

October 8

“Listen”

Genesis 6:13-14

13 So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

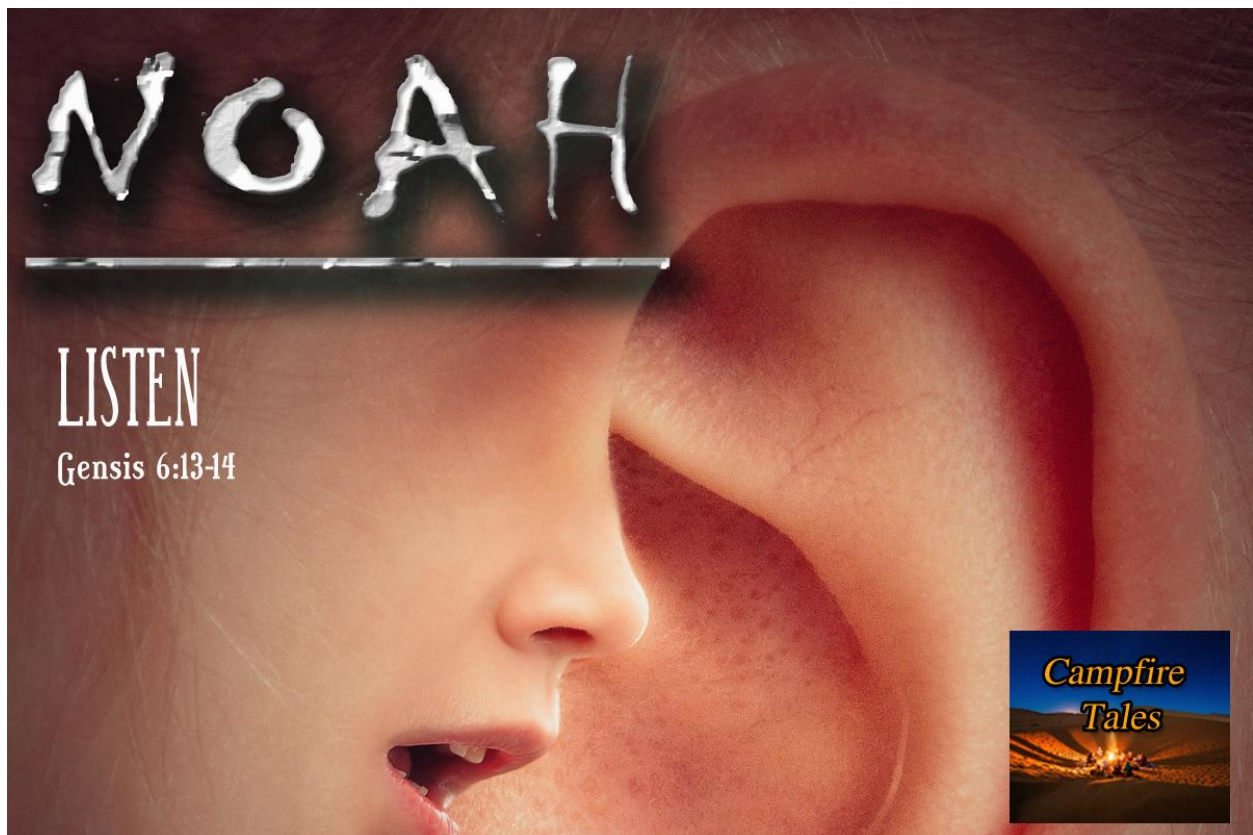
14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

Special Music:

“Voice of Truth”

Casting Crowns

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cKm_mYVPQE



BUILD A BOAT

God said,

There is a storm a'coming

The likes you've never seen.

Rain will come and wash away

Everything that's green

So, build a boat.

God said,

Here are the plans.

Take all your measurements twice.

Make sure you follow every detail.

Make every cut precise.

Build a boat.

God said,

Make it three hundred cubits long

And fifty cubits wide.

Build a roof along the top.

Make a door in the side.

Build a boat.

**God said,
Make rooms to divide the animals,
As they enter two by two.
Three decks to hold them all
Including food for them and you
Build a boat.**

**God said,
Make the boat of cypress wood,
And coat it in and out
With tar and gummy blackened pitch
Be sure it is strong and stout.
Build a boat.**

**God said,
Follow each direction closely.
Don't deviate at all.
It must be built exactly thus,
Every room and every stall.
Build a boat.**

**God said,
Listen. Listen to my voice
And do as I have said.
You will be my hands and feet.
You will do this in my stead.
Build a boat.**

**God said,
If you do as I have said
And followed every plan,
Then you will be ready when the rain comes down
To wash away the land.
Build a boat.**

**God said,
I have a plan to save the world,
And it depends upon your choice.
Will you take up my challenge now,
And give my plan a voice?
Build a boat.**

**God turned and said to me,
I have a plan to save the world.
The cost is very great.
I give my son to bring you home
And lift your heavy weight.
Build a boat.**

**God said to me,
You must trust that I know what's best,
And reach toward my amazing grace
Believing in the son of God
And knowing from my face
To build a boat.**

Have you ever had God tell you that you need to do something, and then thought to yourself that it must be all in my imagination. “Come on. God wouldn’t ask me to do that. I don’t see the need. I’m old. I’m sick. I’m tired. And I can’t even be sure that it was God who was talking to me. God knows my situation, and wouldn’t ask me to do that. So, I must be imagining things. Or, maybe the message was for someone else and I just overheard.”

It’s so easy to put those thoughts to the back of our brains and let them float away. Jesus tells us this in Luke 16:10-13:

10 “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

No, I am not going to make this message about money, but I didn’t want to quote this passage out of context. The point of the passage is that God wants to be faithful with everything that he gives us. When we adopt an attitude of, “Well, God didn’t give this to me. I earned it myself. I worked hard for it. Surely, he can’t expect me to just give it away.”

When we become Christians, we come to understand what the Apostle James is telling us in James 1:17:

17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

James is telling us two very important things in this scripture. 1) **Every good and perfect gift is from above.** Everything that is of any consequence in our lives comes from our gracious Heavenly Father. And, 2) **Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.** The very same thing we focused on last week when we talked about our unchanging God.

Jesus' words in Luke expand on that by telling us how deep our blessings flow and why.

10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

As Christians, we should want more responsibility. And God will grant us that request, as long as we are faithful with what he has already blessed us with. But we can hardly expect for God to give us more responsibility when we can't handle what we are already responsible for. Maybe it's our finances. Maybe it's a skill or a talent. Maybe it's our time. The point is, God is not going to give us more responsibilities, whether it is money, talent, skill, time, or people, if we cannot take care of that which he has already blessed us with.

Let's see how this relates to our study of Noah:

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God.

Noah walked with God. He didn't just walk with God, he walked faithfully with God. When others fell away from worshipping their Creator, Noah continued to walk with God. Noah shouldered the responsibility of maintaining a relationship between God and humankind, even when others neglected that relationship and even set out to destroy it. Noah was a responsible human being, walking faithfully with his Creator in the midst of chaos. Even as an old man, Noah was faithful. He did not let the world around him destroy his faith.

And he didn't have faith like we often picture it today. He was so in touch with what God wanted from him, that in spite of the lack of faith among his own neighbors, he listened when God told him to build the ark. He had never built a boat. There was no physical evidence that a flood was coming. He must have known from day one that he would be a laughing stock. But God told him to build the ark and gave him specific instructions on how to do it. Because of his faithfulness to his Creator, God gave Noah the responsibility for building the ark. Noah must have felt overwhelmed! God expected Noah to step out on faith and take up the responsibility, even though he had no clue about what he was doing. God also knew that Noah would do as he was asked.

How wonderful that relationship must have been between God and Noah that knew the character of Noah so well, there was no questions that Noah would do whatever he was asked. God knows the nature of all of his people. He knew Moses would take up the mantel of leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. He

knew that Joshua would lead those same people into the promised land. He knew that David would be a great king. He knew that Isaiah, Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah would be great prophets. God knows each and every one of his children well. And that includes each of us.

The people in the Bible were not super humans. They were just like us in so many ways.

When God asks Moses to be his spokesperson before Pharaoh, his reply can be found in Exodus 4:10

10 Moses said to the Lord, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

When God called on Jeremiah, this is what it says in Jeremiah 1:5-8:

**5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;**

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

6 "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

7 But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.

8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

And when Jesus was calling people to follow him, Luke 9:57-62 tells us this:

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.”

58 Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

59 He said to another man, “Follow me.”

But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.”

60 Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

61 Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.”

62 Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

The Christian life is not a cakewalk, even for those who are dedicated in their desire to draw closer to God. In many ways, the world is going to hate us. They will attempt to trample us. They will laugh at us. They will tell us how foolish we are to follow an invisible God. “God can’t hear you because there is no God! I prayed for money, and I did not get it. I prayed that my daughter would get well, and she didn’t. I prayed for rain, and it didn’t come! I prayed for healing and did not receive it. God didn’t hear my prayers because there is no God!”

Prayers that go unanswered are often due to the fact that we are not seeking God's will in those prayers. We are seeking our own will. Our prayers are more of a demand or a challenge to God.

But, if we are walking with God, if we embrace the Holy Spirit, he hears our prayers because our prayers are a response to what he wills for us. It becomes a conversation of mutual understanding. God wants us to lead fulfilling lives, but we often do not realize what that means. So, when we have conversations with God and he leads us on the path he has set for us, it seems like foolishness in the eyes of others. But faith in our Creator is a personal relationship established in our understanding of who God is and who we are to him, realizing that he loves us so very much and only wants the best for us.

When we get discouraged, hear the taunts around us, feel the anger that is felt towards us, when society ignores us, there is really only one solution.

Build a boat.

If God is telling us to build a boat then we need to be building a boat, no matter what anyone else thinks. And we need to build it to his specifications. Follow his lead. He can't bless our efforts if we make no effort.

If God is calling us to the mission field, we might want to listen to what he is telling us. He has it all planned out, even if we have never thought about it. If God is calling us into ministry, we might want to listen to what he is telling us. He has the plan, even if we have never considered it. If God is calling us to serve in some capacity in this community, we just might want to listen to what he is telling

us. I say to us all, he has the plan even if we have never pondered taking up that mantel before. We are never too old, too sick, too tired, to stressed, too young, too lacking in any way to do what God is calling us to do.

Build a boat.

Ignore the excuses and the naysayers. We need to listen as God speaks to our hearts and says:

Build a boat.

14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out.

Build a boat.

Trust in the plan that God has for each of us and folks. If we want the blessing he has waiting for each of us and we desire to ever draw closer to him, then whatever the cost, I implore us all.

Build a boat.

God bless you all!

AMEN

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