

# FEASTING ON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

## Faithful to Save

1 Peter 3:20-22

INTRODUCTION: Good morning church. Thank you for connecting to our livestream on Facebook or on our [sabc.org](http://sabc.org) website.

Well, glory to God, FL starts Phase 1 of its reopening tomorrow. Many restaurants and businesses that have been closed will begin to function at 25% capacity and will maintain strict social distancing.

That is still a long way from normal, but it is progress, and for that, we give thanks to God.

I know you are wondering when our church can begin to meet together again. The short answer to that is that I still do not know. The guidance given by the White House, the Governor of FL, and the Bay County Commissioners still leaves the church with a lot of interpretation in deciding when to have worship services onsite.

While we are eager to begin to regather, we do not want to rush so that we put people at risk. However, our staff continues to work diligently to plan to make the return to worship at the church site a safe experience for all who come.

While we do not yet have a date for beginning onsite worship, we are planning that when that day comes, we will have two family worship services, a band led service and a more traditional service. This will help us maintain the social distancing recommendation while we worship.

Be assured that we will keep you well informed by updating you weekly in our worship time and on our website and Facebook page. Also know, we love you, and we continue to pray for you daily!

Although we are all delighted to have a plan for a reopening of FL, we know we are not yet finished with this pandemic, and sadly, it is not yet finished with us.

But neither is God finished with us!

Great is His faithfulness, and His faithfulness will not be, cannot be exhausted.

Even as I try to remind you of the demonstration of God's faithfulness in the past, taking you back to the Scriptures to remember and think upon the accounts of God's marvelous faithfulness,

- my challenge each week is not to find another story of God’s faithfulness,
- but to select from among the hundreds of descriptions in God’s Word of the faithfulness of our God to His people.

This morning I want to tell you, or remind you, about the faithfulness God demonstrated to all of us during the days of a man named Noah. His story is told in Genesis chapters 6 to 10.

I cannot think about the story of Noah in the Bible without remembering the great patriarch of Southern Baptist preachers, Dr. W. A. Criswell, the longtime pastor of what was for decades the largest Southern Baptist Church in America. Even in the days when much of the world was sliding down the slippery slope of liberalism, Dr. Criswell stood firm on the complete trustworthiness and veracity of the Scriptures.

The story is told that one Sunday Dr. Criswell announced that the following week he would be preaching on the story of Noah from chapters 6 to 10. Early the next Sunday, some mischievous middle school boys found the pulpit Bible from which Dr. Criswell always read his text, and they glued two of the pages of the book of Genesis together.

So when Dr. Criswell began his text for the day, he read, “And Noah took a wife. She was”...and he turned the page, not knowing it had been glued and continued... “She was 300 cubits long, and 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits tall.” Dr. Criswell paused and said, “My, my, my, I didn’t know that. But if the Bible says it, I believe it!”

And folks, I remind you that it is important for us to remember that what we read in Scripture of this ancient time is absolutely true. The account told here is no collection of myths or legends. In fact the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave affirmation to what the Bible says about Noah and the great flood.

So what we learn of God’s faithfulness is not the moral of a fairy tale, but a genuine description of faithfulness poured out by our righteous and loving God ages ago, but whose faithfulness continues unabated among us today.

What God accomplished through His faithfulness in the days of Noah benefits each and every one of us today. It is summarized by Peter in his first letter.

1 Peter 3:20–22 NKJV ...the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Let me tell you about the extraordinary faithfulness of God during the days of Noah.

Noah lived in the days of the greatest wickedness that has ever prevailed upon the face of the earth.

**Genesis 6:5 NKJV** Then 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.

We think evil is prevalent today, and it is. Sometimes when I'm watching the news and see and hear what some people are saying and doing, I think things cannot get any worse. But they can, and they will, and things have already been worse. They were worse in the days of Noah.

As we see the great faithfulness of God during the most perverse time the world has ever known, let those who love goodness and righteousness be comforted, that even in days when wickedness prevails, God remains faithful to fulfill His promises and to care for His people.

They were so much worse that God considered ending all of mankind, just saying, "I'm done with this."

**Genesis 6:6 NKJV** And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.

And it is at this very point that we see the beginning of God pouring out His faithfulness on us during the days of Noah.

## **I. GOD REMAINED FAITHFUL TO HIS PURPOSE FOR MEN AND WOMEN TO LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF.**

- This was God's plan that led up to creation.
- He created men and women with choice so the fellowship could be real.
- Even when almost everyone rejected His overtures of love, God remained faithful to offer His plan for eternal life and a glorious eternity with Him in the universe to everyone who would receive it.
- So, God decided to give mankind a fresh start.

## **II. GOD DESIGNED A PLAN TO ALLOW MANKIND TO START OVER.**

- The plan was an act of the grace of God – underserved.

**Genesis 6:8 NKJV** But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Folks, I am so glad that God operates by grace rather than by works or merit.

If you could pick the best days of my life,

- days I refrained more from sin than any others
- days I acted with more love in my heart for God and people than any others
- days that I worked harder for the purposes of God than any others

those days wouldn't be good enough for me to deserve to live with God forever.

Because my best days do not eliminate my every days, when I am a sinner, living my life too much like Mike Claunch wants instead of what God wants. So God designed a plan based on grace and faith and not on merit.

- The first thing God did was to subdue the rebellious angels who had contributed to the wicked path of mankind.
- Secondly God gave everybody 120 years to repent and choose to become a part of His forever family and eternal plan.

This is what the Holy Spirit is talking about through Peter's letter.

**1 Peter 3:20 NKJV ...the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared**

- God determined a righteous judgment upon all who rejected Him so that those born in later generations would have an opportunity to know and trust Him.

But God warned everybody – 120 years of warning. The sound of trees falling, hammers pounding, and the massive ark rising was all testimony of God's warning.

### **III. GOD ENABLED A FAMILY TO BE A PART OF HIS PLAN.**

- Noah, 3 sons, each of their wives.
- God told Noah about the coming flood, 120 years in advance. God said, "Now I've got a little something for you to do while we give folks a chance to repent and turn in faith to me like you have Noah."
- God gave Noah the plan for the ark. The ark was (300 cubits) 1 1/2 football fields long, (50 cubits) 75 feet wide, and (30 cubits) 45 feet tall.
- Its volume would be equal to 561 modern railroad stock cars, room for more than two of every known and living and extinct species, storage space for food for the animals, and living quarters for Noah's family.
- A ship this large would not be built again for another 3500 years when the Danes duplicated the design of the ark and built the famous "Fleuten" barges. Noah didn't figure this out. God revealed it out of His faithfulness.

#### IV. GOD DID THE WORK OF CLEANSING THE EARTH.

- God sent 40 days of rain and opened up the fountains under the earth.
- Water rose above the tallest mountains and covered the earth.
- It was not dry and safe enough to leave the ark for a year and ten days.

Maybe we should not complain of being cooped up in our houses for 6 to 8 weeks. Far better than being on the ark, surrounded by water, surrounded by every kind of animal that lived on the face of the earth.

- When they came out, it was a whole new world. Everything was different.

We say everything will be different after the Coronavirus. Not so. Some things will be different. Some things we like we won't be able or willing to do. But much will remain the same.

But the world Noah knew before the flood perished and a very different world awaited them when they stepped off the ark.

- Changed by volcanic action and earthquakes.
- By both the rise and fall of the waters.
- The hydrological cycle was different.
- Weather patterns were different.
- The only land animals alive were those on the ark.
- All the people outside the ark perished. Those who refused to believe and respond to the warning.
- But Noah, his sons, and each of their wives were saved, saved by the grace and faithfulness of God. And us with them. We are all descendants of Noah and his wife as well as Adam and Eve.

**1 Peter 3:20 NKJV ...that is, eight souls, were saved through water.**

But even as Peter talks about how Noah and his family were saved from this worldwide cataclysm, he tells us that what happened to them was just a type, an advanced picture of the salvation God offers to each and every person through faith in Jesus Christ.

**1 Peter 3:21 NKJV There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,**

- The ultimate salvation that results from God's grace came through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- That salvation requires an answer from people to God.

Romans 6:23 NKJV For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- A gift must be received. How is the gift of eternal life received? You make an answer to God.

Romans 10:9 NKJV that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

**CONCLUSION: Will you make an answer to God today concerning His offer of salvation by grace through faith in His Son Jesus?**

Yes you will. **Everybody will answer either YES or NO.** Just like the people of Noah's day when God waited patiently for them for 120 years.

What will you answer God today?