

## **Noah Sermon – Genesis 6-9**

### **Good morning**

Thank You for joining us online this morning, lovely to see you in person here in the building

### **Opening Prayer**

*Loving Father, would you find us willing and available to follow you, serve you and trust you. AMEN*

### **Intro**

We're doing a series on Trust this term, we looked at some themes in the first half of term and now we're looking at some biblical characters during Lent. David kicked us off last week looking at Abraham, about how Abraham trusted God. This week we're looking at the story of Noah that we find in Genesis 6-9

A few weeks ago I switched on the TV and what did I find? The film *Evan Almighty* was on tele. I'd never seen it before even though it's quite old, so knowing I was preaching on Noah I stopped and watched some of it. *Evan Almighty* is a humorous retelling for a modern audience of the story of Noah.....it's not trying to be biblically faithful, but captures some parts of the story quite well.....and its amusing in places. (Morgan Freeman as God!!)

### **The Story**

The story of Noah is one of the most famous in the Bible, it's a story that grabs our attention, it's a story that is very current with our concern for creation and the environment. It has judgement, the violence and fallenness of creation and salvation all in full view. God speaks to a man called Noah saying something ridiculous - build an ark and populate it with his family and living creatures. Because a flood of judgement is coming. ....Noah builds .... the rains come....day after day after day and for forty days and nights it rains and the ark floats and saves Noah and the animals and the rest of the living creatures are destroyed on earth.....Eventually the waters subside Noah and the contents of the ark are saved, creation has a fresh start and God promises never to wipe people out again with the sign of a rainbow.

### **Judgement**

Now in a city like Bath in 2021, this text is especially challenging, we like to think that everyone is basically ok, that judgement is bad, outdated and it seems barbaric ... because creation is lovely....just look at the beauty of the sunrise this week. But this is what we see at the beginning of Genesis 6....

"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. And God said, 'I will wipe them from the face of the earth.' What makes God so angry? It's human violence and wickedness. However, beautiful you think creation is....violence remains a natural problem, through all creation. Some of the Attenborough TV documentaries are incredibly violent. We observe big viruses eating little viruses. Big fish eating little fish. Big animals eating smaller ones and we smile and say, Well, it's natural. 'It's the circle of

life' Then you say, "Oh, but when big nations eat small nations or when big groups eat small groups, or teenage boys kill teenage boys in London, or people vilely abuse each other on the internet - we say - that's terrible."

So what's the problem? We're all part of nature. Unless there's a God, unless there's a true judge, unless there's something outside of nature by which to judge nature, how can you say anything that's natural is wrong? On what basis do you say it? How can you say anything in nature is crooked unless there's a straight edge somewhere? In other words, you have to believe in the supernatural to even complain about violence. And the violence here grieves God and causes so much pain and suffering that a fresh start is needed. There is a day of judgement for violence, there are consequences in our world, and ultimately true justice is only found in God

## **Salvation**

So what picture of God emerges from this text? We have an infinitely holy, infinitely loving, infinitely just God, bringing terrible judgment. Look closely at the narrative. God sees Noah and the state of creation (6.5,12), this should bring us so much heart today, all of our lives are ones of significance constantly lived in the presence of God. God speaks to Noah, while to Noah this is dramatic and radical(6v13) – the good shepherd loves his sheep and speaks life to us. What is God speaking to you today? – build an ark, speak to someone, consecrate yourself, give something, volunteer? In (8v1) we see God remembers Noah, there will be times of quiet, of patient faithfulness when we need to just get on with living.....God doesn't forget us, his people. While our temptation is to feel forgotten, and ignored and to write ourselves off....God remembers. And at the end of the story God Blesses Noah (9v1) bringing fruitfulness and life. So there is love and life in this story as we would normally understand it.

But, what's going on with the flood? One writer puts it like this "*The flood is salvation through judgment. Not salvation in spite of judgment, not salvation and judgment, not half salvation and half judgment; it's salvation through judgment.*" I think that's helpful. Things are bad, have gone bad and all our human endeavours aren't good enough. So God puts Noah and his family in an ark, and in come the waters of judgment. Two things happen. First of all, they give the world a fresh start to stop the human violence, that's actually destroying God's creation and at the same time God is saving the world. He's redeeming the world. He's giving the human race a second chance.

What do we see in Noah that is trustworthy that means he's saved? We see Noah was a faithful man (6v8,9) Daily following, obedient, attentive to God. Noah listened to God (6v22) Are we really interested in what God has to say to us? Do we want to discover more of God's life and wonders? And of course Noah was obedient (6 v22) Noah comes along, and God says, "Noah, build an ark; trust me," and he builds an ark. It takes years to do it. Noah trusts the word of God. Noah trusts the promise of God. Nobody else does. Everybody else laughs at Noah, but Noah Trusts. Then along comes the water, and the same water that sinks everybody else who didn't believe in the word of God actually lifts Noah up. Do you see that? Noah floats, others sink.

This flood narrative shows us that the world and creation is really important to God. God loves this world and he hates seeing it destroyed. Injustice, violence and oppression fill God's heart with pain, yet God gets involved in the mess, bringing hope and salvation.

And of course this is the same thing we see in Jesus. The Son of God coming into our mess once and for all. Ultimately Jesus' heart is broken on the cross. Through his judgment we too can be saved for eternity. Salvation through Judgement. That means there now is no more judgment for you and I, who trust in Jesus. It's done. The violence is ended "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

So when floods and troubles come into our lives, even if you're a Christian you still need to get into the ark. If you don't get into the ark of the gospel, if you don't receive what Jesus has done for you, when problems come into your life, they're going to crush you and overwhelm you. You're going to feel guilty. You're going to be in despair. You'll sink. But in and through Jesus the flood is over. Judgement and violence are finished. Judgement Day is not to be feared. Because you're a Christian. "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

## **Conclusion**

**Are we floating this morning? Or are we being overwhelmed?** The story of Noah and the flood is challenging, honest, difficult but also full of hope and salvation. I know many of you are exhausted, but this morning God is calling us to get into the boat of his gospel, to Trust afresh in Jesus and to sail with Him

## **Let's pray.**

*We're grateful Father, for your grace, patience, mercy and justice. We confess we find ourselves sinking when the troubles come in our lives instead of being raised up. We put our trust in you afresh this morning AMEN*