and you sing the goodness of God.

Because when you sing and when you worship, you're actually filled with gratitude. When you stop worshiping, when we don't give God our time to worship, that's when we start to get anxious. That's when we start to get ungrateful. That's when we start to think that actually everything that we have, everything that we want will come from us. It's only in worship when we can see that actually we have no good thing apart from him.

[21 : 38] We're going to worship God and that is all that matters. Where are you placing your worship? Where are you placing your time? What is the first thing that you do when you get off the proverbial ark? Is it worship?

Is it offering God your best? So we see Noah waiting on God. We see Noah then worshiping God. And then you see the mercy of God coming into play.

Okay, we're going to go to, we're going to read that again. Genesis chapter 8, verse 20. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

And when the Lord smelt 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 strike again, again strike down every living creature as I have done.

While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. This is really interesting.

[22 : 39] God creates, he then sees it descend. And so then he resets and then he recreates in full knowledge that man is still evil.

Everything was wiped out from the face of the earth apart from Noah and his family and sin. Sin gets onto the ark. God here makes a promise and he says, I'm never going to kill everyone again. I'm never going to wipe out creation again. And actually Noah, his worship to me is pleasing. But this is a huge but. But I also know that Noah is just as capable of the sin as his previous ancestors were.

But still, and we're going to talk about that a little bit later. It tells me one thing that the human heart is fundamentally broken. Last week I talked about the term total depravity.

It's something that we have, regardless of where you are on the theological spectrum, total depravity is something that you must understand. And what is that? That is actually you and I are incapable of pure goodness.

[23 : 47] That is the Christian message. That's why it's actually a little bit offensive. Especially when you talk to people outside who don't believe what we believe. And they say, well, I'm a good person. I've actually been doing okay.

Honestly, if a supernatural being told me to do something crazy like building up, maybe I will do it because I'm just out of the goodness of my heart that I will obey this higher power. What we're saying here is that that does not happen.

We do not have goodness in our hearts. That is what it means to be a sinner. You are not a good person that sins every now and again. You are someone, you are a sinner, which is why you sin in deep need of a savior.

And God knows that. God chooses to use a different plan and we'll talk about that later, but he still very much acknowledges that inside Noah's heart, there is still sin.

John Calvin says, the human heart is an idle factory. We just can't help ourselves. You know, I'm doing well today. I'm worshiping today. Monday, that factory is up and running again.

[24:42] What do I need? I need approval. I need likes on IG. I need grades to be better. I need more money in my bank account. I need people to accept me. I need people to invite me to things. I just need all these things.

What are these? These are all idols. These are things that your mind wanders to, that my mind wanders to. The first step to being saved is simply recognizing that, man, if left to my own device, my heart will keep creating idols.

I stump out one, something else will pop up. I delete this app. This other app will pop up. It is just constant. And you see that here. Something else that's interesting.

We're into chapter nine now. And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth. Can you see the parallels? Who is Noah? Noah is the second Adam who walks into creation, who walks into a pure garden, and he gets to start over again.

And he hears the same mandate that Adam heard all those years ago. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. It's interesting. If you look at Adam and Noah, you see those parallels.

[25:50] He's the man in charge of a garden. He also has three sons. And he's given the same mandate. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

He's also still made in the image of God. And you see here, actually God talks a little bit about this. Okay. So we're going to carry on. Chapter nine, verse two. 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.

Sorry. There's some details here that I just find really interesting. When God created creation at the beginning, it was man and then creation and the animals. So actually the animals would trust man. If you ask me, what's something that you wish you could do? What's one superpower that you wish you could have, James? You know what I would say? The first thing that comes to mind, without giving it too much thought, I wish I could talk to lions and hang out with lions.

Wouldn't that just be the best? Just to have a lion as your best friend. No? No one shares that same dream with me? I would just, right? It would be so cool to be able to not be afraid of this fierce, strong beast or a silverback gorilla.

[27:00] Honestly, if you took me to a zoo and I saw these gorillas, they are just, oh, just, I could sit and watch them forever. I would love to be that Chinese Mr. Doolittle, Dr. Doolittle, that actually can talk to animals and not be afraid of them.

I think that's originally how it was supposed to be. I think Adam hung out with animals, big beasts, and was not afraid. That was the original created order.

But you see, things reverse, right? Man was supposed to lead the woman, and then they were supposed to take charge of creation. But what happens? The woman listens to the serpent, and then the man listens to the woman. Completely reversed.

And then we wonder why creation has turned upside down. And so what happens here is, because of that original sin, what we see here is now animals are now afraid of man. And what happens when animals are afraid?

They attack. And so man, in some ways, has lost his dominion over animals. You see, creation itself, we were supposed to look after this world. And yet now we see all these natural disasters that if you keep just tracing it, you can root it back to us, and you can see the world crying out in pain because of what we're doing to it.

[28:09] We did not care for creation. We did not care for animals the way that we should have. 9 verse 3, Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. That is a huge, huge blessing to us.

Maybe it's just because of the lack of resources at that time. The flood had taken everything out, and so it was time to eat. Either way, I'm giving thanks for that. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

For your life blood, I will require reckoning. From every beast, I will require it, and from man. From his fellow man, I will require reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

Again, parallel, Adam and Noah. Adam was made in the image of God. And you see Noah here again, still, even with the sin, still made in the image of God. Me and you, we still are made in the image of God, despite the sin that is in us.

What else is there that's really interesting? He then says, he talks about the word covenant again. Noah is the first person he talks to about the covenant. Remember, this is after a year of not

speaking.

[29 : 15] So this would have become very welcome for Noah to hear this. Chapter 9 verse, this is where Alex read for us earlier. Verse 8, Then God said to Noah and to his sons, With him, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth is with you.

As many as came out of the ark, it is for every beast of the earth. I will establish my covenant with you. Let me talk to you a little bit about what a covenant is. Sometimes when we think covenant right now, we think contract.

We think, I do this for you, and therefore you did this for me. You turn up here, and then I will do this for you. You scratch my back, and I will scratch yours.

That's what a contract is. This is not a contract. This isn't about obedience anymore. Something that's interesting is sin got onto the ark with Noah, and then God realizes, obedience isn't the thing that's going to actually save mankind, because deep down in the heart of man is evil, is sin.

Obedience isn't going to be the way. It's going to be through a covenant. What does a covenant mean? A covenant isn't, if you obey this law, I will then bless you, which I think some of us actually still believe, that if I come to church, if I'm a nice person, if I give my tithes, if I read the Bible for three minutes a day, God will bless me.

[30 : 37] And you might say, well, that sounds stupid. Of course I don't believe that. But the moment something bad happens to you, suddenly you're like, God, why? Why did you let this happen to me?

Haven't you seen that I've been such a good person? And God will say, hey, I didn't enter into a contract with you. I entered into a covenant, which is this. I am yours.

And you are mine. It's an identity thing. God ties himself to humanity.

Just stop there for a second. If you're struggling to understand the grace of God and what God's trying to do, when you look at someone and you see sin, and yet you still say, I'm going to bind myself to you.

There could be, in fact, there will be a moment that you betray me, but I'm still going to bind myself to you. A covenant is what he's saying here. Just out of interest, again, another point.

[31 : 34] That speech that he gives in chapter nine, look how many times he says that. I establish my covenant with you. It is me that does it. This is the sign of the covenant that I make between you and me. I have set my bow in the cloud.

I bring clouds over the earth. I will remember my covenant. Everything is God's to do. We are so helpless in our sin that God needs to come and save us.

We're not going to work our way there anymore. Some of us still think we're trying to work up this ladder, trying to get to God. God's saying, you will never, ever, ever, ever be able to climb this ladder. Only I can come down and get you.

Again, it's the total depravity that stops us from actually understanding the gospel. It's a covenant that he has with us. He's saying, I will never leave you nor forsake you. Why? Because you are mine and I am yours.

And I am now living in you. There's nothing that you can do that is going to cause me to change how I feel about you, is what he's saying. I'll give my life for you, is what he's saying.

[32 : 35] But sadly, what you see, you see Noah waiting on God. You see him worshipping God. You see God being merciful to him. But then sadly, you see the depravity of man on show.

I have a lot of sympathy here for this final part. Noah's done so well so far. He doesn't say much, but he walked with God. He was righteous and he was blameless. He was willing to be laughed at for a hundred years, give up his career, pour lots of money into this stupid ark, waiting for this rain to come.

He gets on the ark and he still waits. It finally rains, it floods, and then God said 40 days, but it's been one year now and he's still waiting. And then it gets off finally, only, only when God says so. He gets off and the first thing that he does isn't build his own house, he builds an altar. He's done so well so far. But scripture isn't here telling us and showing us the story of Noah to show us, hey, all of us, be like Noah.

If you be like Noah, you will be saved. That's not what this story is here for. And this final bit almost hammers home that point and I feel bad and I feel sad for Noah because I do think, my guess is that he has PTSD, my guess is that he's depressed, my guess is he's closing his eyes at night and

he's just remembering the past.

[33:45] My guess is that it's just been such a lonely, hard time in his life and yet he goes, he's assigned a garden, he starts to work the garden and he discovers, actually, wine.

He discovers wine and so chapter nine, we'll see this, verse 20, Noah began to be a man of the soil. So he's a gardener, he's working, he's working the land and he planted a vineyard.

He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. This is where sometimes scripture just gets a little bit confusing. This is where that kid's book about Noah, the animals went in two by two, hurrah, hurrah, remember that?

This isn't how that book finishes. And then he got drunk and got naked and that was that. You don't see this part because it's confusing.

And honestly, this is where I'm asking you just to lean in with me because the word of God is something that we cannot fully, fully appreciate and understand. And ask God, what is it that you're trying to show us here other than, oh boy, Noah's not perfect and he did so much.

[34:53] What hope do I have? I think that's the point. Follow me here. He's left in a garden just like Adam and then he ends up naked and ashamed just like Adam.

Noah truly was the second Adam. He falls into the same trap immediately. The depravity of man is here to show not just that.

He has three boys. One of his boys sees him, Ham, he sees the nakedness of the father and told his two brothers outside. All we can see and read into this is one of the boys goes and sees that dad is drunk, naked, and ashamed now.

And he goes outside and he starts to tell his brothers and he tells other people. And it's not with an honoring, respectful kind of heart. The likelihood is, and you'll see the consequence later which leads me to this conclusion, he's laughing at dad.

At which point, I must stop. If you're someone who looks at your parents and is like, why are they so stupid? Why don't they, why weren't they just smarter?

[36:08] Can they just not get with it and understand what we're going through here? Can you, I can only imagine the pressure that Noah was on from his wife and from his sons and from his son's wives.

So let's use this as just a tiny, tiny example of just, let's continue to honor our parents. We don't know, we don't remember what they went through. We weren't there when it happened. Them being our parents is their first time being parents often.

They're trying to figure it out as well. And I think that's why later the commandment is honor your father and mother. Honor your father and just how serious that is. As I was reading through this passage this week and I was studying it, it compelled me, it drove me to call my mother just to honor her for the journey that she was on.

The consequences if we do not are dire. So Ham goes, hey, check this out. Dad's drunk and he's naked. Come on, let's laugh at him together. And then the other brothers, their reaction is completely different.

What do they do? Verse 23, then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. They realized the gravity of the situation and they wouldn't even look at their father.

[37:21] They didn't dare to out of respect, out of honor. And so they cover him up just like God covers up Adam and Eve. So they themselves find him again in a garden, naked and ashamed and yet he has also covered up the parallels.

It just keeps going. You see this Genesis chapter 1 to 10 and I promise next week we won't need to recap again. It's just this circle. It's just this circle of sin. It's just this cycle of sin that happens.

And so Noah wakes up. He realizes what happens and he comes out with a curse, much like Genesis chapter 3 when there is also a curse. And this time he curses Canaan. He goes straight, not to Ham, but to Ham's son, to his grandson.

And he curses Canaan. You can see this, well, this is pretty harsh. Again, the gravity, the importance of honoring parents. But then what you see here is actually, I think actually Noah is now prophesying into the future because what will the Canaanites become?

The Canaanites will become the people, the fight against the people of God. Do you remember those two groups of people we saw in the curse, in the original curse in Genesis chapter 3 where there will be one group that fears God and one group that does not?

[38:32] We see the same thing happening again here. And so he curses Canaan and his offspring and then he enlarges the tents of Shem and Japheth.

What a crazy, crazy story. And we sit here and we stop and we go, what was that all about? There was Enoch who walked with God, but then he, middle age, he stopped and then got taken away into heaven.

The descendants kept going down, sin kept multiplying, but then Noah finally broke the chain, he gave rest and relief, and then he screws up at the very end as well. The reason for the story of Noah, the reason why God is showing us even this sad end here is that, yes, there was a second Adam of sorts in Noah, where if you keep going into the New Testament, into 1 Corinthians 15, you will read, actually, Noah wasn't truly the second Adam, there was another Adam that comes.

Let's just call him the last Adam. Where the previous two Adams failed in the garden, there was a last Adam that does not fail, that he chooses to trust and he chooses to obey.

In fact, he was fully clothed and yet he does not count himself equal with God in his robes and he takes them off and he becomes naked and ashamed on our behalf.

[39:52] This last Adam comes to save. And so what we see here is the salvation of God. 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.

I have set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

Remember, salvation comes from God. Only he shuts us in. Gabe and Jojo and a whole group of you went to Tolunas.

Who went to Tolunas this last week? And you're all still here at church. Well done. Well done.

Tired? We, as part of the fellowship, we got to pray with Gabe and Jojo and Ellen every day, every morning.

And it was really fun just to, well actually, it was a little bit fun but also a little bit jealousy invoking as they got to show us the pictures of where they were. On the final full day they had lots of activities that were planned but they said, hey, we might not be able to make the call because we have to make contingency plans.

Why? Because there's a storm outside and so we can't actually join the call. Thankfully, they actually still did but they had to change everything but let's, so we prayed for them. God, the one who controls weather.

[40:59] Have we all prayed that at some point? Especially when we've had a special day that we've got special things planned and we've got, heard you can control wind and waves. Can you control the weather so it can be a nice day? Not too humid. About 60% humidity would be great.

With the light breeze, sunshine, blue skies. Thank you, Lord, very much. Okay, bye. And so we prayed for them just kind of a, well, pray that you'll have a good day. It's kind of sucky to have a storm on the final day.

And then we've got a picture at the end. Gabe, you can show us for us. This is a real picture, right? This isn't an AI created, filtered picture. They all saw it.

And when you were taking a group picture at the end, this was the picture that they showed. It's like, praise God. We got to finish the day looking at that.

Doesn't that warm your heart? Doesn't that bring you to your knees when you realize how small you truly are, how powerless you are, that you can't control anything, but there is one who can control. This would have been a similar rainbow, maybe similar view to what Noah would have seen.

[42:05] when he looks. Remember, 40 days of raining and then flood. It's probably dark and gray. It's probably like the UK. Okay? He's probably getting seasonal depression as well because there's no sunshine.

And then he sees this. And then God speaks to him and says, I will establish a covenant with you. Noah, I'm going to make a promise to you and your family. I am yours.

You are mine. I'm good for my promise. You have nothing to fear. What a beautiful, now there probably were rainbows before this, but now he applies the meaning behind this so that every time, every time he sees a rainbow, Noah will remember that God made a promise to him that he will look after him and his family.

Now those of you who are scientists will know that a rainbow isn't just a semicircle. It's a full circle. It's just that from where we're standing, we can't actually see the full circle. But actually, if you look at scripture, the word there isn't, hey, look into the sky, you're going to see this colorful, colorful

rainbow.

And it's going to be so pretty and beautiful just to remind you of how pretty and beautiful that I think you are. That is not what the word rainbow there means. The rainbow word there in scripture actually means battle bow.

[43 : 26] Can you imagine God puts this rainbow in the sky, this bow in the sky and he says, Noah, I've made a promise to you and your family. I will never wipe out the earth again.

That bow that you see is now pointing in a different direction. It is not pointing downwards anymore. That arrow of justice is never going to come down on you guys ever again.

That is my commitment and that is my promise to you. That bow is now pointing in a different direction. You don't have to live afraid, wondering whether one cruel act, one evil thought, one dodgy thing you say is going to cause judgment on you.

That does not happen. Why? Because there's a rainbow and the rainbow is pointing in a different direction. The rainbow is pointing now towards the sky. Why is God so confident in saying, I'm making a promise to you that I'll never have to do this again?

Because he has a new plan. Because he has a new Noah. He has a true and a better Noah. And this time, this one who's going to come, this one who's going to succeed in the garden will actually take that arrow for us.

[44 : 33] This arrow is no longer pointing at creation. It is now pointing at the sky. It is pointing at God's very own son. That is why he's so confident in saying there will not be any floods anymore.

He's saying next time this happens and it breaks my heart because it will happen. But this time, justice will be upon my son. justice will be upon Jesus himself.

There's a lot of us who've been going through the book of Romans and Romans chapter 8, which has just been a beast these last few days. You see in verse 18 where it says, actually the sufferings that we're going through right now, creation is groaning.

We have subjected ourselves to this futility willingly. Why? Trace it all the way back to the fruit. We made that choice ourselves. And just before we blame Eve, just before we blame Adam, just before we blame Cain, just before we blame Noah, we must look at ourselves and go, have I not made those decisions as well?

Have I not chosen to eat of the fruit? Have I not chosen to trust myself? Have I not chosen to not worship God and decide to create my own altars for myself? Yes, I have. Guilty as charged.

[45 : 49] But now you look at the rainbow and you see there is a new deal. It's not a contract. God says, obedience isn't going to cut it. Just because I get you to build an ark, that's not going to save you. The only thing that's going to save you is you putting your trust in me.

Justice is now going to be upon my son. The wrath of God will now be satisfied on the cross where the wrath and the love of God are met together. That's the only way we can be saved.

God says something even more. I can't trust you to build an ark anymore. You're not trusting enough of me. You're not obedient enough of me. You're just not going to be able to do it. You're not going to be able to work your way up to me.

You see in the Old Testament all these Levitical laws that come. It's God trying to help them understand what it means to be holy, what it means to be set apart. And yet even he knows it's not going to work.

Beginning of Romans 8. It says, therefore there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus for God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. Why? You give us all the laws in the world.

[46 : 51] We'll try for the first few days and then we will fail. That's why it's weakened by the flesh. But now, by sending his own son, by sending his own son, we can build the ark to get rescued.

Now what does Jesus do? Jesus comes down and Jesus gets into our boat. And what do you see when he is in a storm? He stands up and he says, peace, be still. And the wind and the waves obey him.

This was the only way to be saved. It wasn't even about Noah. It was about Jesus. Whew. And suddenly, what you see here is that there is no more need for a boat.

We just need to get in with Jesus. And that's it from Genesis 1 to 10. the creation, the decreation, the recreation, the cycle of sin that wraps around all of it.

It will be broken by one simple, greatest love of act. Act of love, sorry. When Jesus himself took on that arrow, when that bow shot into the sky.

[48:01] And by that, we are saved. What does that do for you? I'll tell you what it does for me. When I look at the news and I see the wars that keep happening, when I see all the hate that's happening, when I see all the sickness that's happening, all the accidents that happen, my heart breaks because God allows me to have a glimpse into the wickedness of man, the corruption of the earth, the violence that we are causing on one another.

But then I stop and I look and I see there is hope. If he just left us there, that wouldn't be enough. Thank God that he shared with us the final bit of Noah because we would have thought that we had to all be Noah.

But that's not the case. We're supposed to be Jesus. So we can look at the storm and by God's grace, sometimes we can see a rainbow. Final thing about a rainbow and final thing from this sermon.

Some of us are looking for rainbows all the time. But the rainbows only come when there is a storm. The rainbows only come on the backdrop of the storm.

So if you are stuck in the storm right now, then count yourself lucky. Count your blessing. There's a chance that you can see a rainbow. But sometimes we want to have the rainbow without the storm and that doesn't seem possible either.

[49:29] Scientifically, that doesn't seem possible. we're living in a world that is currently in the already and not yet. God is still working.

He is still patient. He's waiting, waiting for hearts to turn back to Him. You look and you see, God just pull the plug. It's time to finish. And then He'll tell you, Methuselah, I let Methuselah live to 969. That's how patient I am. And I will continue to be patient because a thousand years is like a day to me. And He loves and cares for each of us so much.

He loves and cares for each of our loved ones so much. Those who we can think of in our family, in our friendship circles, who do not know Him yet, who have not trusted Him yet, who are refusing to get onto the ark. They're saying, the ark's done.

The altars are done. There's no altars in the New Testament. Why? Because now God just dwells in us, each of us. We are His dwelling place. We are the ones who worship Him and that's all because of Jesus.

[50:29] Would you put your trust in Jesus? Would you wait on Him? By all means, be resourceful, but don't move until He says so. Next week, Gabe's going to lead us and we see a new chapter in mankind.

We're finished from Adam to Noah and then we start into soon the story of Abraham. So I encourage you this week, just mull over this creation story again from Genesis 1 to 10 and ask God, what is it that you're trying to show me?

What is it that you're trying to remind me? And I pray, the final thought that you will have and this is my final thought, I promise, is that God promised you that He will make all things new and He will make you new and that is the hope.

That is the hope that saves you. Let's pray. We spend a moment now, Lord, and we just wait on You.

Sometimes the boat is dark and wet and dingy and cold. We know we've been saved but it doesn't really feel like it. But we are adamant.

[51:55] We do not get off until You say so. We wait on You because You made a promise to us. At any moment, any chance we get, we worship You.

we build an altar, a sacrifice of praise. We give You our best. Forgive us when we do not. And Lord, we thank You for Your mercy that even though You know that sin got onto the ark, that in this room of worshippers, sin remains.

grace. But just as it says in Romans 7, there are still things to this day, this morning, that we sat here and know we shouldn't do and yet we still do.

What wretched people we are. how can we be saved? Thanks be to God, to Jesus. Thank You for being the true knower who gives relief.

Thank You for being greater than Moses in delivering us. Thank You that You took on the wrath of God to show us the love of God.

[53:38] Thank You that You took on the flood of judgment for us so that we would be lifted up to be seated at Your right hand as co-heirs.

What's so amazing about grace is that we did nothing to deserve it. And while we were still sinners, You loved us and You saved us. We thank You, Lord.

It's a joy to gather with you all today and see everyone not sure what you took away from the sermon, but I'm just reminded that salvation belongs to the Lord, that He shuts His people in that ark, that He sets a covenant of grace for us in Christ.

Noah points to the perfect one. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Would we walk by faith? Would we wait? And trust on Him as we still encounter the sin within us, around us?

We look forward to that day when it will all pass away. The new heavens and the new earth will come. This is our hope. Church, this is what we hold on to and this is what we want to hold out to the world.

[55 : 04] So, bless you all. Thank you.