

Sermon Notes for May 15, 2016

Sermon Series on Questioning God In Our Trials “How Long Must I Wait For God To Deliver Me?” Selected Scriptures

A man was in an accident so he filled out an insurance claim. **The insurance company contacted him and asked for more information. This was his response.**

“I am writing in response to your request for additional information for block number 3 of the accident form. I put 'poor planning' as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully and I trust the following details will be sufficient. I am an amateur radio operator and on the day of the accident, I was working alone on the top section of my new 80 foot tower. When I had completed my work, I discovered that I had, over the course of several trips up the tower, brought up about 300 pounds of tools and spare hardware. Rather than carry the now un-needed tools and material down by hand, I decided to lower the items down in a small barrel by using a pulley, which was fortunately attached to the gin pole at the top of the tower.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went to the top of the tower and loaded the tools and material into the barrel. Then I went back to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the 300 pounds of tools. **You will note in block number 11 of the accident reporting form that I weigh only 155 pounds.** Due to my surprise of being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. **Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate of speed up the side of the tower.** In the vicinity of the 40 foot level, I met the barrel coming down. **This explains my fractured skull and broken collarbone.** Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley.

Fortunately, by this time, I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold onto the rope in spite of my pain. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of tools hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of the tools, the barrel now weighed approximately 20 pounds. **I refer you again to my weight in block number 11.** As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the tower. In the vicinity of the 40 foot level, I met the barrel coming up. **This accounts for the two fractured ankles, and the lacerations of my legs and lower body.** The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of tools and, fortunately, **only three vertebrae were cracked.** I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the tools, in pain, unable to stand and watching the empty barrel 80 feet above me, I again lost my presence of mind and **I let go of the rope...**”

Introduction

A. Today, We Begin A New Sermon Series Entitled: “Questioning God In My Trials”

1. A sermon series that most, if not all of you, will relate to
2. For, today, we will ask this question: **What is God doing in my life? Why is God allowing all of these struggles to occur in my life?**
 - a. cancer?
 - b. divorce?
 - c. the loss of a job?
 - d. children issues?
 - e. financial issues?

3. Many of you may be asking: **“WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?”**
 - a. “I have been going through this for several months or years.”
 - b. “Does God know that I am at the end of my rope?”
 - c. “Is God truly in charge of my life?”
4. One of the goals that we have of this sermon series is to teach you that:
 - a. the Christian life may not be as “easy” or as “blessed” as you once thought
 - b. there are many Christians who believe that the Christian should never struggle
 1. that God is “so good” and “so gracious” to His children that Christians should never have any hard times
 2. after all, didn’t Jesus say in **John 10:10** that “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

B. We Will Be Looking At Various Individuals Throughout Scripture

1. I want to challenge you to open up your Bible in any area and in any text and simply read
 - a. what you will **probably** find is a story about struggle and suffering
 - b. for, there are very, very few stories IN THE WORD OF GOD where God’s people are not struggling
2. during this sermon series, we will be looking at various individuals in the Scriptures **WHO DID STRUGGLE** and who did **not** have an easy time in life:
 - a. as I said, if you look at the hundreds of people in the entire Bible
 - b. you will be hard-pressed to find one who had an easy time in this life
3. today, we will look at **Noah**, a follower of God, who **CERTAINLY** did not have an easy time while he was on this earth

I. The CAUSE OF GOD TO CALL NOAH

A. Man Was Wicked

Genesis 6:5-6 – “The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that **every inclination of the thoughts of His heart was only evil all the time**. The LORD was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain.”

Genesis 6:7 – “So the LORD said, **"I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth - men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air - for I am grieved that I have made them."**

1. the sense of the Hebrew here is that after God had created mankind, man had become “so sinful” that it was man’s mission to on earth “sin to the fullest” by taking every opportunity to sin:
 - a. preoccupation with physical appetite – **Luke 17:27**
 - b. grossly materialistic attitudes and interests – **Luke 17:28**
 - c. worldly philosophies – **Hebrews 11:7 and II Peter 3:4**
 - d. inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort – **Genesis 4:21**
 - e. no concern for God in either belief or conduct – **I Peter 2:4**
 - f. disregard for the sacredness of marriage – **Matthew 24:38**
 - g. rejection of the inspired Word of God – **I Peter 3:19**
 - h. widespread violence – **Genesis 6:11, 13**
 - i. preoccupation with illicit sexual activity – **Genesis 4:19**

- j. widespread words and thoughts of blasphemy – **Jude 1:15**
- k. expressions of abnormal depravity – **Genesis 6:5, 12**
- 2. this “type of lifestyle” that these people were living was **not** the way that God created man to live
 - a. God did **not** create man to express his life through sin
 - b. and, God hated the way that man was living so much that He was willing to destroy all of mankind!

B. Noah Was Godly

- 1. however, in the midst of all of the ungodly people in the world, God found a man who was **NOT** living like other people
Genesis 6:8-9 – “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.”
- 2. PLEASE NOTICE THAT NOAH WAS A GODLY MAN
 - a. more Godly than any other person on the earth!
 - 1. Noah was a righteous man
 - a. he was just
 - b. he was a man of good character
 - c. he was a lawful man
 - 2. Noah was a blameless man
 - a. without blemish
 - b. sincere
 - b. so, please understand the “kind of man” that Noah was
 - 1. he followed God
 - 2. he obeyed God
 - 3. he was more righteous and blameless than anyone on this earth
 - 4. **AND, YET, AS WE WILL SEE, HE STILL SUFFERED!**
 - a. if Godliness prevented people from suffering
 - b. no Godly person should ever suffer in this life.

II. The CALL OF GOD TO USE NOAH

A. Noah Was Called By God

Genesis 6:14-15 – “So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.”

- 1. not only was Noah unique among all of the wicked people on this earth
- 2. Noah would be “doubly unique” because God called Noah to do a special work for Him

B. Noah Was Criticized By Others

- 1. **first**, God called Noah to build an ark
 - a. while there may have been boats that man used to put on the water
 - b. **THERE WAS NO BOAT THE SIZE OF THE ARK; I CAN ASSURE YOU OF THAT!**

1. the ark would be 450 feet long (300 cubits), 75 feet wide (50 cubits and 45 feet high (30 cubits)
2. the ark would have approximately 1,518,000 cubic feet or 20 standard basketball courts
3. this square footage would have allowed some 569 modern railroad boxcars to fit inside of the ark
- c. it would actually be thousands of years before man would build a boat the size of the ark! (slide of boats)
- d. **AND**, can you imagine how difficult it was for Noah to build a boat this big at this time in history
 1. no electricity
 2. no Skilsaw
 3. Noah probably used some kind of hatchet or machete to build the ark
2. **second**, do you believe, for one second, that the people in Noah's day did not make fun of Noah's project?
 - a. there had never been a boat this big ever built
 - b. and it took about 100 years to build
 - c. there should be no doubt that Noah would have been called "the village idiot"
 - d. **AND, GOD CALLED NOAH TO BUILD THIS HUGH ARK!**
 1. this was **not** Noah's idea
 2. Noah was just doing what God called him to do!
 3. so, for 100 years, all of Noah's neighbors must have shaken their heads in confusion and disgust
3. **third**, Noah himself must have wondered **what** he was doing:
 - a. can you tell me that during all of those 100 years that Noah never, once, questioned God?
 1. there is no evidence in Scripture that God had a lot of conversations with Noah over those 100 years of building the ark
 2. for in **Genesis 6**, God told Noah to **build the ark**: and then in **chapter 7**, He told Noah to **get into the ark**:
 - b. **SO, FOR 100 YEARS, NOAH LIVED A LIFE OF FAITH, BUILDING THIS GIGANTIC BOAT BECAUSE GOD TOLD HIM TO DO SO**
 1. **despite** the confusion that Noah must have felt to build such a hugh boat
 2. **despite** the ridiculing that he endured
 3. **despite** the continual direction that God did **not** give Noah over those 100 years

III. The CLOSING OF NOAH AND HIS FAMILY IN THE ARK

A. The Calling Of Noah To Enter The Ark

Genesis 7:1 – "The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation."

Genesis 7:7 – "And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood."

1. and then, God told Noah and his family to get into the ark
2. can you imagine what Noah must have felt as he entered the ark?
 - a. for over 100 years, he had obeyed God and built the ark
 - b. Noah must have thought; what now?
 - c. I have a hard time thinking that Noah was unfazed or not curious. **HE HAD TO BE ASKING: WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN?**
2. the Scripture says that Noah waited 7 days in the ark before the rains came.
Genesis 7:10 – “And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.”

B. The Closing By God Of The Door of The Ark

1. and, please notice: after all of the animals were put on the ark, **GOD CLOSED THE DOOR**
Genesis 7:16 – “The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. **Then the LORD shut him in.**”
 - a. can you imagine what Noah must have been thinking as the door was closed?
 1. What will happen to all of the people and the animals that did **not** get on the boat? After all, God had told Noah that everything that had a heartbeat would die!
Genesis 6:17 – “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.**”
 2. What will happen to me and my family?
 - a. after the flood, there would be no people on the earth but Noah’s family
 - b. there would be no animals, but the animals on the boat
 - c. there would be no vegetation; no crops, no trees and, no fruit
 - b. Noah must have thought: **HOW WILL WE LIVE AFTER THIS FLOOD IS OVER?**
2. Noah must have **ALSO** thought; **HOW WOULD HE TAKE CARE OF ALL OF THESE ANIMALS?**
 - a. some believe that there could have been as many as **50,000 animals** on the ark.
 - b. and, there was only one window in the ark to see outside what was going on
3. at the end of 150 days, the ark stopped floating
 - a. the ark settled on Mount Ararat, a high mountain
 - b. **BUT**, Noah and his family stayed in the ark **ANOTHER 114 days**; so far, Noah and his family had spent **264 days** in the ark
 - c. at the end of the 264 days, Noah sent out a raven to see if the raven found a dead carcass, for the raven was a scavenger
 - d. Noah then sent a dove that would have to return to the ark;
 - e. after the dove came back, Noah waited **7 more days** before he sent the dove out again
 - f. after the dove returned with an olive branch, Noah waited **another 7 days** and sent out the dove again, but the dove did not return

- g. after that, Noah spent another **85 days in the ark**
- h. so, Noah and his family spent some **370 total days** in the ark; more than a year in the ark! (7 days spent in the ark before the rains came)
- 4. so, it was one thing to survive the deluge of water in the ark; it was yet another struggle to remain in the ark after the rain stopped.
 - a. I may have found that period of time harder staying in the ark after it stopped raining instead of during the time the boat was floating in the water
 - b. after all, the rain had stopped, the ark had settled on dry land and, it was time to get out of the “stinking boat” and get on with life!

IV. The CONFIRMATION OF NOAH WHEN HE LEFT THE ARK

A. Noah And His Family Exited The Ark

Genesis 8:13-16 – “By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. **Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives."**

- 1. so, finally, the long ordeal for Noah and his family was over;
 - a. the 100 years of building the ark
 - b. the 370 days in the ark
 - c. the continual smell and sound of all of the animals
 - d. Noah and his family were finally back on solid ground
- 2. so, what would Noah do now?
 - a. would he say to God: “I am so glad that is over.”
 - b. would he begin to find a place to live and start over again?
 - c. would he wonder how was he going to find his family for food to eat because everything had been wiped out by the flood.

B. Noah And His Family Worshipped God

1. THE FIRST THING THAT NOAH DID AFTER LEAVING THE ARK WAS TO WORSHIP GOD!

Genesis 8:20 – “**Then Noah built an altar to the LORD** and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, **he sacrificed burnt offerings** on it.”

- a. it was a way for Noah to thank God for His great mercy and provision for him and his family
 - 1. God had personally selected Noah and his family out of all of the people of the world
 - 2. **WHAT ELSE SHOULD NOAH DO?**
- b. please notice that Noah worshipped God and NOT THE ARK
 - 1. so many of us would have looked at the ark and thanked God for the ark that had protected them
 - 2. BUT, NOAH DID NOT PRAISE THE ARK, HE PRAISED GOD WHO TOLD HIM TO BUILD THE ARK!

C. H. MacIntosh – “Instead of casting back a lingering look at the ark, or regarding it as an object of worship or veneration, he built an altar unto the Lord, and worshipped Him. **The ark was never heard of again.**”

2. how many of us **finally** get through a trial or a struggle and fall down on our face to worship the gracious and sovereign God who got us through our ordeal?
 - a. instead of thanking God personally for His deliverance
 1. we may only thank the Doctor
 2. we may thank the medicine
 3. we may thank our reinforced car after a wreck
 - b. instead of falling down on our faces to worship the God who delivered me from our trial.
3. some of us may say to God after an ordeal like Noah; “Why did you let me go through that trial in the first place?”

Conclusion

1. What do we learn from the trials of Noah?
 - a. **FIRST; NOAH WAS IN GOD’S WILL DURING THE ENTIRE TIME OF HIS TIME IN THE ARK**
 1. being in the Ark was God’s ordained plan for Noah and his family
 2. Noah and his family were **supposed** to be in the Ark!
 - a. **where do we get the idea that, because things may be hard and that we can’t understand our situation, that we can’t be in God’s will?**
 - b. Noah was in God’s ordained will and **IT WAS HARD!**
 1. our fire – we were called to Mississippi to Pastor
 2. **Jim Elliot** – The Auca Indians in Ecuador
 - c. **I Peter 4:12-13** – “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.”
 - b. **SECOND; THE ARK WAS IN CONSTANT TURMOIL WHILE IT FLOATED ON THE WATER**
 1. initially, there was an **OUTPOURING** of water with 40 days and 40 nights of rain
 2. then, there were high winds which rocked the boat back and forth for 150 days
 3. not to mention the problem of having hundreds and hundreds of animals on board
 4. application:
 - a. **A CHRISTIAN CAN BE “SMACK-DAB” IN THE MIDDLE OF GOD’S WILL AND STILL BE IN CONSTANT TURMOIL!**

- b. In the initial years of the gospel first being taken to the mission field: in **Western Africa**, it was **fourteen years** before one convert was received into the church. In **East Africa**, it was **ten years**; in **New Zealand**, it was **nine years** before there was one baptism and two more years before one communicant. In **Tahiti**, it was **sixteen years** before the first harvest. William Carey labored **seven years** before the first Hindu convert was baptized. In **Burma**, Adoniram Judson served seven years before he had one convert.
- c. **THIRD; NOAH COULD NOT SEE MUCH OF ANYTHING THROUGH THE WINDOW IN THE ARK**
 1. certainly, when the rains were falling for 40 days!
 2. Noah **had** to live by faith and not by sight
 3. we **must** look to God when there is no light
 - a. have you thought that God may **not** be giving you any light on your situation so that you would have to look to Him?
 - b. **HOW ELSE WILL YOU LEARN ABOUT FAITH?**
 4. God did not speak to Noah until he was told to get into the Ark and off of the Ark
 - a. **THE ENTIRE TIME THAT NOAH WAS ON THE ARK, GOD DID NOT SPEAK TO HIM FOR SOME 370 DAYS!**
 - b. “a trial of faith;” illustration of a rubber band
- d. **FOURTH; NOAH WAITED AND WAITED AND WAITED**
 1. even after the rains and flood receded, Noah had to remain in the ark
Noah had to wait for God’s PERFECT TIMING
 2. **PLEASE REALIZE THAT GOD DID NOT FORGET NOAH!**
 - a. in fact, the **EXACT DAY** that the ark rested on Mt. Ararat is given:
Genesis 8:13 – “By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry.”
 1. God had an **EXACT DAY** that Noah was to get into the Ark and an **EXACT DAY** that Noah would leave the Ark.
 2. God knew “**that day**” even if Noah did not.
 - b. Jesus Christ experienced life on this earth on “**EXACT DAYS**”
 1. **His birth: Galatians 4:4-5** – “But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

2. **His death:** Jesus Christ died on the “**exact day**” of **the Jewish Passover.**

- a. it was on the Friday of Passover that Jesus died
- b. Scripture says that the veil of the Temple was torn in two at the exact moment that Jesus died on the cross
- c. some believe that it was just as the Priests were offering the blood on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies!

e. **FIFTH; RIGHT AFTER EXITING THE ARK, NOAH WORSHIPPED GOD**

1. **WHY DID NOAH WORSHIP GOD?**

- a. **AFTER** such an ordeal?
- b. **AFTER NOT KNOWING WHAT GOD WAS DOING OR IF HE OR HIS FAMILY WOULD SURVIVE**

2. Noah worshipped God because

- a. Noah had witnessed the almighty power of God in flooding the earth
- b. Noah knew that God had chosen him and his family specifically to be saved
- c. Noah wanted to make an offering that expressed his “total worship of the God who saved him.”

2. If you think about it, we, as believers, are very, very similar to Noah

- a. as of this past Thursday, there were **7,242,885,050** people in this world
- b. if you are a Christian, God has called or “rescued” you by saving you out of all of the people in the world
- c. and, you are currently in the “Ark of Jesus;” and instead of being covered by the black pitch that protected the ark, you are covered by the blood of Jesus
- d. and, you are in that Ark today and for many, it is currently a “bumpy ride”
- e. but, one day, after all of the rain and the storms are over, you will finally find your rest when you “land” in heaven
- f. and, there, you will fall on your face to worship the God who rescued you
- g. so, why not start worshipping your Rescuer now by giving Him your very life; all of it.