

July 10, 11 Genesis 6:5-8

THERE IS ALWAYS ONE

I have decided to read through the Bible once again starting at the very beginning and in doing that thinking about what God was saying yesterday that applies to today thinking about messages this summer from what I read in the OT. So far I have reached part way in the book of beginnings, Genesis, as far as Jacob marriage and his dealings with his Uncle Laban and finally to Joseph's story, one of my favorites. It's amazing when you reread or read for the first time God's history all the way back to creation, through the birth of sin, the stories of Cain and Abel and the first murder and so much more. Well, I got to Noah recently and read his story and got further than that and thought to myself that I would go back to Noah's time for this morning's message.

Noah is a favorite story of many people because we all know about Noah and his Ark. If you look at the front of the bulletin this morning you see a crafted creation of the ark resting on its final perch in a mountain where no one has been able to get or find. But that is what it is supposed to look like. Doesn't look to big to carry all those animals and such. But isn't that the miracle of God? We love the Noah story because of those cute songs, children's stories and everything else. I think back to Bill Cosby's comedy act about the Noah story. Noah standing there listening to God speaking about his mission. Out of nowhere a booming voice comes, "Noah." "Yes Lord." Says Noah. "I want you to build me a boat." Noah thinks a minute or two and says, "Right! ...what's a boat?" God replies, "Don't worry I'll tell you how and what to build. Just do it." Noah answers, "OK, God. But what do I need a boat for?" "For you and your family and all the animals I bring to you. I'm going to destroy the world by a flood and this boat will save you." Noah again racks his brain and says, "What's a flood?" God says, "When it rains too much and the waters rise and covers the whole earth. Ask someone from Illinois

lately, they'll tell you about rain." "Right! By the way what's rain?" And thus the end of what I sort of remember from Bill Cosby's talk with God concerning the coming flood.

God told Noah because of the wickedness of man he was going to destroy the earth by causing it to rain 40 days. "What's rain?" You see, like many other people might not know there never had been any rain on the earth so they didn't know what it was. God provided springs, dew for his vegetation. Before the flood, there never was any precipitation from heaven. Even those who watched Noah build his ship laughed when he told them the reason he was doing what he was doing for they had never heard or seen rain.

I could have called this message MISSION IMPOSSIBLE because when Noah heard what he was to do he might have thought this was impossible. Can you imagine building a ship so large to carry 2 of every kind of animal there was at that time, the birds, and who knows what. Add in Noah and his kids and their wives and you begin to see how impossible that mission might be. Add to that finding the wood, cutting down the trees, and preparing them just like God said and you can tell the mission was almost impossible. Just think about it. No crew to take care of things. No sails. No steering wheel. No compass on board. No stars or moon to go by because of the clouds and rain. Because of the rising water, no land anywhere. And besides with just the one window high up, Noah couldn't see anything anyway. And remember the tools he had to use. Perhaps rocks as hammers... no chain saws, no cranes, unless Noah could get an elephant to help. No workers except his two sons. All the other people thought Noah was nuts. And how about his age. He was ancient. Yes, mission impossible would have been a good title. And by the way, it took some time to build that ship. He told his story many times and warned his friends and those who came by to laugh at what he was doing to turn to God and

maybe they would be spared. But we know no one listened. No one believed. No one except Noah.

Why did all this happen? It was because God saw how wicked his creation had become. It never really says exactly what evil they were doing, but God found evil everywhere there were people. From heaven he could see all that the world had been doing and he was not pleased. He was disgusted with the actions of those he created. His creations weren't faulty. They had become faulty through their own wishes and actions.

Hear the Word of God found in Genesis 6

“The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thought of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart filled with pain.”

For many years God allowed all this to happen. Reading through those first 5 chapters you see creation story and when sin enters the picture you begin to see the perfect picture of creation beginning to fall apart. God’s heart was broken. He could have created man as a puppet. He could have created man as one who would be servant always, a ‘yes’ man type. But he didn’t. The one thing you find in the garden when Adam and Eve sinned is the fact that they had a choice. God had given them perfection yet they chose to sin. It doesn’t matter the temptation from the tempter, what matters is they had a choice to make. Do they listen to the tempter or remember what God said? Do they pick the fruit from the tree or just admire it from afar? Does Adam follow in Eve’s footsteps and take a bite of the forbidden fruit, or tell her forget it? Folks, it was their choice. And on and on it went throughout history. Not only Adam and Eve but Cain and Abel. Cain didn’t have to kill his brother because God accepted Abel’s offering as the better one. But jealousy, yes,

the first jealous person got his revenge by killing his brother in the field and then like the first parents lying about it to God. But God knows everything. And he doesn't let things go. Cain paid the price big time just like his folks.

And on it went with God giving each person, each group of persons a chance to follow the right paths. He created them out of love so that they would love him back. When he put the world in motion he was not going to disturb it. His creation was 'very good.' He wanted people to love him for who he was creator and sustainer. He wanted them to obey his wishes because they loved him. But they failed to do so.

There was one problem. MAN'S HEART WAS BENT ON SINNING! He had a choice to make with each temptation that came his way to either give in to it, or turn away from it. God gave man a conscience to know the difference between right or wrong. You all know that because you all have one. And you can't get away from it. You know when you have done something wrong, like cheating, stealing, being angry, jealous and just downright mean. The right choice can bring happiness. The wrong choice can bring sorrow.

When God saw his world was heading for destruction his heart broke. Man had tried to become god and decide for himself what was best for him leaving God out of the picture. It all came to an end in the time of Noah because God said enough is enough. Let the world pay attention today.

Hear the rest of the story found in Genesis 6.

“So the Lord said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men, animals and creatures that move along the ground and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them.”

If you have never read any of the Old Testament you may never understand God completely. Some think God was pretty harsh in his verdict against the world when he destroyed it. But he saw the total picture. He just knew that the world that had come to be was going downhill like an avalanche falling from a mountain peak. And it was destroying everyone in its wake. I guess we might say the people did their own thing. God was non-existent. Wickedness had the rule of the land and Satan was enjoying what was happening.

You see, he, meaning Satan, had his way with them. Don't know what hold he had on people or does today, but he seemed to have because when God looked around he could not find people who stood up to the Devil, who said "Can't do that. God said it was wrong."

BUT, and here is where I got the thought and the title for this morning's message. Hear again God's word from Genesis 6.

"But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."

One man found favor in the eyes of the Lord. When he searched the land only one man stood out to him and his name was Noah. Who knows what Noah was doing when God spotted him? He certainly couldn't have been reading his Bible because the Bible hadn't been written yet. Maybe he was praying. Maybe when God looked down upon Noah and found his life was different than the others he was amazed and ran a background check on him. Maybe God had his angels in heaven check out Noah from the time of his birth to this present time which covered some 600 years. He was 500 years old when his first son was born and 600 when the flood came. So the records department in heaven checked and rechecked and rechecked his life during that span. And guess what! God was right! There was one man, though not perfect, who had helped his fellow human beings, done what was right, did the things that God was pleased with.

THERE IS ALWAYS ONE it seems that God can find. In Genesis God's word says about Noah *"Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time."*

God found one. Some of you may remember the story of Abraham and his cousin Lot. They had left the far country to follow God to the place where God wanted them to be. The call came really to Abraham to follow, but Lot seemed to tag along. A time came when they needed to go their separate ways. Both men had their own servants and workers and even their own flocks. The trouble came when their servants argued about flocks mingling together and whose was whose and they accused each other of stealing. Abraham took Lot to the mountain side and told him to pick where he would go and Abraham would go in the opposite direction. Lot spotted the good ground and spied a couple of cities and since he might have been more of a city guy, told Abraham he would take the area near the city. "Done!" said Abraham, and they hugged, kissed had a fellowship dinner, separated the flocks and Lot went his way, Abraham his.

Lot chose the land near the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. We don't even want to know what went on in those cities, but Lot and his family lived near them and often visited, shopped, and ate there. And then they moved into the city. Well it came to God's mind that these two cities were filled with evil so bad it isn't all mentioned in the Bible. God sends his messenger angels to tell Abraham he soon would be a father, and by the way, they were going to destroy a couple of wicked cities so evil that God was going to wipe them off the face of the earth. Abraham knowing his cousin Lot was there began to deal with God. He said to God, "If you find 50 righteous people in those cities, will you change your mind?" God said he would. "Abraham thought for a moment and decided to push his point. "God, how about if there is just 40 people who aren't so bad?" God said he would save the city. Abraham felt he was on a roll and lowered the amount each time, 30, 20. Finally,

Abraham said, “God how about if there is 10 people who aren’t so evil. Will you destroy the cities if you can find at least 10?” Abraham of course was thinking about Lot and his family, and God said if he could find just 10 people who did not do evil, he would spare the cities. With that, their conversation ended.

Soon after that, the angels paid a visit to the cities and to Lot’s house and found the cities were exactly as God had thought, full of evil and perversion. The angels told Lot to pack his bags and take his family away from this horrible place because it was to be destroyed. No kind of coaxing could persuade the angels to change their minds. And after leaving that city they were told not to look back for those cities were to be history. Lot and his family ran for their lives, and the cities were wiped from the face of the earth with no record of where they actually ever were. So one family survived. But it wasn’t a happy ending as it could have been because when Lot’s wife disobeyed and turned to see what was happening to the cities, she turned into a pillar of salt.

God found out in starting over the problemMan’s wickedness returned because God realized through this whole experience he didn’t make bad people.....but that people became bad because of what was in their hearts. Evil had crept in. It was that choice thing. You can choose to do evil or you can choose not to. You can choose to do good, or you can choose to do from God with Jesus as the donor. Man’s heart is bad, corrupt, and in order to survive it needs a new clean heart. That is why when Wesley realized Christ died for even his sins his heart was ‘strangely warmed.’ It is why in Ezekiel we read *“I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws...and I will be your God and I will save you from all your uncleanness.”*

Today I wonder who would be the one? The one who God would find favor in the eyes of the Lord. Evil is still around and people still don't listen to God even after he has sent us his son. People act as if they can do whatever they want as long as they don't get caught and that they will never have to pay the consequences for their actions. WRONG! Our God is a just God.

One day....yes one day according to the Book of Revelation, and Jesus' own words, this world will end and there will be a separation of the good and the evil ones. It's not a joke. It's not fiction. It's the truth. You can kid about it, laugh about it, make jokes about it, but one day soon....he is coming back....the thing is, are you ready? Will he find you to be a righteous?

Yes, we can learn a lot from history, especially God's history because it is HIS STORY!

Let him who has ears, pay attention.