

Session 2

PROMISES OF PRAYER

Genesis 6:9-22; 9:12-17

Memory Verse

“I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

– GENESIS 9:13, CSB




Promises of Prayer


THEOLOGICAL THEME: In a world living in rebellion against God, Noah stood out because of his faithfulness to God. God used a flood to destroy the world but used Noah and his family to keep His promise.


CALL TO ACTION: Who are the lost and searching around you who need a new beginning? Make a list of specific people who need to know Christ and His promises.

We live in a world where promises are not worth much. Political candidates promise certain things and often fail to follow through. Advertisers promise that different products will change your life or your look, and they often fail to live up to the guarantee.

We have been conditioned to believe promises don't carry much weight and are used as tools of persuasion without much effort to follow through. Think about the difference it would make if people kept promises like the Lord keeps His promises. Today, we are studying a man who stood out among the people of the earth. Noah found favor with the Lord and God used Noah and his family to keep God's promise for redemption. This promise was ultimately fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

 How do you feel when you experience a broken promise from someone or something?

 How likely are you to keep the promises you make to others? Why is this the case?

 What are some ways we are to stand out in our culture as Noah did in his day?

Session Summary

Today's study focuses on the flood God used to destroy the world when evil was rampant among the people. It was a time when all were ungodly except for one man who remained faithful to the Lord. Yet, it is important to recognize that Noah was faithful to God because God had first been faithful to Noah. The world today is similar as many pursue things outside of the will of God. Our culture celebrates ungodliness, and faithful Christians stand out. Like Noah, we can trust that when difficulty comes, God will be with us through it.

We can also trust God's promises every time. Jesus has come as the fulfillment of every promise of God. The account of Noah and the ark has parallels to God's plan for the redemption of man through Jesus who has acted as our refuge from God's wrath and is renewing the world completely. Our prayers can be fueled by this truth: God is just and always keeps His promises.

1. Corruption (Genesis 6:9-13)

Noah stood out from the world. The reference to Noah being perfect does not mean sinless but means he alone sought to live God's way. We are also introduced to Noah's three sons, whom God used to repopulate the world.

Where sin abounds, corruption and wickedness follow. That was the situation in Noah's day. God, who is just and holy, acted to stop humanity's rebellion. God's interaction with Noah reminds us sin and wickedness carry consequences but God is also gracious to sinners, which included Noah. Instead of eliminating the whole human race, God preserved a remnant.



How do you see evidence of God's grace today even though sin still abounds in our world?

Sometimes God's people struggle to pray and don't even know what to ask for when facing the corruption of this world. We can take heart from this account, knowing God is watching and is moved by the depravity He sees. We also can be encouraged that the Lord takes note when His people make godly choices and seek to live in a God-honoring way, regardless of how others live.



How do accounts of God's faithfulness to His people in hardship encourage you to endure in prayer and faithfulness to Him?

Throughout the Bible, we are reminded that the wicked never prosper forever and today's passage is another reminder of this. We can trust that the Lord knows what is best and He alone has the right to judge. He will do so in His perfect timing. Because of His great mercy, we also know He allows time for more people to accept Christ as Savior.

? Application: How have you benefitted from the fact that God remains patient and long-suffering with people, even when we are unfaithful to Him?

2. New Beginning (Genesis 6:14-22)

In these verses, God focused on Noah and gave him some unusual instructions. Instead of questioning why he should build a boat in a desert, Noah did all the Lord commanded Him. That's the kind of obedience we should strive to display in our own lives. Following God by faith and with uncertainty is better than following the world with clarity.

God did not give Noah every detail of His plan, but He gave Noah each next step he needed. God instructed Noah to build the ark and gave him exact specifications for each part. God did not share the specific purpose of the ark except that it would be used as part of the plan of judgment and preservation. Noah obeyed God and acted on the given task. Imagine how others might have reacted when Noah and his family started building a boat in the desert in a place it had never rained. Sometimes God's instructions can seem crazy to the world, we must be okay with not being understood by those who are far from God. It is better to follow God than be understood by the world.

? What are some things all Christ followers are called to that don't make sense to the world? What makes it hard to be faithful in these areas?

Any time you choose God over the world, you can expect opposition. This opposition can come in various forms, but it will come. Noah obeyed God even though he was surrounded by corrupt and wicked people. Thankfully, God doesn't call us to do this alone. He has made us part of His family in the church and has given us brothers and sisters to encourage us to stand firm, even when the world doesn't understand or agree.

? How have you been encouraged toward faithfulness by brothers and sisters in the church? How is prayer for one another instrumental in this?

Instead of questioning and demanding answers about things he had no prior experience with, Noah obeyed God. So many times, we get caught up in asking questions and demanding answers or details that we can miss being used by God in powerful ways. We can also follow like Noah, trusting God even when we don't understand exactly what He is doing.

? Application: Where is God calling you to obey now? How do you need to respond?

3. Promise of God (Genesis 9:12-17)

These verses follow the events of the flood. Once the flood was over, it was time for rebuilding. God gave instructions on how that was to happen, and He blessed Noah for his obedience. God also established a covenant with mankind and promised to never flood the earth again. The Lord knew Noah and subsequent generations would need a reminder of His covenant, so He placed the rainbow in the sky as a sign. In God's grace, this sign would remind and encourage Noah and those who followed God later that God was faithful in the past and would be in the future.

It is important to recognize the "hero" of this story is not Noah but God. You can't stand firm and unshakable until your foundation is firm and secure. The truth of God is solid and unshakeable, and we can stand firm in obedience when we fully trust in Him. The world offers many options to base your life and choices on, but these will never stand the test of time or the storms that come your way. Only Scripture can give the firm foundation needed to build a life of ongoing trust in and faithfulness to God.

? What are some types of shaky ground that people stand on today? How are Christians also tempted to place their hope in these things?

Acknowledging the activity and nature of God are vital in strengthening our prayers. We can look to Scripture for encouragement to pray with confidence that God not only hears our prayers, but He will answer them. Today's account is one of many reminders that God always keeps His promises. Just as the rains will come, you can also stand firm on the faithfulness of God that the rainbow represents. God's promises move us toward prayer as an active means of seeking to trust Him more each day.

? How does God's ongoing faithfulness give us reason to repeatedly come to Him in prayer?

Consider that a rainbow is seen by everyone who looks to the heavens. Even those who reject the faith and turn away from the Lord can see this sign of the covenant. This is a reminder of God's grace to all people on the earth. He made us all in His own likeness and desires for all to be restored from their sin. Every Christ follower receives a new beginning and becomes a new creation in Jesus. And we are called to share that opportunity with those around us. Too many fail to share their faith for fear that it will make them look different or stand out from the rest of the world. But this is what we are called to do.

Noah's obedience changed the course of history and ours can too as we follow Jesus in faith. Just as Noah did not know what exactly was coming, you may not have the whole picture either. But we can follow Noah's example and simply take the next step of obedience. It is not enough to only hear the Lord speak; we must be willing to respond in obedience. Noah did and the world was changed. There's no limit to what God can do through our obedience.

? Application: Where is God calling you to be bold in standing out for Him? What steps can you take toward that?

Conclusion

Noah lived a righteous life in a wicked world. He was not sinless, but he sought God's ways over the ways of the world. He didn't bow down or give in to the influence of the world around him. In the face of likely persecution and ridicule, he obeyed. A life of obedience will be rewarded by the Lord. Although it took time, Noah's faithfulness and obedience were rewarded when the ark was completed, and God told him and his family to enter the ark so they would be spared. No matter what our circumstances look like, God always keeps His promises, and we can always trust Him.

? How will you be obedient in an area you have been questioning God's instructions instead of obeying them?

? How can we encourage one another toward faith in God's promises?

? Who are the lost and searching around you who need a new beginning? How can you share the hope of Christ through the story of Noah?

Memorize

"I have placed my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

- Genesis 9:13, CSB

