

Epic: Part 2

I'm glad you are all here today. Last week we kicked off a new series called, EPIC. It's all about Story and how God desires to be a part of your story.

We're going through several of the Old Testament epic stories and looking at how God worked through people and how He ultimately writes himself into the Story through Jesus in the New Testament.

I think this series will help give you a better understanding of the foundation of Christianity, to see how our Amazing God works through ordinary, flawed people like you and I, and finally, how we can respond to God's leading and be used powerfully by Him in the world He has placed us in.

Now, If you're interested in looking at what we talked about last week, Creation, I encourage you to go back and listen to that message on Facebook Live or at [**www.myccod.com/sermon**](http://www.myccod.com/sermon).

This coming week, I suggest that you spend time each day reading chapters 37-50 of Genesis which will cover what we will talk about next Sunday as we look at the **story of Joseph**.

Today, however, we are **taking a look at the story of Noah**.

So let's start by talking about what has happened up to this point.

God created the heavens and the earth and everything in it. He made Adam and Eve and gave them responsibility and authority for managing the entire earth; to populate it and care for all its inhabitants.

He also made a beautiful garden and placed Adam and Eve in it. There He planted two trees; the tree of life which would sustain them for eternity as they ate from it and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that when eaten would have the opposite effect. God told them very clearly not to eat from it and that knowing good and evil would result in their deaths.

God's always been gracious in letting people decide their fates. We can choose eternal life with Him walking at our side. Or we can choose to go it alone, and experience all the good and evil out there, separated from Him and the life he offers.

Satan, filled with pride and jealous of man's worship of God (the world system is jealous of that too), deceived Eve tempting her crafty words and thoughts.

In the end Adam and Eve disregarded what God said and followed their own path; choosing to walk away from eternal life and down the path of temporary gratification.

Eating from that Tree, they brought self-centeredness and death into their hearts. It was a choice their children and the world would be plagued with.

But God immediately steps into their story with a beautiful redemptive plan that included a coming Messiah who would selflessly suffer on behalf of all humanity to save them from the curse of sin and destroy the deceiver.

Way back in Genesis 3:15 it says, - *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

God’s unfolding work of redeeming mankind throughout the Old Testament culminates in the coming of the Messiah. It is because of that plan that we can have hope of a restored relationship with Him, a walk with Him that leads to eternal life. **But that’s the end of the story.**

So, anyway, through Adam and Eve, sin and death was introduced into the world. We see the effects of that right away in the Genesis story as **Cain kills his brother Abel** over jealousy.

Those **insecure evil thoughts** passed from the deceiver to Adam and Eve and their offspring. And that sin continued to grow in intensity all the way up until the time of Noah which brings us to our text this morning.

Genesis 6:5-22, 7:11-12, 19-23, *“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 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. 15 This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits [elbow/finger 18-20"] long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. 16 Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. 19 You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. 21 You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them." 22 Noah did everything just as God commanded him."

Genesis 7:11-12, *"In the 600th 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."*

Genesis 7:19-23, *"[The waters] rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. 20 The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits....23 Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark."*

Noah was certainly an extraordinary man. In a time when people had abandoned faith – he was a man of great faith.

Where did that great faith come from?

We find out in **verse 9**. It says that *"he walked faithfully with God."*

So often today we want to find the end of the rainbow, the pot of gold, the good life, but we want to get there by doing things our way. The only way to the end of the rainbow is by **walking in close fellowship with God**.

What does walking with God look like though?

As a pastor, I get to talk to people about their walk with God. Many times, people think because they pray, that's enough. It's according to the Bible.

Sometimes when someone hasn't been around in a while, I'll call them to encourage them to get back to gathering with God's people and get back on track with their walk with the Lord, they often tell me, ***"Hey, you don't have to worry about me, I still have my faith. I'm still praying every day and I still read the Bible occasionally too when needed."***

Now, those aren't bad practices, but that isn't what demonstrates a faithful walk with God. **Noah** lives a life that gives some visible clues of what a real walk with God looks like.

And the first thing we see, right off that bat, is that...

1. Walking with God is demonstrated by Obedience (we dislike that word)

In **Genesis 6:22** we see that *"Noah did everything just as God commanded him."*

He was obedient. But Noah wasn't just obedient. **He was obedient without having a complete understanding of what he was doing.**

Sometimes we say to our kids to do something, and they ask **why** and we give them 10 reasons why but it isn't good enough and when they ask the **umpteenth time**, we say, ***"Because I said so."***

We want them to obey what we say because it shows that they trust us that we are not having them do something that is worthless but has value for them even if they don't understand it. **They should obey because we are doing what is in their best interest.**

Noah obeyed even though he did not understand it all.

Listen to what the author of Hebrews says about Noah.

Hebrews 11:7, *"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear **built an ark** to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."*

When warned about things not yet seen, he built an ark.

Imagine the situation: Noah walks faithfully enough with God to hear Him when He speaks.

God says, "Noah build an ark?"

How big Lord? 500 feet long, 80 feet wide, 50 feet high? Where? Whose going to move it into the water? Oh, I'll take care of that...a great flood is coming."

"What's a flood?" says Noah.

"Water will rise up from the deep, the sky will pour out rain."

So, Noah was obedient in building the ark, because God told him about an impending flood, that he had never seen, caused by rain, which probably had never happened. **And Noah did it anyway. That is obedience.**

Why was He so obedient? Because he walked with God regularly enough that He knew He could be trusted. So He obeyed without fully understanding.

The same holds true for us. If we want to live lives that are being used by God to do extraordinary things, we have got to be obedient, and to be obedient to what He calls us to do, we have to walk with God daily. Our trust in Him results in obedience and that obedience demonstrates that **we walk with Him.**

Secondly, Noah's walk with God teaches us that...

2. Walking with God is demonstrated during Opposition

In **Genesis 6:11-12** it says that, *"Now God saw that the earth had become corrupt and was filled with violence. 12 God observed all this corruption in the world, for everyone on earth was corrupt."*

Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.

In the New Testament, Peter tells us that Noah was *"a preacher of righteousness."* (**2 Peter 2:5**)

Imagine preaching righteous living to a people filled with corruption and violence – void of faith and antagonistic to God. Oh wait. We don't have to really imagine that. We seem to be living in that kind of atmosphere today.

And what do we encounter when we speak to others who are opposed to the righteous life that the Bible teaches? Well, we are seeing them opposing not only the message but often they oppose the messenger who delivers it.

More and more pastors are threatened with fines and jail time if they teach what the Bible says.

You can preach all the easy to hear stuff Mark as long as you stay away from topics on sexuality or the sanctity of life or mutual submission or obedience...

When we as Christians seek to express what God says regarding living righteously regarding those issues, it's not just the message that's opposed, but the messenger too; even if we're speaking out of an intense love and desiring for people to experience the power of the Lord in their life.

Imagine however, being the only one, like Noah and his family, who were walking with the Lord and seeking to speak truth into the society.

No others to support you against the opposition that was sure to be happening.

And that resolve to continue preaching righteousness was not something that happened because he spent a few days or weeks or months with the Lord.

The third thing Noah's walk teaches us is that...

3. Walking with God is demonstrated over a long period of time.

Genesis 6:9, *"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked **faithfully** with God."*

Faithfully denotes a lifetime of walking with God. We don't know the exact time frame it took to build the ark, a good estimate would be 50 to 75 years.

During that time frame his faithfulness in preaching righteousness – in word and action, was due to lifetime (hundreds of years) walking with the Lord.

This was back in the early days when men were still living a very long time, several hundred years (900 down to 120). Longer life reptiles to dinosaurs!

Anyway, imagine working to hard to provide for your family. And then after work, coming home and getting your boys out to work on the ark for 75 years.

"Let's go boys. Time to work on the ark" Day in and day out!

"Aw Dad, do we have to?"

"Yes we do. We have got to be ready for the flood!"

"But dad, the neighbor kids dads think we're crazy"

As they aged (50-75), "but dad the guys at the office keep ridiculing me."

Yet, Noah kept walking with God in the midst of opposition for a very long time.

People, **faithfulness is not measured over a weekend or a couple years.** It is measured over **long periods of time.**

Think of it in terms of marriage. You aren't a faithful spouse if every few years you have an affair. You're faithful when you don't have an affair or if you mess up and do, then you are faithful when you stop having affairs for the rest of your marriage.

But the only way to be faithful for the long haul is to keep walking with God, because sometimes it is going to be hard, but when we walk with God, He give us the strength to **continue and endure and to succeed.**

It is then that we get to the rainbow.

After Noah's time in the Ark, God brings him and his family out of the ark and establishes a covenant to never destroy the earth and mankind by a flood again and the sign of that **promise is the rainbow.**

The thing about rainbows though, is that we don't get to see them without going through **the storm.** As we walk with God, and he strengthens us to obey amid opposition and over time, he brings us through the storms of life to experience **his great blessing.**

In Closing:

Now maybe some of you here today haven't even started a walk with God yet, while others are in the midst of a storm that is happening.

In Noah's day, Noah was the only one walking with God and the rest of the world was corrupt, full of violence and denying the God who loved them.

The same is true for us today if we do not believe. Paul says this to Titus.

Titus 1:15-16, *"To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him."*

In both Noah's day and our own day, the only hope of overcoming the corruption of the world was to walk with God believing Him and what He said.

That walk begins with believing in Jesus Christ and the salvation that he has brought. Listen to how Peter says it in...

1 Peter 3:18-22, *“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 **who formerly** were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 **There is also an antitype** which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 **who has gone** into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.”*

It is not the water baptism that cleans you up and saves you, but the embracing of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection on your behalf (pictured in rising up out of the water) that saves you.

Don't just claim to know God, let your actions demonstrate you walk with Him.

Walk with the Lord believing Him like Noah did.

Maybe you're here today but you haven't fully believed and begun a walk with Him yet. That walk starts by getting on board the boat embracing the death, burial and resurrection that Jesus offered to you so you can live a new life.

To get the end of the rainbow, you need to enter into a walk with the Lord.

If you would like to begin your walk with the Lord, the Bible tells us that we do that by faith. We must recognize our brokenness - our sins, accept Jesus for who He is and what He did on our behalf.

Maybe you've started your walk with the Lord by receiving Him as Savior, but you haven't been walking close lately and the opposition has been beating you down. You need to lean into the walk. Prayer & Bible daily/church/groups.

Maybe you are in the midst of the storm and thinking of abandoning ship.

There is hope. It is found when we get back up and walk with the Lord; trusting and obeying what He says, despite the opposition for the long haul.

If you are in any of these places this morning I invite you to **Pray with me.**