

September 30, 2012
Never Again
Genesis 8:1-9:17

[SHOW PROMO DVD]

Our scripture today is the first reading in our 40 day journey through the Bible. Today you have received a Bible reading plan and schedule. Together we are going to spend the next 40 days in God's Word by reading a chapter or 2 per day. We also encourage you to take advantage of the Bible Studies we are offering to enhance your readings (at the Mercurio's on Wednesday at 7pm; at the church on Wednesday at 8pm; as well as M.E.N., and Young Adult).

You can get the whole family involved by using Family Bible reading poster we also have given you today. You will need a magnet for that poster and we've even included that!

Now, the goal is not to read the Bible, the goal is to hear God's voice as you read the Bible; God speaks to us through His Word. As your Bible reading planner reminds us, to get the most out of your Bible reading: Pray, Read, Reflect, Respond (to the passage). In this way our lives can be transformed.

Our Key Thought Today: God's love overcomes our sin. Do you believe sin is real? As ridiculous as it might seem, some people don't! And many who do believe in sin, really don't think it's a big deal. But it is a big deal, for not only is sin real but it brings consequences.

Coming home from work, a woman stopped at the corner deli to buy a chicken for supper. The butcher reached into a barrel, grabbed the last chicken he had, flung it on the scales behind the counter, and told the woman its weight. She thought for a *moment*. *"I really need a bit more chicken than that," she said. "Do you have any larger ones?"*

Without a word, the butcher put the chicken back into the barrel, groped around as though finding another, pulled the same chicken out, and placed it on the scales. "This chicken weighs one pound more," he announced. The woman pondered her options and then said, "Okay. I'll take them both." Honesty is still the best policy, sin is still real, and brings consequences, just as it did for the butcher, consequences even though we are forgiven.

The story of Noah helps us to see both the love and the justice of God. God loves us, yet as a righteous and fair judge He must punish when His commands are disobeyed. By His love and mercy He has provided for our forgiveness, but His justice may mean consequences for our sins.

God created human beings in His image. In the story of Adam and Eve God gave them everything to enjoy, they were in paradise, everything was perfect; but God did give them one command and in spite of all God had blessed them with, they did not keep that one command. There was a consequence for that though God made a way for the atonement of their sin. We read in **Genesis 3:21, 23** (NLT) that after Adam and Eve had sinned ...

The LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife (and) ... the LORD God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden.

Did you catch that? God made clothing from animal skins. Doesn't that imply that animals were sacrificed, for the sin of Adam and his wife? For as ... **Hebrews 9:22b** (NLT) tells us, **"Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins."**

Yet, though there was atonement and forgiveness for Adam and Eve there was still a consequence, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden.

Fast forward to Noah; although even after the fall God still provided for all human beings on the earth, still they sinned.

Genesis 6:5

Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness, and he saw that all their thoughts were consistently and totally evil.

The consequence this time was that God would destroy the earth with a great flood. However, there was this man Noah and his family.

Genesis 6:8-10 (NIV)

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. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

God saw something in Noah and showed grace to Noah and his family. So God had Noah build an ark. This was the way he and his family would be kept safe from the judgment God was going to bring upon the earth. Do you think Noah and his family faced any ridicule from the neighbors? Not only is he building this huge boat in his back yard, but he is warning the people about a coming flood that is going to destroy them and all the earth; and this warning went on for many years when there was no sign of a flood.

Well, I think you know the story. The flood eventually came but Noah and his family was saved by the ark. They were on that ark for 10½ months before the flood waters receded, and had to wait another 2 months before the land was dry enough for them to step off the ark. I want you to notice one of the first things Noah does after stepping off the Ark.

1. The bad news: Sin is real. (not only did Noah see it in his day, we see sin in our day)

a. (we know that) Noah recognized it (that sin is real) because as he steps off the ark he builds an altar and offers a sacrifice to God (8:20).

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.

Noah was giving thanks and worship to God for their salvation through the storm, yet recognizing that sin is real, and that it requires a shedding of blood, the sacrifice of the animals and birds on the altar he built was also made for atonement. Not only did Noah recognize that sin is real...

b. God recognized it (8:21).

And the LORD was pleased with the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will never again curse the earth, destroying all living things, even though people's thoughts and actions are bent toward evil from childhood."

The flood was a consequence of sin, but not the end of sin. All of us are sinners. God had required a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, yet the sacrifice of animals wasn't a perfect sacrifice and so these sacrifices had to be made over and over again.

2. The good news: God's love overcomes sin.

a. God makes a covenant with Noah: The rainbow (9:8-17).

Then God told Noah and his sons, "I am making a covenant with you and your descendants, and with the animals you brought with you--all these birds and livestock and wild animals. I solemnly promise never to send another flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the earth." And God said, "I am giving you a sign as evidence of my eternal covenant with you and all living creatures. I have placed my rainbow in the clouds. It is the sign of my permanent promise to you and to all the earth. When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, and I will remember my covenant with you and with everything that lives. Never again will there be a flood that will destroy all life. When I see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the eternal covenant between God and every living creature on earth." Then God said to Noah, "Yes, this is the sign of my covenant with all the creatures of the earth."

Noah and his family were free from the smelly ark, but were they free from the stench of sin? Unfortunately, the answer is no, as Noah seems to understand (8:20). God knows the reality of sin, but that's what makes His promise to Noah all the more moving (9:8-17). "Even though" God knows human beings are born in and practice sin from the earliest age (8:21), "never again" will he consider destroying them completely (8:21; 9:11, 15). At this point, a rainbow would be the symbol of his love. Later He would say it in Person.

3. The latest news: The new covenant in Jesus Christ.

a. Jesus' sacrifice. Our new covenant

Matthew 26:26-28

As they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread and asked God's blessing on it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take it and eat it, for this is my body." And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, "Each of you drink from it, 28 for this is my blood, which seals the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many."

b. Jesus is mediator of the new covenant

Hebrews 8:9-13

This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord. But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds so they will understand them, and I will write them on their hearts so they will obey them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me. And I will forgive their wrongdoings, and I will never again remember their sins."

13 When God speaks of a new covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and ready to be put aside.

The previous covenants of God pointed to Jesus Christ. Under the old covenants people did not have direct access to God. But under the new covenant through Christ, we can have direct access to God. The guilt was never fully relieved in the old covenant. Only through Christ can our consciences be truly cleansed.

God's demand for holiness is satisfied by the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, and so our guilt is taken away. There is no reason to feel defeated by a guilty conscience. If you have guilt either you don't understand that God can make your conscience clean, or you have not received God's forgiveness because you have not asked. Give your life to Jesus, ask Him to forgive you, and thank Him.

Under the old covenant sins were temporarily covered by the blood of animals. Under the new covenant the blood of the supreme and perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, covered all believers' sins. Under the old blood had to be shed and offered to God again and again. Under the new Jesus' blood was shed once for all.

The new covenant provides an inward change, a new heart, a new sense of intimacy with God, a relationship with God brought to a personal level; He becomes known as Father (Abba), and we are known as His children. We have new desires for God, and want to obey Him. If our hearts are not cleansed we will find it difficult to obey God and follow His will.

Christ would have lived, and taught, and preached, and prophesied, and wrought miracles in vain, if he had not crowned all by dying for our sins as our substitute! His death was our life. His death was the payment of our debt to God. Without His death, we should have been of all creatures most miserable. - **J. C. Ryle**

Jesus is our ark of safety. But you have to get on board before it's too late. Jesus is coming again. We have been warning people for years. Many ridicule us. Even Jesus said:

Matthew 24:37-39 NLT

"When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day. In those days before the Flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. People didn't realize what was going to happen until the Flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes."

Please tell people that Jesus has died to forgive their sins; please warn people that Jesus is coming again.

What God promised, Jesus accomplished.

1 Corinthians 15:49 NLT

Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven.

Life in Christ is never complete. Heaven promises completeness; until then, we must keep on growing in our faith. The key to growth includes daily devotion to Christ through Bible study and prayer. Join in on this 40 day journey, you will be glad you did.