

“SUNDAY SCHOOL REVISITED: II - DO WHAT?!”

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Genesis 6:11-7:10

A number of years ago, I led the very first Disciple Bible study at my last church. If you've taken Disciple, you know how incredibly life-changing it can be. Well, it was with that group of 12 people with whom I worked. We had a wonderful time together, and when the class came to an end, the group gave me a lovely gift.

They put their money together and gave me a really beautiful silver and gold pin - it was Noah's ark. I was really touched and I wore it a lot.

Well, people would see the pin and really admire it, which was good, but wait until you hear what happened then! For some reason, when they saw that pin they thought I was a Noah's ark fan, so I began getting Noah's ark gifts. And I don't mean one or two - I mean before I knew it I had a Noah's ark collection! I'm not kidding. Even today, you hardly have to turn around in the parsonage to see something Noah's ark. Music boxes, writing tablets, pens, light-switch plates, pictures, paintings, plates, cups, statues, socks, earrings, and I think, a total of about six Christmas tree ornaments! It took on a life of its own!

Now, I told you all that because I think it shows how popular this Biblical story is - maybe one of the most popular in the whole Bible! As I can attest, there is tons of Noah's ark memorabilia to be purchased; but there also have been some interesting little ditties written about it over the years.

Perhaps you've heard this one: Ten Lessons We Can Learn from Noah

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics, just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. Speed isn't everything; the snails were on board with the cheetahs.
8. When you're stressed, float awhile.
9. Remember the Ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic

by professionals.

10. No matter what the storm, when you are with God there's always a rainbow waiting.

(On-line, Sermoncentral.com)

Well, this morning, I can't cover the entire Noah's ark saga in this sermon, because there just isn't time; so what I want to do for just a few moments, is to look at Noah himself, at what he did, and finally, at what that means for your life and mine.

We learned from the scriptures that Noah was a good, faithful and righteous man, and it's a good thing, because when he was over five hundred years old, God chose him among all the people of the world for a special task. God was disgusted with humanity at that point, at their corruption, their moral degradation, the way they had turned away from Him. So disgusted that God was determined to wipe them out and start over - all of them, except one good, faithful and righteous man - Noah.

So God spoke to Noah, and told him the plan, and the plan included Noah building an ark to ride out the storm that would kill everyone else. God told him what to build, how to build it, and who to put into it. And no matter what God asked, the scriptures say, "Noah did everything God commanded of him."

It's hard for us to imagine what Noah went through, well maybe not so hard, since we've had the benefit of seeing movies like "Evan Almighty," where the toll it took on him was made very clear. But just imagine what it was like, for him to be building this monstrosity in clear view of everyone. Imagine the comments, the laughter. Imagine people thinking he was crazy, thinking he was a religious fanatic, or in terms we hear today "a Bible banger" or "Jesus freak."

He could have ignored God, you know? He could have pretended he really didn't hear God's voice. He could have chalked it up to indigestion, or a headache, or a nightmare. He could have decided he wasn't the right man for the job, or maybe that God wasn't going to do what He said He was going to do.

It took an incredible amount of faith and courage to do what God called him to do, yet that's exactly what Noah did - despite everything, the odds, the ridicule, the toll it took. Over and over again, we read in Genesis, "Noah did everything God commanded of him."

Could we say that of ourselves? Could you say that? I don't know about you, but I know that there are some things that God calls me to do that are easy, and others that are really difficult - and it's really easy to jump right up and do those easy things, but those difficult things - that's another story - especially if it

means other people are going to think I'm crazy.

Do you remember that great movie of a number of years ago called "Oh God!" starring George Burns and John Denver? If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend that you do - because in many ways it's a modern-day Noah's ark story. John Denver is a nice-enough guy, working as a manager of a grocery store, when one day, out of the blue, God (who was phenomenally portrayed by George Burns) showed up and appeared only to him. The movie was all about God calling John Denver to tell people what God was thinking, and what God wanted, and the bottom line is that nobody believed him, and nearly everybody thought he was crazy. In the end, he lost most everything in his life - his job, his friends, his reputation. But, like Noah, he was faithful and did everything God commanded, and it pleased God, and in the end, it pleased him too.

Sometimes God calls His children to step out in faith and do something seemingly outrageous - like build an ark, or talk to people about Him. And friends, sometimes those children will be some of you. You'll know it when you feel something stirring inside of you; when you feel the Spirit moving you to do something, and it will not let you go; or perhaps others when affirm what you feel you're being called to do. When that happens, even though your natural inclination may be to say back to God, "Do what?!", may you and I instead be like Noah, and do what God commands us to do - no matter what the cost may be. May you and I be willing to pay that cost because of our love for God, and the knowledge that He wants what is best and wills what is good.

God may not ask you to build an ark to save humanity; but He may ask you to reach out and speak to someone you haven't communicated with in years. He may not ask you to round up animals two by two; but He may ask you to start a mission project that will care for His children. He may not ask you to gather lumber, but He may ask you to gather resources to care for the poor. He may not ask you to risk ridicule by your friends and family, but He might, by asking you to stand up for or against something really important.

Whatever God asks of you or me, may we not just respond, "Do what?" but may we instead do as Noah did, and be faithful, doing as God commands. We can do that, friends, because we know God loves us, He will be with us as we do whatever He asks, He will give us what we need, and most of all, if we look back and remember Noah's story, in the end, all will be well. A rainbow will come at the end of the storm, and all will be well. Thanks be to God.

Amen.