

October 22

“Bring on the Rain”

Genesis 7:11-12

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

12 And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Special Music:

“Bring the Rain”

MercyMe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtjxCx-7Hps>



BRING ON THE RAIN

I won't say that I'm not afraid,
As I stare into the thundering fray
Gnarly winds
Causing trees to bend.
Almighty God,
Bring on the rain.

I know that I am not prepared,
Fear sets in and nostrils flared.
I worked so long and very hard,
Knowing you would play this card.
My Spirit Lifter,
Bring on the Rain.

I brought the animals in, two by two,
Because I believe your word is true.
Packed it all so very tight.
Ready for the perilous plight,
My Gracious Master,
Bring on the Rain.

As you requested, I finished the chore,

Packed our bags and closed the door.

All at the ready.

Make my heart become steady.

Dear Awesome God,

Bring on the rain.

There are blessings in the storm above,

Blessings of your boundless love.

I know you've got me,

Because you've taught me

Precious Lord,

Bring on the rain.

I'm ready for the big reveal,

For this is the only way to heal

A fractured earth

Awaiting rebirth

My Creator

Bring on the Rain.

Now we lift our souls to you,

Me and my hapless crew

We're in your hands,

At you command.

Father God,

Bring on the Rain.

We know not what's on the other side.

You alone will be our guide.

Lift this boat,

And make it float.

Yahweh

Bring on the rain.

Master, Creator, Editor of our Salvation, bring the rain.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

How very precise that measurement of time is. Noah was 600 years old when the rains came. And they came on the seventeenth day of the second month. A date that will be carried down by word of mouth through Campfire Tales until Moses wrote it down for posterity.

Water. H₂O. The great equalizer on a planet covered 71% by this precious liquid. Two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. 61% of the human body is water. Oxygen and Hydrogen atoms merged into molecules that fall from the sky and keep the rivers flowing, the plants growing, the seas throwing, and the rainbows glowing. The same substance that brings life to the world also brings devastation and destruction. Its behavior is the most unpredictable of all elements. What encourages poets to whimsy can also bring continents to their knees, ripping trees from their roots, flooding towns and villages, carving chasms out of rock, and bringing death and discouragement. As much as humankind attempts to master it, it always remains untamed and unpredictable. In spite of all our efforts to contain it, water will always find a path from the tops of mountains back to the sea. That which we depend on for our very existence can turn on us and separate us from our souls.

Jesus, bring the rain.

12 And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

The rain that had watered the gardens of civilization now brought total annihilation to all that Noah Knew. The blessing became the curse. And those who were faced with the curse, found only one person to blame, God. Those who felt cursed screamed obscenities to the heavens and rushed to the vessel that Noah had spent so long building, the one they had called Noah's Folly since it's inception. "Why save the elephants and not us?" they cried out as they pounded on the door expecting Noah to open the door and let them in. "We did not believe it was true. We're sorry we called you crazy. We were wrong. Now let us in! If not us, at least let our women and children in! We beg of you! Have mercy! If you do not let us in, we will take the boat by force! May the God that we have despised have mercy on your miserable souls, for we will haunt your every dream!"

Heavenly Father, bring on the rain.

Here in Fort Stockton, the same rains that bring us life and replenish our aquifer may also bring flooding to Houston and Corpus, may also cause destruction in Dallas and Fort Worth. The truth is, one person's blessing may be another person's curse. I remember a time of great drought in Tarrant County that lasted several years. Lakes dried up. Boats sat on dry land beside their docks. Fish died. Water reserves reached dangerous levels. People were praying, begging God to bring the rain. And then the rains came. And they came. And they came some more. And those many souls who had been praying for rain were now begging God to turn the rain off. The water supply stations had

become overwhelmed, and people had to boil their water to make it drinkable. Before the rain, the Water District had been inundated with complaints about the lack of water, and after the rain the Water District had been inundated with complaints from all the damage the water had done. The Water District caused neither the drought nor the floods, but they got all the complaints.

Jesus, on the rain.

I will tell you that when people complain about such things, it is usually not the rain or lack thereof that they are complaining about, but about their own lack of preparation (which they refuse to be responsible for). People are usually told about what to expect, but more often than not, they do not believe what they are being told. They are told to conserve water in times of drought, but they think that is only meant for everyone else, so they continue in their regular habits. When they are told that they live in a flood plain that they need to take precautions and make sure they have flood insurance, that's really a message for everyone else, not them. And then the floods come, and they are not prepared and it is all the fault of the Corps of Engineers, City Planners, or God.

We're fortunate that it isn't feast or famine all the time. Most of the time, things go along normally and the people that we have chosen to maintain the water levels in our area are on the ball, and planning years in advance. The problem comes about when those responsible are trying to make arrangements for such contingencies, but the current conditions don't warrant it. It's hard to get people to embrace a need that they cannot see, because they are not living in those conditions at the moment. "We don't need a dam right now. It can wait!",

“We don’t need to conserve right now. We have plenty!”, “We don’t need to spend money on a levee system. It’s not even raining!”, “We don’t need to rethink our habits because there is no current emergency.” It is a most difficult thing to get people to think about resource management or contingency plans when there doesn’t appear to be a need. It’s a little late to embrace water management when the drought has already been going on for over a year. And it is a little late to think about building a levee system when the rain is already pouring down. No, we often do not think ahead until disaster hits. “Well, Resource Management Board, you should have seen this coming and done something about it. You’re to blame for all this destruction!” Oh, what stiff necked people we are.

And we have the stories in the Bible to remind us of how important it is to be prepared, starting with Noah.

- 1) Noah warned everybody about what was going to happen, and no one would listen. But they were quick to complain when they got left behind.**
- 2) Joseph told Pharaoh that the drought was coming. So, Pharaoh put him in charge, and they stored up grain for seven years in preparation for the dry conditions that were coming.**
- 3) We even have a lesson in the New Testament when the wedding feast runs out of wine for lack of planning. If Jesus had not come to the rescue, the party would have been a disaster.**

A lack of planning on our part does not constitute an emergency on anyone else's part. This idea of "I didn't plan for this, so you need to drop everything and come to my rescue" is a pretty silly way to live, and somewhat narcissistic.

So here is Noah who gets a weather forecast from God himself. He builds a boat with God's instructions. He doesn't put it off until he sees rainclouds. He prepares for the inevitability of the coming flood. His neighbors ignore his eccentric attitude thinking that if he is somehow right, they will just tag along when the time comes. In the meantime, he's just a might touched in the head and wasting his time and resources. What kind of hubris is that?

I just love Proverbs 6:6-9:

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Jesus, bring the rain!

The message in the song by Casting Crowns is not "Jesus, bring the rain because I am thirsty," Or, "Jesus, bring the rain because I want to be tested." No! It is "Jesus, bring the rain because I am prepared to receive your grace. I am ready for the mercy you are about to rain down upon me."

Let's face it, we wouldn't be asking God to bring on the rain if we were not ready to receive the rain. We would not be asking God to bring on the rain if we had not braced for the flood. We would not be asking God to bring on the rain if we had not built the ark. The rain, in and of itself, is neither a good thing nor a

bad thing. The flood, in and over itself, is neither a good thing nor a bad thing. Water is not emotional. It is not out to get us. It is not intent on destroying us any more than the wind, an earthquake, a drought, or a tornado. These are all elements of an ever changing and chaotic earth. But their intent is not the destruction of humankind.

I say that so that we can rethink our approach to such events. We need to bend an ear to what God is telling us instead of blaming him for the result. In 1949, the Trinity River in Fort Worth overflowed killing ten citizens and destroying countless residences, leaving over 13,000 people homeless. The floodwater reached the 7th floor of the Montgomery Wards building. It wasn't totally unexpected. For decades, city planners knew of the possibility of this happening, but did nothing to address the potential problem. Everyone pointed blame in every other direction. But after the disaster, rather than sit around and argue about responsibility, the city brought in the Army Corps of engineers to build 27 miles of floodway to protect the city. It took thirty years to complete with several floods occurring before it was finished.

I have to wonder why we wait until disaster strikes before we take preventive action. How many of our schools have had shootings because security was not taken seriously by everyone involved? "Such a thing could never happen here," we cry. How many times did there have to be earthquakes in California before building codes were addressed? How many times has New Orleans flooded because no one wants to admit the folly of building a city below sea level? How many city planners around the world have said, "We will take

action if it ever proves to be a problem?” How many lives have been lost because those responsible did not take their positions seriously?

Can you imagine how ancient history would have played out if Noah had simply determined that there was no real need to build the ark as instructed. At the same time, who had the novel idea of building an enormous city called Pompeii at the base of an active volcano? We can be such a stiff-necked people. Can you hear the voices ringing in our heads even today? “This is such a wonderful idea. What could possibly go wrong?”

Oh, the hubris of the people on this planet who believe that the human race is invulnerable, even as we stockpile more nuclear weapons, pour out our destructive powers of war on each other, continue to pollute our oceans, our cities, and the very air we breathe? We fuss. We argue. We shout. We complain. We do everything but sit down at the table and talk respectfully with one another in order to seek solutions to the problems that plague us all. Why is it so easy to believe that we are not responsible for the chaos on this planet? What is the old adage? “If we are not part of the solution, we are most definitely a part of the problem.”

We often get our prayers to God backwards. We call for him to send the rain before we are ready to receive the rain. And what’s worse, we really have no intention of getting ready to receive the rain. That would require diplomacy, compromise, and respect for our fellow human beings. I will tell you that we do not have to be right or wrong as long as we can sit together and seek answers. Sometimes, everybody is wrong. Sometimes, everybody is right. But we should

all admit that God is in control and let him lead us to the appropriate solutions. We cannot build a boat without his blueprints, or we are just asking for it all to fall apart.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.

12 And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Have we asked God to prepare us for what's ahead knowing that he has the solutions? Or are we just planning on winging it as we go along; wait until it starts raining before we build the boat? God wants what is best for us. He loves us. He sent his son to die for us. He gives us every opportunity to bear fruit. But our choice must be that we allow him to give us the plans that will provide us with the greatest degree of success. We can't let our pride stand in our way.

Let's take time this week to legitimately ask ourselves, "Is God the author of our plans? Or are we just letting him come along for the ride?"

God bless you all!

AMEN

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