

Noah Pt 2: God Remembered Noah

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- [0 : 00] Thanks very much for leading and for reading that passage, Ross. I'm James, as Ross said, ministering training here at Haddentine Cooney Church. It's good to welcome you and to be here.
- If you've got a Bible, please do keep that open, Genesis chapter 8, as you work through that together. Sometimes in life, we can get to a point where we just really want to start over, to start fresh, to have a completely clean slate.
- I'm not an artist, but sometimes I think an artist, when they've spent hours working on something, and they step back and they look at it, they can see that something's gone wrong.
- And when that happens, they have to discard that canvas. They have to start over with a fresh canvas. I can kind of relate to that way of thinking when I think of writing an essay.
- I can think it's going quite well as I'm writing it, and I can come to read back over it, and I can realize quite quickly that a few edits isn't going to fix this.
- [1 : 13] It needs to be deleted. It needs to be started from scratch. Hopefully, after the sermon, no one's wishing that I discarded the sermon and started from scratch.
- But in a sense, this is what's going on in the account of Noah and the flood. God is starting over.
- Things have gotten so bad that he's decided that he'll completely undo his work of creation and start fresh. And that's the picture, really, that we left on last week.
- We read in verse 24 of chapter 7, the end of that chapter, that the waters prevailed on the earth for 150 days. The whole earth was completely covered in water.
- Nothing else was to be seen other than this great boat. Everything has been stripped back as a punishment on how wicked and evil man had become.
- [2 : 13] God said in chapter 6, verse 14, that, I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
- And so all the people along with the earth will be destroyed. And we saw last week, as Ali preached, that sin is serious, and that it must face God's judgment.
- We also saw, though, how God made a way for Noah, his family, and some animals to be carried safely through that judgment, to be saved from it.
- And we thought last week about how judgment is actually a good thing, that it's good that God is just. It's good that wickedness is held to account.
- But this judgment is also something that we need to be rescued from. And that's where we pick up this week. They're all still in the ark, floating on top of the deep waters of God's judgment.
- [3 : 18] But they're safe. And so as we work through this chapter, chapter 8, we've got three main points. And the first one you'll see in verse 1 is, God remembered Noah.
- That's our first point. God remembered Noah. We're going to think about that from kind of two angles. Firstly, from Noah's point of view, and then from God's point of view.

And so for the next couple of minutes, I want us to try and put ourselves in Noah's shoes. I want us to be realistic about how this experience would have been for Noah. Because it certainly wouldn't have been easy.

God graciously told him to go and to build an ark because he was going to send a flood. But he didn't tell Noah how long the flood would prevail on the earth.

And Noah's been in this ark for months. He's been caring for these animals. He's been tending to these animals. The boat itself, it must have been, by this point, smelling pretty bad.

[4 : 20] Couldn't have been a great place to have been. He was there with his family for a really long time, just on a boat. That must have been tough. I can picture me and my family being on a boat for this long.

My brothers and I probably after a few weeks knocking lumps out of each other. Our mum then sending us to different corners of the boat until we were ready to act like adults.

Noah and his family, it must have come with real challenges for them. And they must have been longing for this flood to come to an end. And yet there was no sign of it.

But thankfully for Noah and his family, it didn't matter what they were thinking. It didn't matter what they were doing on the ark. Because none of this depended on Noah.

But instead it all came down to the living God and to him keeping his word. And so as we think about things from Noah's point of view, as we reflect on the months spent in the ark, perhaps as Noah wondered if God had forgotten him.

[5 : 28] I hope the opening words of chapter 8, but God remembered Noah, hit us that little bit harder. And so now let's think about those words from God's point of view.

Now, of course, God himself is completely all-knowing. And he definitely didn't forget about Noah. God wasn't just going about his usual business one day and thinking to himself, I feel like I've forgotten something.

There was something I was supposed to do. No, God never forgets. But the Bible sometimes speaks of God remembering. And it's used in the sense to convey the truth that God hasn't forgotten, but instead that he is now about to act in accordance with his promises, with what he has said.

In the teens group, on Sunday nights, we are working through the book of Exodus. A while ago we saw in chapter 2 that it said there, and God remembered.

And again, there it wasn't that God had forgotten his people. It was him highlighting that he hadn't forgotten them and that he was now about to act. And he then goes on there to save the Israelites from slavery.

[6 : 46] This phrase, and God remembered, it's a sign that God is about to act in a big way. And that's exactly what we see here in our chapter.

God remembers Noah. Those words are followed by God then acting powerfully and for the good of his faithful servant as he brings the flood to an end and Noah leaves the ark.

These words are to be understood, I think, as the climax of this chapter, of this kind of narrative of Noah. These words are the turning point in the narrative.

In chapter 7, the waters, we've seen, they were rising and rising. They've been destroying every living thing. They prevailed on the earth. Everything looked bleak and no one could do anything about that situation.

But then we come into chapter 8 and we read, but God remembered. And now there's hope. Now the waters, they begin to recede.

[7 : 52] Now the prospect of life after the flood becomes real all because God remembered Noah.

And now secondly, God recreates. And that's from the rest of verse 1 through to verse 19. God recreates.

And this is the big point here of this chapter. This chapter is painted quite clearly as a recreation picture. We noted at the beginning that God in the previous chapter, he's undone what he has created.

So chapter 7 is in some ways a de-creation chapter, if that's even a word. Gradually what God has done in creation is reversed.

It's like things are being put back to how they were in the beginning at chapter 1. We read in chapter 1 verse 2 that the earth then was covered by water.

[8 : 58] And at the end of chapter 7, the earth is again covered by water. A clear similarity going on there. And so if chapter 7 was God de-creating, then chapter 8 we're to understand as God re-creating.

And we see the similarities as God is preparing to recreate. Because in Genesis 1 verse 2, the Spirit is hovering above the waters.

And here in 8 verse 1, that same word for Spirit is translated as wind. In chapter 1 verse 9, the waters, they begin to recede.

And then in chapter 8 here, the waters recede. In both accounts, the dry land then emerges. When Noah is commanded to leave the ark, he takes with him all flesh, birds, animals, creeping things that creep on the earth.

And so the earth is then populated with living things just like at creation. And after God created man and woman, he said in chapter 1 verse 28, be fruitful and multiply.

[10 : 18] And he says again here to Noah in verse 17, to be fruitful and to multiply. And so the similarities between the creation account and chapter 8, they're so clear for us to see there.

And I think the author wants us to see that, to notice them. It's like God is an artist and he is starting over with a new canvas.

Although that's not exactly what it's like. With an artist, my understanding is that when they start over, they discard the spoiled canvas that they were working on.

They put it in the bin and they get a new, fresh canvas that they begin to work on, an untouched canvas. Whereas, although this is an amazing picture of God recreating through his judgment upon wickedness, God, he doesn't discard his creation.

He could have destroyed the earth completely so that it completely ceased to exist and then started over from scratch.

[11 : 33] But he doesn't do that. He keeps his original canvas, his original creation. And through doing that, what God is doing, he is demonstrating that he is absolutely committed to his creation.

He isn't just going to discard it. He has an amazing plan for his creation that will be worked out.

By not completely wiping out his creation, he has shown us that he is far from finished with it. God is a God who is committed to what he's created.

In Genesis 3 verse 15, after sin had entered the world, after sin had come into God's good creation, God promised there that he would send someone who would crush the head of the serpent, someone who would defeat sin and death.

And God is faithful to his word and he did not forget that promise. he will send that serpent crusher to redeem sinful people who is of course our Lord Jesus.

[12 : 51] He won't just do away with the earth because he's promised that he's going to fix the problem of sin. He's committed to keeping that promise. Although we are only at the beginning of the Bible, this picture of recreation, it's already pointing us forward to the end of the age.

Although God has sent this flood as a judgment against sin and wickedness, although sin here is being judged, sin hasn't been dealt with.

Sin is still very much alive and kicking in the lives of those that have been saved from the flood. And we'll see that next week as we'll see that Noah sins.

The problem of sin, it is still a problem after this recreation. The world, it still longs for more. And this account here, it points forward to that something more.

And that's why when Jesus came, the first time he said that when he comes again, it will be like in the days of Noah. And so this account shares light on the fact that one day God won't just kind of redo his work of creation on this earth.

[14 : 15] He will bring about an entirely, a completely new creation. God warned Noah of this coming judgment and he instructed him on how to escape from it, on how to be carried safely through it.

And he's done exactly the same for us. He's warned us through his word that Jesus will return to judge the world.

And through his word, he's also called on us to trust in the salvation he's provided that we might be saved from that judgment.

Through Jesus' first coming, as he went to that wooden cross, he bore those waters of God's wrath and judgment against sin in our place.

And so as we place our trust in what Jesus did for us, we have the assurance that when he comes again, our sins have already been dealt with at the cross.

[15 : 21] It was finished at that cross. It's through faith in Christ that we truly will one day enter the new creation that is depicted in the opening verses of Revelation chapter 21.

I'm going to read those verses just now. This is John's revelation of the new creation. He writes there, Revelation 21, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

The sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride, adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them.

And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more.

[16 : 31] Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away. And he who is seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new.

A world where sin will be no more. The former things will have passed away.

The things that we know now today to be wrong in this world, the things we heard Ross pray about, the things that are just not right, they'll have passed away.

Things will be how they should be. In Genesis 8, 15, and 16, we read that God said to Noah, Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons wives with you.

In God's grace, he didn't just save Noah here. Because of Noah's faith in God and his faith seen through his obedience, God saved his family.

[17 : 49] And he now leads them out from the ark, which he noted must have been a hard place for them to have lived for all that time. And he leads them onto dry ground, into this new creation, this recreation.

And similarly, through our faith in the Lord Jesus, he will one day lead each of his people out of this broken world, out of this fallen world, out and away from the hardships that we face each and every day in this life.

And the Lord Jesus will lead us into the new creation that we just read about there in John's Revelation. He'll lead us there, not because of who we are, not because we're righteous or good people, but because he remembered his covenant promises and he acted mightily as he sent that promised serpent crusher, as he sent the Lord Jesus Christ.

He remembered, he acted, and he has saved us and he will one day lead us into that new creation, which is the great hope that we have and we cling on to in this world.

God remembered, God recreates, and then thirdly here we see Noah's worshipful response. That's just in verse 20, we're going to just stop in verse 20 this morning.

[19 : 21] Noah's worshipful response. As Noah leaves the ark, he doesn't get caught up in how righteous he might be.

He doesn't for any second begin to think that God's saving him and his family was actually just God doing for Noah what he deserved. No, Noah is fully aware that he is a sinner and that it was only by God's grace that he was saved.

And we see that in verse 20 where we read, 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.

Noah's absolute priority when he leaves the ark is to respond to the Lord's kindness.

Noah had spent months inside the ark. He knew firsthand exactly what God had saved him and his family from. He saw the judgment that they were saved from.

[20 : 27] and because of the amazing way that God saved them, it caused Noah to respond in the only way that seems fit by worshipping the God who is faithful, the God who remembers, the God who acts in order to save his people.

Presumably Noah's family were all there with him as Noah offered these burnt offerings and worship to the living God. Noah has led his family out of the ark into this recreation and they worship God.

And then again it's so similar to the picture of the new creation that we look forward to when Jesus, when he leads us into that new creation, he will also lead us to worship the living God who has remembered us, who has remembered his people and has promised to save us.

This response of worship, of seeking to glorify God, it's the outcome that I think was anticipated at the start of chapter 7.

We can see there that there wasn't just the bare minimum number of animals taken on the boat that was required, but there was more than needed. And this I think was to allow for Noah to respond in worship, to respond seeking to give God the glory as he's so deserving of it for the way in which he rescued Noah and his family.

[22 : 07] And that idea of glorifying God that's a key part of being a Christian today. That's really the main purpose of mankind, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

I think one of the big questions that the Noah narrative leaves us asking is what does it look like for us today to worship God, to glorify him and to enjoy him?

We can see, I hope from these verses that it makes sense for Noah to respond the way that he did after God so graciously rescued him and his family.

God has also so graciously rescued each of us as he sent his son. And so what does it look like for us to respond in the right way to that great act of salvation by the living God?

Well, the New Testament is quite clear on that, that we aren't to come sacrificing different animals as offerings. Jesus himself fulfilled the Old Testament sacrificial system.

[23 : 25] And so we read actually in Paul's letter to the Romans of how we should respond to God's act of salvation. We read in Romans 12 and verse 1 the apostle writing, I urge you brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy because he is remembered to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your true and proper worship. worship. Our whole bodies, our entire lives are to be our offerings of worship.

I heard a talk once and the guy speaking, he said, trying to encourage us, God doesn't expect all of you, he just wants a little bit of you.

You're all probably thinking who on earth does James listen to. That's obviously not what the Bible teaches. And you're right, of course that's not what the Bible teaches.

But although we all know that, how often can that be exactly how we respond to the gospel? How often do we subconsciously have just a little part of our lives that is designated to God and the rest of it is actually kind of separate?

[25 : 03] We give God our Sunday morning. We give God half an hour every other day as we read our Bible and pray. But once we're at work, that's separate.

It's different. Once you're with friends, that's unrelated to God. It's so easy to know what the Bible tells us God requires to have the way we live contradict what we know.

The gospel has got to permeate every aspect of our lives. The gospel should be connected to every part of our lives.

And I think a helpful question for all of us to be asking as we go about our day to day life is how should the gospel impact this area or that area?

Because he has remembered us, because he has acted through the gospel, how should that then shape who we are? For example, in the workplace, because God has loved us so well, we're to respond by loving others well.

[26 : 20] Maybe that looks like being the person at work who doesn't gossip about the colleague that no one really likes, but instead gets alongside them, reaches out to them.

The gospel should make us the person who offers to make a coffee for that colleague who was up all night with their young child and is now exhausted at work. Because God has remembered us, we now ought to remember him in all that we do, because we're called to do all things as though we're doing them.

for the Lord. Part of offering our lives to him, I think that also includes speaking well of our saviour, having him in our conversations.

I don't mean going around and forcing the gospel down everyone's throat, but for example, tomorrow if someone at work or someone that you meet up with asks how your weekend was, well in that question there's an opportunity to mention church and to then speak well of our Lord and saviour, to remember him in our conversations.

That's the same if we're at school, if we're with friends, family, children or grandchildren, always having that question on our minds. How should the gospel impact each area of our lives?

[27 : 44] How does it look to love others well, to serve others as Christ has served us? God remembered Noah.

He acted in a mighty way as he recreated the earth so that Noah could then walk out into the recreation, having been spared from the waters of God's judgment by God's grace.

And Noah then glorified God through his worshipful response. And so as we gaze upon the cross of our Lord Jesus, where God remembered his covenant promises to us, may that picture of what he did for us drive each one of us by the work of the Spirit in our lives to respond by offering not just a little part of our lives, not just a couple of areas of our lives, but instead to offer all of our lives, all of who we are to him as a living sacrifice of worship to the Lord.

Why should that be our response? Well, because as we'll sing in a moment, in Christ we are free from every plan of darkness, free to live and free to love.

death is dead and Christ is risen. It was finished upon that cross. And that's exactly why we respond by offering our lives as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, because it is our true and our proper worship.

[29 : 35] Let's pray together. Let's pray. Let's pray.