

The Flood: Part Two

Pastor Jim Essian : June 21, 2015

THE PARADOX CHURCH

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. (Genesis 8:1-5)

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. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. (Genesis 8:20-22)

We'll continue talking about this famous story, Noah's Ark. It's a famous story. We started last week, and this week we will pretty much finish it up. And what we've looked at is really from two perspectives; how do we view this story? One is from God's perspective. And we saw that God, He looks at humanity, He looks at the world, and He sees its corruption. He sees that it's been destroyed by sin, and now He's going to respond to that with the flood, with judgment. The flood is God's judgment on sin. But then we also talked about, from God's perspective, that He also responds to sin with grace. So God is going to respond to sin with grace. He's going to respond to sin with judgment.

Then we also looked at a from Noah's perspective. Where Noah is hearing things from God; he's having God command him to do something. God has told him to build this ark, and now Noah is going to obey. Noah is going to believe God and trust God and obey God and worship God. And he begins to obey. And he's obeying for a long time, right? Probably over one hundred years building this ark; over one year on waterworld basically with the world covered by a flood, and he's obeying God through all of it. He's obeying. And so we have Noah obeying; we have God, His response to sin. And we will continue this morning looking at the flood from both those perspectives.

Now real quick, because I know some of you have probably asked this, or you have friends that ask this, and that is: Why are we studying Noah's ark? Why are we studying the flood? It's not real, is it? You guys don't really believe that this is true, do you? And the answer

is: Yes, we do. And let me just tell you real quickly three reasons why. There are many more, but let me give you three:

One, all cultures of antiquity have a flood story. There's a flood narrative in different cultures and not just the Israelite culture or God's people. It isn't just the Bible that has a flood narrative. There's other cultures that have the flood story as well, which points to, corroborates this reality that there was a historic, actual real flood. There was an actual flood, and it's not just the Bible that speaks of it, but other cultures as well.

Secondly, you'll see that throughout the narrative in Genesis six, seven, eight, and nine, especially today as well, that Moses, the author, uses very specific dates and very specific times. At least in five verses, he's very specific about when things happened. It doesn't read like a myth at all. He's making very clear--Hey, this happened here. This is when the rain started, and here's when this happened, and it was in this month. It was May 5th, and this happened--He's being very clear. This is history. This actually happened. Here is the actual date that this occurred.

Now most importantly and thirdly, we believe this because Jesus said it was true. Jesus spoke about the flood. Jesus spoke about the days of Noah. Jesus spoke about this story as a reality, as history, and so if you don't believe the flood, then you are going to have a problem with Jesus. What words then do you believe of Jesus? Which things do you believe Jesus said were true if the flood wasn't true? But Jesus said it was true. Then now what do you do with Jesus? You have a problem with Jesus. And you don't want to have a problem with Jesus. Jesus is really smart, and you don't want to have a problem with Jesus. If you are in disagreement with Jesus that's not a good thing. Okay? That's my point. And so yes, we believe the flood actually happened. It actually happened. It was a historic reality.

And so last week, we left Noah on the boat. We just kind of left him on the boat, in the midst of his suffering, in the midst of this trial, over a hundred of years of building the boat, years of persecution. Now he's on this big ark. Everyone else is dead. There is no land in sight, and we leave him there in the midst of him having to endure and persevere and obey and still trust in God. That's where we left him.

Some of you that's where we left you. Some of you that's where you're at right now, right? In the midst of suffering, in the midst of trial, and it's been difficult. For some of you, your marriage has been bad for a long time. Some of you, you've been sick for a long time. There's been great suffering in your life for a long time. Some of you have been single for a long time. Some of you have not been able to have a child, not be a daddy, not be a mommy for a long time. And there is great suffering, and there is great trial, and you understand what that's like; you understand where Noah is. That he's having to obey, and he's having to endure, he's having

to trust God despite this length of time and this difficulty of time that he is facing. And so we left Noah. That's where Noah and his family are.

Now the text never actually says that Noah ever wavered. The text never says that Noah ever doubted. The text never says that he ever for a moment believed that God had somehow wronged him or led him astray. But if we just step outside the bottle for second-- that's usually really dangerous, okay? So, we'll get back in it in a moment-- Just conjecture. We can imagine that over the course of over one hundred years, at some point, Noah must have wondered. He must have cried out; he must've, at the least, cried out for God to then come and for this to be over. At some point he had to of. At some point on waterworld for over a year--God, when will you come?! God, when will you deliver me?! I believe it, but when will you come?!--At some point, he probably did that.

Now, what we do know--jumping back in-- What we do know is that through it all, Noah obeyed. That through it all, Noah endured. That through it all, Noah, he believed God, worshiped God, clung to God in the midst of trial and suffering, and it must have been really difficult. Have you ever tried to obey in the midst of suffering and trial? Have you ever tried to believe in the midst of trial and suffering? Have you ever tried to worship in the midst of trial and suffering? It's difficult, isn't it? And it was difficult for Noah.

But then we read, starting in chapter eight and starting in verse one, we read these wonderful words, "But God remembered Noah." Circle that. Highlight that. "But God remembered Noah." I want to chat a little bit. I want to stick here for a while, because this is a big idea. This is an unbelievable reality. When it says God remembered Noah, we have to ask ourselves, what does that mean? Does that mean that God had forgotten Noah? Does that mean that God had forgotten Noah, somehow? God was like, "Noah? Who's that guy? Oh, Noah. That's right. The guy in the boat." "Jesus, Holy Spirit, I could of sworn I was supposed to do something. What happened? Oh, Noah! Noah. I forgot about Noah." Is that what's happening here? No! So it can't mean that. God remembering Noah must mean something else then. So, what does it mean?

It's really quite interesting when you look in the Bible, and you look and see what God remembers, and you see what God forgets. It's unbelievably interesting and great insight into the heart of God. Listen to this: God remembers Rachel, Genesis 30:22, "Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened and opened her womb." Rachel had infertility, and she could not have a child; and at some point, it says that God remembered her, and in His remembering of her, He opens her womb.

Exodus 2:24. God's people, the Israelites, they are enslaved in Egypt for four hundred years. Four hundred years! That's a long time, right? That's a long time of trusting in God. A

long time of having to obey God, to worship God. And it says in Exodus 2:24, "And God heard [his people] groaning, and God remembered his covenant with [them]."

The psalmist, David, he speaks about God's remembering a lot. He says in Psalm 98:3, "He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to [his people]." Psalm 105:8, "He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations." That's a long memory. Psalm 106:45, "For their sake [our sake] he remembered his covenant and relented according to the abundance of his steadfast love." Psalm 115:12, "The Lord has remembered us; he will bless us." Psalm 136:23, "It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever." And so when God remembers, He's remembering His love, He's remembering His promises, He's remembering His relationship, He's remembering His covenants. He's remembering.

But then we also see what God has forgotten, what God forgets. Isaiah 43:25, God's speaking. He's says, "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins." He forgets them. Jeremiah 31:34, "I will remember their sins no more." Isaiah 65:17, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."

So this can't mean that God actually forgets our sins, right? I mean, God is all knowing, He knows all things. This can't mean that He doesn't know that we sinned or remember that we sinned. And certainly Him remembering Noah, can't mean that He had forgotten Noah. Him remembering us, can't mean that He had once forgotten. So what's happening here? What does this mean when it says that God remembered Noah? What does that mean?

It means He's going to act. When it says that God remembered somebody or someones, it means He's about to act, He's about to act on His covenant relationship with somebody. He's going to enter into history. He's going to act in the history, because of His love, because of His relationship with His people. That's what it means. That God remembered Noah. He's about to act.

And this is unbelievable because this tells us something about God. Remember this was one of the questions that we said we have to ask every time we read the Bible. When we read something, we have to ask, "What does this tell us about God? What does this tell us about His nature and His character and what He's like?" That God remembered Noah, what does that mean then about God?

Well, there is something called the transcendence and the immanence of God. That God is transcendent. So He's big. There is a grandeur to God. There is a bigness to God, a glory to God, but then at the same time there is an immanence to God, a nearness to God. That there's a transcendence to God, an immanence to God. In fact, many theologians and denominations and churches and pastors and even individual Christians will emphasize one of those at the expense

of the other. Where God is transcended but He's not really immanent; or He's immanent, but He's not really transcendence. You even in theory, maybe in practice, will tend towards emphasizing the transcendence of God over the immanence of God or the immanence over the transcendence of God.

For example, if you emphasize the transcendence of God at the expense of the immanence of God, then for you God, He's really big and really distant, but He's not very much involved in your life. He's big; He's out there; you acknowledge His existence; you are aware of Him; you believe in Him, but He's not really all that involved in your life. Your life is not centered around Him; you don't really pray; you don't have a relationship with Him. He's too big. He's not near, He's just big. So you'll have this kind of cognitive knowledge about Him. You'll may even read. You'll want to know theological truths about Him as this kind of big historical, theoretical figure, but He's not your God. He's just God. You hold to the transcendence of God, but you tend to minimize the immanence of God. He's the man upstairs for you, right? He's not very personal.

And so for you, church then becomes really about the transcendence of God and that alone. So you want the preaching to be very deep. You want to hear about the deep things of God. The preacher should look smart and wear glasses, and he should use big words like transcendence and immanence. And the worship, it has to be very rich and deep theologically. It should only be the hymns. And any sort of emotive or expressive response to worship is very strange to you, because we're not talking about a God we know and walk with, but just a God that is out there and is very big.

And the Christian community for you is: You just expect everyone to know what you know and believe what you believe and think what you think and argue and debate with you about that these very deep things of God and very deep theological truths. And there's not really people to love, and not really people to care for, and there is not really people to disciple, and there is not really people that need to grow in faith. They just should all know what you know and argue with you about what you want to argue about, because you hold to the transcendence of God, but God's not really near. He's not your God, He's just God.

But some of you, you emphasize the immanence of God to the expense of the transcendence of God. Like, God is always near. He's kind of like your buddy. He really loves you, and He's very near to you, and He's very close to you, and you need to feel near to God, right? It's a feeling based relationship. You have to feel Him near, and when you don't feel like God is near, then you tend to struggle. And when you do struggle, and you do suffer, you're crushed by it. Because how could this happen, and how could this be, and where is my buddy, and where is my God, and how could He let this happen to me? Buddies, they return phone calls. Buddies return texts. Why isn't God answering me? Why isn't God talking to me. Buddies, they

want what you want. They want you to just be happy. Why doesn't God just want me to be happy? How could God let this happen? And you tend to express, rather emphasize the relationship with God and the feelings that you have about God, and yet you lose sight of the bigness of God and the transcendence of God.

And so church for you: The sermon, you want it to speak to your current felt need, like what you're going through, what you're wrestling with. You want to cry. You want me to make you cry, and you want things to be maybe emotional in the worship and expressive in the worship, and you want to connect. And if you don't connect, you don't really jive with the church or the community or the people because you need to connect. You need to connect with the worship, you need to connect with the teaching, you need to connect with the people. And it's not just a radical commitment to one another or a trust in the bigness and transcendence of God. It's only, "Do I feel? Do I know He's near?" And so you tend to emphasize the immanence of God at the expense of the transcendence of God.

But what's the truth? It's both of those! It's both of those! God is transcendent, and He's immanent. We should have our affections stirred for God. We should have our affections stirred for Jesus. We should worship, and we should rejoice, and we should experience Him; but then at the same time, we need to dive into the deep things of God. And we need to cling to rock, solid truth sometime, and we need to cling to the bigness of God and the grandeur of God. We may not always feel or experience God, but we believe in who He is and what He said. It's both; it's the transcendence and the immanence of God. It's not just one over and above the other.

And, in these three words, "God remembered Noah", we see both the transcendence and immanence of God displayed. And, so you see the transcendence of God: God over the flood, over the ark. This transcendent, big God. God remembers Noah. You see, the transcendence of God means that God is outside of time and place. That He's not constricted to a particular season or time or era or day or time frame. And He's not constricted to a particular location, but He's, in fact, over time and place. He's outside of the bounds of time and place. To the point, where a thousand years ago isn't just a place that God knew about or history that He understands. It's literally a place that He's in. And a thousand years from now, it's not just a future that He's aware of; it's a reality that He stands in, because God is outside of time, and everything is always present to God. A thousand years ago is now; a thousand years from now is now; now is now for God, and He's not bound by time and place. He's transcendent. He crosses over all times and places and peoples and cultures and languages. He's over everything. Over all things. Over you, over me, over everything that occurs and everything that happens. His ways are not your ways, and His thoughts are not your thoughts, why? Because He's not restricted or constricted by the things that we are limited by. And so He knows all, sees all.

Have you ever been in that the time of suffering season where it seems really hard and seems really long, and then after you got out of it for little bit, you looked back to it, and you realize it wasn't that long, it wasn't that hard? In fact, maybe you are even thankful for it. Have you ever had that? Or have you ever had a season of sin and rebellion, and in the midst of the season of sin and rebellion, it didn't seem all that bad? It didn't seem all that rebellious, but then you get out of it, and you look back, maybe with new eyes? And you look, and you see how foolish you were and how devastating that time was. Has that ever happened? Why? Because in the midst of it, your vision is limited. In the midst of it, you can't see. In the midst of the suffering, in the midst of the trial, in the midst of the rebellion, in the midst of sin, in the midst of it you're limited. You and I are limited. God is not. God is not limited. God can see what we can't see. God is over what we are in the midst of. There's a transcendence to God that understands that.

And so the transcendent God sees Noah's situation perfectly, and He remembers Noah. He's about to act. It means that He's above the flood. And, He looks back at Genesis three, and He remembers His promise that He's going to send from the seed of the woman a savior that's going to crush our enemy, Satan, sin and death. And He sees all the way forward to the cross of Christ, to the empty tomb, to a risen Savior. He sees the renewal of all things and this people, this worshipful people from every nation, tribe, tongue, and race all worshipping God. He sees the beginning to the end; the eternity past to eternity future. He sees all of it.

He looks down at Noah's situation, and at the right time, He remembers, and He moves to act. He's going to act in history on Noah's behalf, for Noah's sake, to do work because of His love for him. Why? He's transcendent. He never gets anxious. He never gets nervous. Noah is getting tossed to and fro by the waves right now, wondering, crying out, hoping in; and the whole time God sees all, knows all, and at the right time, acts. Why? God, He's transcendent. He's transcendent.

See, you look at the situation that happened this past week with the Charleston church shooting. And, you look at the man who used to go to this church who passed away at thirty-five last week, because of a brain tumor. Or, you look at the various sufferings that are happening in this church, right? Just all sorts of suffering and all sorts of injustice and all sorts of pain that's happening. Marriages wrecked by adultery, and babies that have been born with heart defects that may not make it, and you have physical abuse and sexual abuse and drug abuse, and you have eating disorders, and you have all these things that our people are wrestling in, and our people are walking through, and our people are suffering from. All of that. And, you can look it all that and look at the destruction of the world--We haven't stopped destroying one another, have we?-- And you can look at it all of that, and you can ask, "Why?" We can join in with David and the Psalms who says, "How long oh Lord?"

I don't know. I can't see. I don't know why a baby would be born with a heart defect and might die. I don't know. I don't know why marriages would be broken. I don't know. I can't see. You don't know. You can't see. God can! He's transcendent. He's over all of it. And by the way, it brings me zero comfort to believe in a God who doesn't act upon sin and suffering, who isn't over. It brings me zero comfortable to believe in a God who, because of free will, keeps Himself from entering into human injustices and human suffering and human sin. That brings me zero comfort at all. That is not the God that I worship, that is not the God of the Bible, and that's not the one true God. But a God who's over suffering, a God who is over injustice, a God who sees all, is above all, has power over all, knows all, a God who gives and a God who takes away? Blessed be the name of the Lord. I'll worship that God!

But that's not all. He's not just transcendent. "But God remembered Noah." Noah. An actual person, an actual relationship that He has. There's a relationship there. There's been promises. There's love. God's immanent. He remembers Noah; He remembers Noah's wife; He remembers Noah's children, and He's going to act, and He's going to draw near. God's immanence means that God draws near. He's big, and He's near. As Jesus said about the Father, that He knows what you need before you even ask, that's how close He is. That's how near He is. He's close to you. He's near to you. He's in relationship with you. He will walk with you. He loves you. When you pray, He hears you. He speaks to you. God is near. There's an immanence to God as well. He remembers Noah.

You know, over and over again the number one command given in the Bible, do you know what it is? Do not fear. Do not fear is the number one command God gives in the Bible. Do you know what the reason given all the time is for why we shouldn't fear? Because I'm with you. Because I'm immanent. Because I'm near. Because I will never leave you nor forsake you.

At the same time you got David who in the Psalms will speak of the transcendence of God. He'll say, "Who is man that you are mindful of him?" God, you're transcendent, you're big. How would you consider us? Why do you think about us? How do you remember us? Or he'll say, "Our God, he is in the heaven and he does as he pleases." He is over all things, and He does what He wants; He's transcendent. He will speak of that God, but then in the same breath, at the same time, he'll say what he says in Psalm 139--But where can I go from your presence? Where can I flee from your spirit? If I go down you are there. If I go up, you're there. Wherever I go, you are there with me always. You hem me in from behind and before-- God, you're transcendent, but you're also near. There is an immanence to you. You draw near to me. You're close to me. There's a relationship with me. When I talk, you listen.

Jesus he actually says that we can have boldness in sharing the good news of Jesus, sharing the gospel with our neighbors and with our friends, because of the immanence of God. He says in Matthew 28, "Surely, I will be with you always even to the end of the age." In fact, He

also gives His transcendence the reason for also boldly sharing the gospel, because right before that He says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."-- So, I'm transcendent. Go and tell people about Me. I'm with you always. Go tell people about Me. Why? Because I'm big, and I'm near. Because I'm glorious, and I'm with you. Let's go together on mission. Let's get after it.-- Yeah, God is close. He's near. He's immanent. God remembers Noah. He remembers Noah.

You see, God doesn't just call for our obedience in the midst of the suffering, in the midst of the storm, in the midst of the trial just as a transcendent God who must be worshiped. Right? He must be obeyed! He must be feared! He isn't just the transcendent God that calls for obedience in the midst of trial. He's the immanent God that gets in the boat with us. He's the immanent God who gets into suffering with us, who gets in the trial with us, who empowers us in the midst of it. He's with us in the midst it. We don't have to fear, because He's with us there, and He eventually will deliver us and save us from the trial and from the suffering. Why? Because God is transcendent, He's immanent, and He remembered Noah. He remembers Noah, and He's about to act.

Jesus is the clearest example of God's immanence and nearness. You see, God is about to act at the perfect time. As a transcendent God, He sees all. And He's about to act in time and in place on Noah, because of His love for Him, but He does so at the perfect time. And we see that Jesus comes as God-near at the perfect time. Galatians four, the Apostle Paul will say that at the fullness of time, at the right time, God sent forth His son to be born of a woman. So how near does God come? He enters into our world; He puts on our flesh; He breaths our air; He drinks our water; He hangs out with our prostitutes; He eats and drinks with our sinners, and He dies our death, and He bears our judgment, and He bears the weight of our sins. That's how near God comes. And so God is both big and near. Both transcendent and immanent. And He sees Noah, and He's going to act on His relationship with Noah at the perfect time, and He comes near. And we'll go on:

But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rains from the heavens were restrained, and the waters receded from the earth continually [You'll notice the tone begins to change here from judgment to renewal. Keep going]. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continue to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month [notice the very specific dates], on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him [circle and highlight verse nine. We're going to come back to that.] He waited until another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month [very specific dates there], the waters were dried from all the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. Then God said to Noah, "Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh--birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth--that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark. (Genesis 8:1-19)

And so what we see here is a renewal of the earth, right? Chapter seven was more judgment and destruction, and everyone dies, and the floodwaters are going to come on the earth and kill everyone. But now in chapter eight, the tone changes, and you have a renewal of the earth. The waters are going to abate; they are going to start to recede. And you have a new creation, a new renewal to the world and to creation. To the point where you see God's commitment really to creation, and what He did in Genesis one. The animals get saved, and they get put on the ark. There's a sense in which the same waters that washed the worth of destruction and corruption are now cleaning the creation and the earth as well for a new start.

And in verse nine, this probably best typifies really what we see in these eighteen or nineteen verses in the first part of chapter eight. In verse nine, we see that it says the dove found no place to set her foot. That's actually a play on Noah's name. Rest, comfort; she found no Noah and returned to him on the ark. So the dove found no Noah, found no rest; and she returned to rest, she returned to Noah.

And then every commentator makes special notice of the way that Noah responds. He put out his hand, he took her in, and brought her into the ark with him. They called this Noah the conservationist. He's stewarding creation; he's caring for creation. The authority structure is being renewed and returned to what it should be. We are over creation, not under its control, not enslaved by it. There isn't idolatry here, but it's also a stewarding of creation. He's bringing the dove in; he's caring for creation; he's caring for the animals. There's a renewal now of the earth; there's a new creation happening. It says later in verse seventeen that they are going to be fruitful and multiply. That there is going to be this new creation going on in the earth as the animals multiply as before. And so, there is this renewing happening in the midst of God's judgment.

As well, we see Noah's obedience to the end. Notice that despite the anxiety of what is next, despite the length of time that he has endured, despite all of that, Noah doesn't even set foot out of the ark until God tells him to. He's obedient to the end. He's obedient to the end. Now what would you do? Like, you step out of the ark for the first time. You're Noah, you're his family. What would you do? What would be the first thing you do? You got a new world to explore, you've got food you need to gather, you got a shelter that you need to build. There is so much to do at this point. What are you going to do? What would be your first thing? This is kind of like that neverending conversation or talk like, if you were on a desert island, what three things would you bring? If you were Noah, what would you do at this moment? What is the first thing that you would do you when you set foot on dry land?

What does Noah do? Look at verse twenty, "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." What does Noah do? He worships. He worships! His first response is to worship. He has church. He gathers his family, and they come before the altar, and they offer a sacrifice to God. They give thanks to God for delivering them; they give thanks to God for saving them; they offer a sacrifice for their sin because on the ark they are sinners, and they sinned. And, there is judgment on the sacrifice, and that sacrifice was offered up to God, and they worship God. They worship. That was the first thing they did as a response. That's the first thing you do after God delivers you from a time of suffering, a time of trial. Noah and his family, they worship.

And then, apparently, in verse twenty-one, this worship pleased the Lord, and when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord is pleased in his heart. We are back in Genesis six where He is grieved to His heart because of sin, now He's pleased in His heart because of this worship, because of this sacrifice. What does this mean? Why does a burnt offering please God here? He just judged the whole world. Why does this burnt offering please God? David actually can help us in Psalm fifty-one. It's interesting because he starts, and he says "For you [God] will not delight in sacrifice." God just did though. God just did. David continues, "or I would give

it; you will not be pleased with the burnt offering." No, there's a burnt offering right here, and God was pleased. David explains, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart." This act of worship, this sacrifice from Noah, pretty much acting as a priest for his church, his family. He offers it up, and it pleases God because of Noah's heart. Noah had obeyed God. Noah clung to God. Noah trusted God. Noah worshiped God even in the midst of suffering, even in the midst of trial. And so when he offers up this sacrifice, it pleases God.

See, your external, ritual activity and duty and religious observances in and of themselves don't please God. You can muster up all the authenticity you want in singing the words that we sing, and eating of the bread and the wine, and attending a church gathering; but if you leave here in continual disobedience, you are a hypocrite, and you don't actually worship God or please Him. Noah's heart pleased God. Noah's heart pleased God. And so he worships, and God is pleased. He worships, and God is pleased. To the point where God says in the second part of verse twenty-one as he says in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth."

And so God says He's not going to judge the whole earth again like He just did. And so we need to talk about this, because we said we would talk about it last week more. And we need to talk about it, because sometimes in the midst of suffering and in the midst of trial, it feels like God's judgement. Doesn't it? You sometimes feel like God is judging you in those times. Like, God is mad at you. Like, God is punishing you. That God is somehow judging you for some reason. Doesn't suffering sometimes feel like that? And so we got to talk about judgment; we got to talk about God killing the whole world with the flood, and we got to understand it; because, I don't know, I got a little problem with that. And some of us have a little problem with that, and we got to understand what judgment looks like for God, and what is actually going on here.

And so we talked about last week--If you go back to Chapter six--this language that Moses is using where he speaks about the corruption of the world. Right? God looks at humanity, looks at creation, and He uses this word corrupt, and He uses this word destroy, and they are the same Hebrew word. And He says that the whole world is corrupt because of sin. The whole world has been destroyed, because we have destroyed it. Humanity is so sinful and so corrupt that we've destroyed the world. And then that His judgment was going to be to destroy the destroyers. That God's judgment on the earth was actually stopping the destruction. He was going to stop the destruction. His judgment on the earth was actually a saving of the world. He says in Genesis six, I'm going to destroy the self destroyed; I'm going to destroy the corruption; I'm going to stop it.

And so His judgment then, is in fact, a saving of the world. So the same waters that press down on evil, the same waters that press down on those that don't trust God and believe His

words are the same waters that lift up those that do. They are the same waters that wash clean the world. And they are the same waters that lift up those that would believe God and would believe His promises and His word. His judgment is actually salvation. His judgment is to stop what's already been broken and what's been destroyed and to bring about a renewal.

Tim Keller, he says, as the waters increase, they press down and crush everybody else, but the same waters lift up the people who believe in God's Word. The flood is salvation through judgment. Not salvation in spite of judgment; not salvation and judgment; not half salvation, half judgment, but it is salvation through judgment.

See, in the midst of trial and in the midst of suffering, it sometimes feels like judgment. When, in fact, it's God saving you; it's God sanctifying you; it's God making you more and more like Him. In the midst of it, we can't see. In the midst of it, our vision is blurred. In the midst of it, it seems like maybe God's judgment, or it seems like God has forgotten us, and we don't know if we can trust Him, and we don't know if He's still good. But He calls for our obedience, and He calls for our worship, and He calls for our faith and our trust in Him because He sees that it's saving us. He sees that it's making us more like Jesus; He sees the work that it's doing in us. He see that. His judgment is actually His salvation as well.

See, this is why it's so important to have both a transcendent God and an immanent God, because in the midst of suffering and trial, if you only have an immanent God then you just have this big God who is out there who's not really involved in your suffering and trial. And so suffering and trial is something to get through; it's something to endure, but it's not going to make you more like Jesus; it won't humble you; it won't be something that stirs you to worship; it won't give you the sense that God is with you; it will just be something you have to get through. And it won't be saving you; it won't be transforming you; it won't be sanctifying you.

But if you just have a God who is immanent, when you go through suffering and trial, it will crush you. Suffering will crush you. You will go into despair. Because God is with you, but then He's not. Or God is with you, but He has no power over the suffering. You don't have a God that's big enough, and so you're crushed in the midst of the trial and the suffering if God is just transcendent. But if you have a transcendent God and an immanent God, then the suffering and the trial that you might go through, even if it feels like judgment, is actually salvation. It's actually salvation. And it makes you more and more like Jesus.

See, here is what Noah's ark is all about: Noah is saved by grace through faith, He is in this relationship with God, a big God and a near God, and because of God's grace, God's going to save him, but God is going to save him through judgment. The same judgment that kills those that won't believe God that judges those who don't believe God, lifts Noah up and saves Noah; and he trust in this big God, and he knows this near God, and so he obeys in the midst of

suffering and in the midst of trial, and he worships. That's what Noah's ark is about. It's about a God who saves. It's about a God who saves.

See, I know some of you are going through times right now that are just devastating and horrific. They're broken. They're difficult. And it seems like you're being crushed under the weight of it. I promise you, He's saving you; I promise you, He's delivering you; I promise you, He's with you; I promise you, He's over it, and that He sees what you can't see. I promise.

And we can trust God, because He's a God that does come near. We can trust God, because He is a God that isn't just over our suffering, but He comes into our suffering. We can trust God, because He suffers for us. We can trust God. We can trust God, because we see that on the cross Jesus was judged in our place. That he was crushed. Isaiah fifty-three says, it was the will of the Lord, the will of the Father to crush Him. See, Jesus on the cross is basically saying, "My sinking is your salvation." That this ocean of God's wrath and this ocean of God's judgment and this ocean of sin that I'm going to sink in, that I'm going to drown in, will lift you up and save you. That we see in the judgment of Jesus, we see the salvation of mankind. And in the judgment of Jesus, you are saved. What seemed horrific, what seemed like too much and too extreme, and what seemed like too much of a judgment on Jesus is actually our salvation.

So Jesus' obedience and Jesus' worship, and Jesus' judgment, and Jesus' crushing is actually your salvation. It's your salvation. His suffering is your salvation as the Father sends forth the Son at the right time to be born of a woman, to be judged in your place, to be crushed, so that you might become a son or a daughter.

See, the big idea here is that the story of Noah's ark points to something else. It doesn't do the job. Noah's going to be still sinful, right? We're going to see this in a couple weeks. He's literally passed out naked in his tent, drunk. Like, he's at the Texas motor Speedway or something. And, his son sinned, and the world becomes corrupt again. The flood doesn't actually cleanse the earth, why? It's pointing to something else; it's pointing to Jesus, the ultimate ark, the ultimate judgment, the ultimate salvation. Jesus is saying, if you cling to me, if you'd get on the boat, if you would get with me and cling to me, hold onto me, my sinking will be your salvation. Yeah. So, we can worship and we can obey, even when we can't see, because God can.

Let me pray for us. Father God, thank you for your goodness to us. Your grace. We ask that you would just sink this truth deep into our soul that we might know it, and we might believe it. That it might comfort us and change us. We ask this in Jesus name, amen.

