

Noah: Faith Working

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Date: 03 June 2018

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, this morning if we could turn to the letter to the Hebrews on chapter 11.
- Hebrews chapter 11, we'll continue in our study in this chapter. It's on page 1211, if you're using the Pew Bible. Page 1211, Hebrews chapter 11.
- A chapter that's all about what does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ.
- So this morning we're looking at Noah. So Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 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. Mr. Noah built an ark.
- [1 : 1 9] The people thought, he's such a lark. Mr. Noah pleaded so, but into the ark they would not go. Down came the rain in torrents.
- Down came the rain in torrents. Down came the rain in torrents. But only eight were saved.
- These words are the familiar lyrics of a children's song. But sadly they remind us about the hardness of the heart. But you know, we're not only familiar with that children's song, we're also familiar with the biblical narrative of Noah's ark.
- Even those who have never read the Bible, they've heard of this man, Noah, who saved his family from this devastating flood that destroyed the world. And in fact, the story of Noah and the flood, it's so well known that it became a Hollywood blockbuster in 2014.
- Maybe you've watched the film, maybe you saw the film Noah. But you know, I don't think it would matter how many special effects that were used to create that Hollywood movie with all the big film sets or the computer generated pictures.
- [2 : 3 2] You know, the reality was far worse. The movie about Noah was described as an action adventure film. But the reality would have been a horror story.
- Because the death of all mankind, it certainly wasn't entertainment for Noah and his family. Watching the world being destroyed before their eyes wasn't movie material.
- It wouldn't have been award winning for them to see their community being drowned by an unstoppable flood. You know, when God destroyed the world, it was a scene that Noah and his family would never forget.
- And yet what we see here in Hebrews 11 is that Noah, he was a man of faith. And he's commended for his actions of faith. And it's interesting that when we considered Abel a few weeks ago, we saw faith worshipping.
- When we looked at Enoch last week, we saw faith walking. But as we look at Noah this morning, we have to consider Noah as faith working.
- [3 : 4 2] Noah had a faith that worked. Because his faith responded by actively stepping out in obedience to God's word. Noah's faith was a faith that worked.

Noah was committed. And as we said before, Hebrews 11 is all about answering the question, what does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ? And faith in Jesus Christ, it involves confidence in Jesus Christ.

It involves conviction about Jesus Christ. And it involves commitment to Jesus Christ. And so as we consider Noah this morning, I just want us to think about three things.

I want us to think about the promise, the plan, and the proclamation. The promise, the plan, and the proclamation. We'll read verse 7 again.

We're looking at the promise. By faith, Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear, constructed an ark for the saving of his household.

[4 : 51] By this, he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Now, before we're given the promise of salvation, the narrative of Noah, it begins with the problem of sin.

And that sequence is important. Because you have to see the problem of sin in order to see the promise of salvation. How are you going to know your need of a remedy if you first don't know that you're in ruin?

How are you going to, why are you going to seek the Lord if you don't first of all know that you're lost? And that's how the narrative of Noah begins. It begins with the problem of sin. And then we're given the promise of salvation.

And you know, the problem of sin, we're told, was of epidemic scale. It was widespread. It was worldwide. Sin had swept across the nations and the continents of this world.

Sin was rampant. It was like this unstoppable plague where the disease was spreading further and further. And it was so awful that we're told in Genesis 6 that the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

[6 : 09] You know, it's a harrowing description. Because the world that the Lord had made only nine generations earlier, the world that he had made perfect and he saw that it was very good.

And now we're told it's almost unrecognizable. So this rampant plague of sin, it had taken hold and there was widespread wickedness everywhere.

There was violence in the earth. Sin was so awful that when the Lord looked upon the world that he had made, the Lord, we're told, was sorry that he had made man on the earth.

And he was grieved in his heart. Now, of course, the Lord knew that Adam was going to sin. The Lord knew how awful it was going to become.

And the Lord knew that sin was going to cause chaos in the world. The Lord knew all that. But the reason we're told that the Lord was sorry or that he regretted that he had made man or that the Lord was grieved in his heart.

[7 : 14] These descriptions in the Bible, they're there for our benefit. They're there so that we understand how the Lord views our sin. Because, my friend, our sin, it causes the Lord hurt.

It causes him heartache. It causes the Lord disappointment. It causes the Lord disgust. The Lord hates sin. The Lord can't tolerate sin. The Bible says that the Lord is holy.

He's of purer eye than to behold iniquity. And he cannot look upon sin. So sin is an offense to the Lord. And because of the problem of sin and the wickedness of mankind, the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created.

I will destroy them from off the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air. For I am sorry that I have made them. As the Lord looked upon his fallen humanity, he saw that the descendants of Adam, they were progressing in evil.

And the Lord knew that the only way to deal with sin was to destroy the world. But then we're introduced to Noah. And we're told, we're told about this problem of sin.

[8 : 36] And then we're told, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Despite the problem of sin, there was in Noah the promise of salvation.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And you know, I love that statement because when the Lord looked at mankind, all that he saw was their sin and their rebellion.

But when the Lord looked at Noah, he found grace. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. My friend, when the Lord looks at you, what does he see?

Does he see your sin? Or does he see his son? Does he see badness? Or does he see blood? Does he see foolishness?

Or does he see faith? When the Lord looks at you, what does he see? Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. But how did Noah find grace in the eyes of the Lord?

[9 : 38] Well, we're told, as we read in Genesis 6, Noah was a righteous man. He was blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he had confidence in Jesus Christ.

He had conviction about Jesus Christ. And he had commitment to Jesus Christ. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he had put his entire trust in the Lord and in his word.

So my friend, I'll ask you again. When the Lord looks at you, what does he see? If your hope and trust is in Jesus Christ, then the Lord sees grace.

He sees righteousness. He sees precious blood. He sees the reflection of his own son. But you know, if you're still a stranger to grace and to God this morning, then the Lord sees you for who you really are.

And you know, my unconverted friend here today, the reason you're not a Christian today is because you can't see yourself for who you really are.

[10 : 47] You can't see your problem of sin. And because of this, you don't really think that your problem of sin is as great as the Bible makes it out to be. That your sin, if left undealt with, it will bring you to a place of unimaginable pain and unending suffering.

You don't see your sin for what it really is. But you know, there was a story about a minister that was once told. He spoke to this young woman and he asked her to promise him, promise him to earnestly pray this prayer day and night.

And the prayer the minister sent was very short, only of four words. Lord, show me myself. Lord, show me myself. Then a few days later, we're told that the minister, he returned and on meeting this young woman, he said to her, I hope that you've done what you promised you would do and prayed that prayer.

And the young woman, she said, God has answered my prayer in an awful way. He has shown me myself and what a sight it is. And she said, Sir, what will I do?

The minister, he then proceeded to tell her about her need of Jesus and her need to trust him with all her heart. But then the minister said, earnestly pray this prayer.

[12 : 12] It's also a very short prayer with only four words in it. Lord, show me thyself. Lord, show me thyself.

And of course, her prayer was answered. My friend, if you can't see your problem of sin today, then you need to earnestly pray, Lord, show me myself.

Show me myself. But if you can see your problem of sin, but you're not committed to Jesus Christ, then you need to earnestly pray, Lord, show me thyself.

Lord, show me thyself. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And it was for that reason that Noah received the promise.

Not only the promise of salvation through building an ark, but he also received the promise that the Lord was going to destroy the world by a flood. And we're told here in Hebrews 11 that by faith, Noah being warned of God concerning events as yet unseen.

[13 : 18] But what were the events that were as yet unseen? Of course, Noah had never seen the destruction of the whole world. But that wasn't what was as yet unseen. Noah had never seen the sea.

He lived in the desert. But that wasn't what was as yet unseen. What was as yet unseen was the rain. Noah had never seen rain.

And yet God promised he was going to flood the world. And you know, I say this because we're told back in Genesis 2 that the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth.

A mist was going up from the earth to water the face of the ground. Noah had never seen rain. But by faith, Noah believed God's promise.

And that's what faith is. Faith is believing God's word. It's taking God at his word and actively obeying his command to follow him.

[14 : 23] And that's what we need to do. Like Noah, we need to believe God's promise. And like Noah, we need to follow God's plan. God's plan of salvation.

And that's what I'd like us to think about secondly. The plan. So the promise and then the plan. The plan. 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. So when Noah received the promise of salvation and he received the promise that the Lord was going to destroy the world with a flood, Noah then responded to the Lord's promise by being obedient to his plan.

And as we saw in our reading, the phrase, Noah did all, did according to all that the Lord commanded him, that phrase, it was repeated throughout the narrative. And that's because Noah had a faith that worked.

Noah had a faith that worked. It doesn't mean that Noah worked for his salvation. Rather, Noah worked because of his salvation. Even though he had never seen rain, Noah responded to God's word by faith.

[15 : 46] And his faith was evident because he actively stepped out in obedience to God's plan. My friend, Noah's faith was a faith that worked.

It wasn't a faith that wanted. It was a faith that worked. Noah's faith wasn't a faith that wanted. It was a faith that worked.

Now, let me say this. I know that many of you in here, you want to be saved. You want to be a Christian.

You want to follow the Lord. You want to die with Christ as your Savior. You want to be converted. But my friend, wanting and working are two different things.

Noah's faith wasn't a faith that wanted. It was a faith that worked. It was a faith that was evident because he actively stepped out in obedience to God's word.

[16 : 50] And you know, this is what the Bible teaches. Faith without works is dead. That doesn't mean that you have to work for your faith. It means that because of your faith or an evidence of your faith is that you work.

You actively step out. You make a movement in obedience to God's word. And you know, this is what the letter of James speaks about in the New Testament.

James writes, Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. And James says, Show me your faith without your works. And I will show you my faith by my works.

And what James was saying is that there needs to be evidence of your faith. There needs to be a response of your faith. There needs to be an outworking of your faith. There needs to be commitment in your faith.

Because your faith can't be a faith at once. It has to be a faith that works. You have to actively step out in faith by your obedience to God's word.

[17 : 55] You need to actively commit your life to Jesus Christ because the evidence that you're a Christian is when you make a commitment. My friend, the work of your faith, the evidence of your faith is when you confess Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior.

My friend, the evidence of your faith is when you tell other people, I am a Christian. I want to follow Jesus. I know I'm completely unworthy.

But Christ is my righteousness. And yes, that might be a scary thing to do. But I guarantee you that the moment you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, there will be a peace in your heart that passes all understanding.

A peace that you will not be able to explain with words. But you will know it so personally and so deeply. My friend, you don't need a faith at once.

You need a faith that works. You need to actively step out and seek the Lord by faith in your obedience and your commitment to his word.

[19 : 10] Because that's the faith that Noah had. He had a faith that worked. And his faith was evident because he actively stepped out in obedience to the Lord's plan. And the Lord's plan was build an ark.

Build an ark. And you know, what's interesting is that Noah didn't have to design the ark by himself. He didn't have to come up with all the measurements and all the dimensions of this boat that he was going to make.

Noah didn't have to plan his own way of salvation like many people like to do. Noah just had to be obedient. He had to follow the Lord's plan of salvation.

And by faith Noah constructed an ark. He built this box-like ship according to the exact specifications which God had given him. And as we read in Genesis 6, the ark that was to be built, it was 300 cubits long by 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high.

Now, a cubit was the distance between your elbow and the tip of your finger which is about 18 inches. So, if we work it all out, the ark was 450 foot long, it was 75 foot wide and it was 45 foot high.

[20 : 31] Or you could say that Noah's ark was roughly one and a half times bigger than our old ferry the Isle of Lewis. One and a half times bigger than the Isle of Lewis.

And you know, when you think about it, when you think of the Isle of Lewis, it doesn't seem that big. It doesn't seem big enough to house Noah and his family and all the animals that the Lord was going to put into the ark.

But if you were to imagine the Isle of Lewis as this complete box, no accommodation, no car decks, no engine room, there would be just a box. And there would be all this extra space.

And in the Lord's plan of salvation, he provided everything they needed in order for Noah and his family to be safe inside the ark.

The Lord provided a way of salvation so that Noah and his family could escape the wrath of God's judgment against sin. And is that not what Jesus Christ has done for us?

[21 : 45] That in the Lord's wonderful plan of salvation, he has provided everything we need to be saved. He has provided a substitute for our sin. He has provided blood, the blood of a sacrifice to cover our sin.

He's provided the death of a sinless descendant of Adam to stand condemned in our place. My friend, the Lord has provided a way of salvation in Jesus Christ.

God has provided everything we need to escape the wrath of God's judgment against sin. John 3 16, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

God has provided for us a way of salvation through the death of his own son. And like Noah, we have to actively respond in faith to God's plan of salvation.

Like Noah, we have to follow God's instructions for safety and security. Like Noah, we have to commit ourselves to the provision of salvation in Jesus Christ.

[22 : 50] Because failure to follow God's instructions, it will lead to death and judgment. My friend, the Lord has provided for you and he's planned for you a way of salvation.

He has provided you instructions for salvation. Believe and you shall be saved. confess with your mouth, believe in your heart that the Lord, that Jesus Christ is Lord and you shall be saved.

He has provided everything for you. But failure to follow these instructions will lead to death. But if you respond in faith and obedience to God's plan, you receive the promise of eternal life.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever, whosoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

That's God's plan and that's the plan Noah followed. But you know, Noah didn't want to keep God's plan to himself. Because the plan and provision of salvation, it is to be offered to whosoever.

[24 : 03] And that's why I'd like us to think about thirdly, the proclamation. The promise, the plan, and the proclamation. 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. We spoke earlier about that children's song.

Mr. Noah built an ark. The people thought he's such a lark. Mr. Noah pleaded so, but into the ark they would not go.

And you know, we can often be tempted to think that the day and generation that we're living in is a dark day. And that because the number of people who follow the Lord is small, that we think there's no hope for the church.

There are so few people coming out in the sight of the Lord that, you know, we can be tempted to think that there's no one to stand up for the truths of scripture. There's no one to stand up against this tide of secularism that is running riot in our nation.

[25 : 16] But when we consider Noah's day and Noah's generation, there were only eight people who followed the Lord. In a world of wickedness, there was only a church membership of eight.

Noah's day and generation, it was one of the darkest days of the church. But Noah, we're told, he found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation.

Noah walked with God. Noah lived against the grain. He didn't go with the flow of the world. He stood up for Christ and he stood up for his saviour. And what Noah discovered, as every Christian discovers, is that far better for you to be on the side of Christ than to be part of the minority and worship the false idols of this world.

Far better for you to put your trust in Jesus and his salvation and come out on the side of the Lord than to follow the ways of the world than to a lost eternity in hell.

And I know it's not easy to come out on the side of Christ. It's not easy to make a stand for Christ. It's not easy to say that you're a Christian, whether that's in your home or your workplace or among your friends.

[26 : 38] But you know, better for you to be saved by Christ than to be spurned by Christ. Better for you to be covered by Christ than to be condemned by Christ.

Better for you to be delivered by Christ than to be destroyed by Christ. And you know, Noah, he couldn't keep this promise and plan of salvation to himself.

So what did he do? Noah proclaimed the promise and the plan of God's salvation. Noah was a preacher. The apostle Peter, he describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness.

Noah was a preacher and he proclaimed God's promise and God's plan of salvation. Noah preached about sin, righteousness, and judgment.

Noah preached about the problem of sin and that God hates sin. Noah preached about the need for righteousness, that we can only be made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.

[27 : 39] Noah preached about judgment and that judgment is coming and that people need to repent and turn from their sin and turn to the Lord. My friend, Noah preached about God's promised judgment and God's plan of salvation.

He preached that you need to be safe and secure inside the ark when judgment comes. And you know, Noah's proclamation, it would have been urgent.

So urgent. It would have been so passionate, so powerful. No time would have been wasted because Noah knew that time was short, judgment was coming.

Noah would have preached and pleaded with people, you need to come into the ark, you need to be saved, you need to flee from the wrath to come, you need to come in, you need to be in Christ because it's in Christ that there's hope, there's joy, there's peace, there's the promise of eternal life.

Noah would have pleaded with the people, you need to come into the ark. And you know, the Bible tells us that there was 100 years between God giving the promise of judgment and God fulfilling that promise of judgment.

[28 : 58] That means that there was 100 years of opportunity. It's 100 years of hearing the message of salvation. It's 100 years of being reminded that judgment is coming, judgment is coming, you need to repent because judgment is coming.

My friend, 100 years, it was a lifetime of God's mercy being extended to lost sinners. And you know, that's the situation for some of you here today.

You have had years of opportunity, years of hearing the gospel, years of being reminded about sin and righteousness and judgment. And some of you have had a whole lifetime of God's mercy being held out to you.

But you know, my friend, with every passing day and every passing week and every passing month and every passing year, eternity is coming closer and closer and your window of opportunity is getting smaller and smaller and your time to act is getting shorter and shorter.

And like those who rejected Noah's preaching, we're told he condemned the world. He condemned the world.

[30 : 16] Noah's preaching, his message of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through it, he condemned the world. And because they refused to listen, because they refused to respond in faith, because they walked away from the free offer of the gospel, Noah heaped burning coals upon their head.

my unconverted friend, that's what happens every time you reject the offer of the gospel.

The preached message of sin, righteousness and judgment, it is heaping the burning coals of hell upon your head.

But today, in the gospel, once again, you are being cautioned, you are being counseled in love, you are being pleaded with, you are being urged to come, that you would actively respond in faith by committing your life to Jesus Christ.

Christ. By faith, Noah. The promise, the plan and the proclamation.

[31 : 45] Noah had a faith that worked, because his faith responded in actively stepping out in obedience to God's command.

command. Noah had a faith that worked. He was committed. He was committed. What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ?

Faith in Jesus Christ involves confidence in Jesus, conviction about Jesus, and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Noah had a faith that worked. my friend, do not sit where you are any longer. Step out in obedience and commit your life to Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we are reminded in thy word that thou art one who hates sin.

[32 : 56] And help us then, we pray, as those who are sinners, to run to this saviour, the saviour that thou hast provided, the saviour who is Jesus Christ, that we would see his arms outstretched to us.

As one of old said, I asked Jesus how much he loved me. And he stretched out his arms and died. Lord, that we would see how much we are loved.

We are loved more than we could ask or even think. And help us then to come, to come and embrace this free offer, to step out in obedience and to walk with this Jesus, the Jesus who loved us and gave himself for us.

Go before us, Lord, we ask. Apply thy word to us, we pray by thy spirit, that we would leave this place changed, transformed, renewed, and willing to follow this Christ.

Do us good, then we ask. Take away our iniquity. Receive us graciously. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We shall conclude our service by singing the words of Psalm 107.

[34 : 17] Picking up where we left off earlier. Psalm 107, page 384 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 107, we're singing from verse 29 down to the verse marked 31.

As I said earlier, this is the testimony of a sailor, that he experienced a storm. He cried to the Lord for mercy. And then he says the storm, maybe not the storm outside, but the storm within his heart.

It changed to a calm. And that's why the psalmist, he pleads in verse 31, that everyone would come and know this Lord who is able to change hearts and lives.

The storm is changed into a calm at his command and will, so that the waves which raged before now quiet are and still. Then are they glad because at rest and quiet now they be.

So to the haven he then brings which they desire to see. Oh, that men to the Lord would give praise for his goodness then. And for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men.

[35 : 30] These verses to God's praise. Do we have to bookmark or please. Aaah. That I don't trust.

The story has changed it due perhaps. The storm has changed when to who I have come. Let my heart be cold, go please And why yet now they be, so hear the heaven, heaven, grace, which they desire to see.

Oh, that men to the Lord would give praise for His goodness there, and for His works of wonder done.

And to the Son of Man. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[37 : 39] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.