

Genesis 6:9-22, 7:11-23. ⁹ *This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.* ¹⁰ *Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.* ¹¹ *Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.* ¹² *God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.* ¹³ *So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.* ¹⁴ *So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.* ¹⁵ *This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.* ¹⁶ *Make a roof for it and finish the ark to within 18 inches of the top. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks.* ¹⁷ *I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.* ¹⁸ *But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.* ¹⁹ *You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.* ²⁰ *Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.* ²¹ *You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."* ²² *Noah did everything just as God commanded him.* ¹¹ *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.* ¹² *And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.* ¹³ *On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark.* ¹⁴ *They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings.* ¹⁵ *Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark.* ¹⁶ *The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.* ¹⁷ *For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth.* ¹⁸ *The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.* ¹⁹ *They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.* ²⁰ *The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.* ²¹ *Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.* ²² *Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.* ²³ *Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.*

Be Prepared

1. **Avoid the dangerous darkness of this world**
2. **Walk with God in the safety of his light.**

What would you do if God had told you that there was not much time before the world was going to end? What would you do if God had told you that if this wicked world did not change he would bring destruction?

This is the account of what Noah did. This is history of Noah. Genesis 6 and 7 is not necessarily a record of God's wrath or a record of the flood that was so destructive that it wiped out every living thing. No this is the history of a righteous man who walked with God. That is, Noah was a man, who listened to God's instructions and then carried them out. Noah was a righteous man, but he did not obtain this status because he was so absolutely perfect in everything he did. No, he was righteous

because he believed in God. His righteousness was not his own. It was God's righteousness and the Lord gladly gave it to his friend Noah, because Noah trusted in God. Noah was righteous and blameless in God's eyes because of the faith that he had been given. And Noah's life was then marked by an obedience that came from faith in God, and this evidence of faith was clearly on display throughout Noah's life especially in the days leading up to and during the flood. Genesis 6 and 7 is a history of God's grace to Noah and to all of us for by saving Noah God preserved his promise that a Savior would come to this world.

God had warned his friend that the world had 120 years to straighten out its act and follow God or destruction would come. God had told his friend that he was so serious about destroying this wicked world that Noah should build a massive ship, an ark, in which God would spare him and everyone and everything that was on board. God told Noah that the world would end soon, and how did Noah respond?

He continued in his walk with God. He continued to live his life and his life of faith. The world as he knew it was going to end, but day after day he went to work as the Lord commanded him. He started preparations for the ark and lived his life. He enjoyed his family and took care of them. He trusted that God would deliver them and so he even added to his family at this time. It was after Noah learned of the 120 years God would give the world to repent, it was then he had his three sons. It seems clear that Noah became their father under God's blessing. It also seems clear that Noah had a personal desire to fulfill the task God had given to him, to build the ark so that humanity might survive the Flood, and the promised Savior might arrive in due time. Noah believed that God would spare him from this disaster and God would bring salvation through the Savior that would come from his offspring. Noah believed God and lived his life in faith.

God told Noah that the world as he knew it would end; that a great devastation unlike anything ever seen would come upon the earth, and what did Noah do? He started a family and he raised his sons and passed his faith onto them. In the very midst of this wicked world Noah stood out as light in a world that was so dark that it was doomed to destruction.

In this history of Noah we are told of this remarkable aspect of his faith. Noah followed God and listened faithfully to his Lord and all the while he was surrounded by nothing but evil. Noah walked with God while the people of his world ran after and lunged for every evil desire. We are told that the earth was full of violence. We are told that God looked at the world, and behold, it was shocking in its unrighteousness; it was disturbing in its corruption.

How horribly different is this assessment of the earth from that which God gave after he finished creating the world! In our Bibles, Genesis 6 is just a few pages away from Genesis chapter 1, but do you remember how God viewed his creation then? At the end of Genesis chapter 1 we are told that God looked at man and the earth and everything that he had made, he looked at it and it was very good. The world as Noah knew it was far removed from the perfection of God's original creation. At the time of Noah the sight of the earth was a nauseating sight. It was corrupt and rotten, and mankind was the worm in the apple, the source of the corruption. And this was God's shocking conclusion, this was what God was now forced to do, bring an end to this world; to throw out this rotten world and start anew. God said to Noah, **"The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth has filled up with violence because of them. And now look at Me! I am destroying them together with the earth"** (Genesis 6:13 translation from the Hebrew)

What would you do if you were surrounded by a wicked world, and God said that it would all end soon? We don't have to stretch our imagination at all, do we? The corruption of this world we live in today is shocking and mankind is the source of the corruption. It is nauseating to watch how this earth has been filled up with violence and immorality and evil. Wars are raging. Each night some crime, or some shooting, is reported on the nightly news. This past weekend there were people in

this country who were so overcome by greed and anger that there was multiple shootings outside of department stores as people jockeyed for position for the big door-buster, Black Friday, sales. This world is corrupt and it comes from the hearts of sinners. We too get dragged down into this mess. We too are too easily overcome by anger and greed. Our tempers flare. We fight over possessions. We let our anger overtake us as we yell and scream and fight even with those that we love. All of this has not gone unnoticed by God. It all happens under his nose and the stench has reached His nostrils. All this evil daily happens in his presence and nothing eludes his sight. And there will come a day that he will say that “enough is enough”. He has promised as much. He has told us in his word that judgment is coming.

But our story as his people, as his church in this part of history, is not a recording of the coming destruction, but it is a record of his grace. In the midst of this dark and corrupted existence, he saves us. He saves us despite our own sinfulness. He does it in his saving love that takes action.

Notice how God acted in saving Noah. He warned his friend. He gave him time to build the ark. He strengthened his faith even though there must have been timers that Noah doubted. And then when the ark was complete God closed the door. God sealed him in. God made sure that his friend Noah was safe.

Take time today and notice God’s saving action in your life. He reaches down into this dark pit and he saves us. Just like he did for Noah, through water he saves us. In baptism he brings us into his family, he brings us into his church, and he seals us in, seals us up, with the Holy Spirit, who is guarantee, a down payment of his promises. He did that for you. He sets us apart and gives us his word so that we may serve him just like his servant Noah. He speaks to us so that we may resist the seductive darkness of this world and walk with him. He gives the light of his love so that we might be saved from the dangerous darkness that surrounds us. He gives us the light of his love so that we may be the bright light that stands out against the darkness of this wicked world.

It is his will that we would be a beacon in this dark world so that others may be drawn to his light. But this is not a light that comes from us because we are such good people. This is his light that fills us but it is not from us. It is from God. In his grace he has made us righteous through faith. In his undeserved love he has brought us into the light of his love. He has given us the righteousness and perfection that Christ earned. He gives it to us in the saving waters of baptism through which he cleanses us from our sins and clothes us through Christ. And in this blessed sacrament he brings us into the fellowship and safety of his church where he keeps us safe and protects us.

Even the very architecture of our church reminds us of this grace of God that saves us from the wickedness of this wicked world. It is no mistake that the baptismal font is up front for all to see. It is no coincidence that the main part of the church building is often referred to as a nave, a term that is also used to describe a boat. This all reminds us that the God who once spared Noah by having him float in a huge boat on top of the waters of the Flood has saved us as well. God saves his people through water and the word. He plucks us out from under the crushing waves of his judgment. He spares us from his wrath. And instead he brings us into the safety of his love. The righteousness that we have is his and he provides us with safety and refuge in his church. We find rest and safety and security by coming to hear his Word and listen to his voice. He rescues us from the wickedness of this world and he prepares us as we go back out into it.

However, we don’t stay in this ark, this boat, this church, this place of refuge and safety all week. We have to go out each day into the wicked world. We still go out and have to walk through the trials and the temptation of each day. We still go out among the evil influences of a world gone bad; but God walks with us. He promises protection. He promises deliverance.

The Lord prepares us as he warns us of the coming destruction. He tells us that he will act because of the world’s unrighteousness. He tells us that he will come soon. He gives us signs that

have been fulfilled. And as we see with the account of Noah, those threats of punishment, those warning of destruction and judgment, they are nothing to be ignored. God means business. He will come again with power to destroy those who are his enemies and he will protect and save his people. He will come again, but we have no idea when he will come again. So what are we to do?

We are to worship our God like Noah did. We worship not only in the safety of these four walls, but we worship him with lives of obedience. We know that God will someday soon bring an end to this wicked world, we are to live out our lives with this knowledge that God has given us shaping the very way that we live. Knowing that Jesus could come again and put an end to this world at any time and at any day, that knowledge doesn't paralyze us with fear, but rather each day it compels us to walk with God, to follow his commands, to conform our will to his will, to carry out the work that God has placed before us; to be prepare for the day our Savior comes.

So what do we do? We don't run for shelter and hide. We don't foolishly run off and do all the immoral things our sinful heart desires before we can't anymore. No, we live our lives in faith. We go about our days, and we do so as God's friends because in love he has befriended us. He has shined his light into our hearts. He has brought us to faith and he has shared with us his saving promises. And now we live our lives in the obedience that comes from faith. We hold onto the promises of God and we walk confidently with God in faith. He is our creator, our protector, and Savior, and in love and out respect and reverence for God we walk in his light and we resist the darkness of this world. We do our best to follow his commands. We do our best to resist the evil of the world and the evil desires of our hearts. We live not just for ourselves but we live for him who died for us, was raised again, and who will come again.

We go about our days living in this world and we do it to God's glory. If it is the Lord's will, we get married. If it is the Lord's will we have children. We raise them and bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. We each go to work. We labor. We rest. We find refuge in God's house. We take time to be in God's Word and we go out into the wicked world again.

If tomorrow was the last day on earth, what would you do? As Christians we know we could live it like any other day. We could live without fear, but instead we would live with confidence.

If God told me that tomorrow was the last day of this earth, I would probably do a lot of the same things I do every day. I would go and do my work. I would try to be home for supper. I would spend some time with my kids; have a devotion with them; we would say our prayers and I would tuck them into bed and kiss them goodnight. Then I would enjoy some time with my wife and fall asleep knowing that if my Lord does choose to bring an end to this world he will deliver me to the paradise of heaven. There I will be safe together with all those who are in Christ Jesus, and we will all dwell in our Savior's perfect protection and care forever.

Dear friends, the Lord is coming soon. The signs have been fulfilled. The wickedness of this world calls for judgment. The Lord could come at any hour. So what will we do? Like Noah let us avoid the dangerous darkness of this world and let us walk in the safety of the light of Christ. Let us gladly serve the Lord and live for him until he brings about the end of this world. Because he will come; He will come to bring judgment on the world. He will come to bring destruction on those who rejected him, but he will save and protect those who are made righteous through faith in Christ Jesus.

By his grace you are made righteous. He saved you through water. He brought you and me into the safety of his church. Now let us live for him each day as we prepare for that day that he will bring an end to this world and bring us safely to our new and eternal home. Amen.