

Thanksgiving Day
November 22, 2018

Genesis 8:15-22
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Celebrate Thanksgiving Like Noah

- I. Thankful for God's grace.
- II. Thankful for God's faithfulness.
- III. Thankfulness shown in actions.

Dear Christian friends,

Someone said that **reading the account** of the flood is like reading Noah's diary – everything is so EXACTLY DATED. ***"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month" the flood started. "For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth - the waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days - on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat - on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible."*** There are more dates as the **waters dry up** until FINALLY, ***"By the twenty-seventh day of the second month of Noah's six hundred and first year the earth was completely dry."*** That's when, ***"God said to Noah, 'Come out of the ark.'"***

I doubt that ***"the twenty-seventh day of the second month of Noah's six hundred and first year"*** was the fourth Thursday in November ACCORDING TO the **calendar we use** but it was certainly a day of THANKSGIVING for Noah. Noah was thankful and he HAD TO SHOW it.

UNLIKE Noah we haven't lived 601 years or survived a universal flood. But LIKE Noah we today are thankful and we WANT TO SHOW it. So let's CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING LIKE NOAH. **Like Noah we're thankful** 1)for God's grace and 2)faithfulness and we show our thankfulness IN ACTIONS.

I. Thankful for God's grace.

What a ride Noah and his family had been on! There were those years building the ark and enduring all the **scoffing** and **ridicule** of their UNBELIEVING and IMPENITENT **neighbors** and **friends**. Things had gotten so bad SPIRITUALLY and MORALLY that there were only eight believers left in the **whole world** – Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives. Then had come God's command to **load up** the ark and God Himself has ***"shut"*** them in. I CAN'T IMAGINE being in the ark **during the flood** and the **days after** as the water receded. There had to be some SCARY, HARROWING days and nights. But in the ark they were SAFE UNDER God's **protection**. Now finally AFTER OVER a year in the ark they could safely leave it and begin a new life.

They had SURVIVED the flood and it was all by God's GRACE **alone**. God didn't spare Noah and family because they were SO MUCH BETTER than everybody else. They were sinners just as deserving of God's **wrath** and **judgment** AS ALL those millions who perished in the flood. But by God's GRACE and POWER they were sorry for their sins and IN FAITH they clung to God's promise of the **coming Savior**. GRATEFUL for **God's grace** the FIRST THING Noah did when he left the ark was build an altar and offer a sacrifice to God.

As we count our blessings today at the VERY TOP of the list must be God's grace – that God ***"does not treat us as our sins deserve nor reward us according to our iniquities."*** We can properly lament how MORALLY MESSED UP and spiritually bankrupt the world has **once again** become, but we better also see THE MESS in our **own hearts** and THE TOLL the world has taken on our lives.

Just take being THANKFUL. Do you realize WHAT A SLAP in God's face our grumbling and complaining really are? WHATEVER it is **we're grumbling** about we're basically accusing God of **doing** a LOUSY JOB taking care of us – we're telling God we DESERVE BETTER – we're saying God DOESN'T KNOW what He's doing. That's not humble trust in God's **ways** and **promises**. That's sinful pride criticizing our **Creator!**

See that **big cross** and never cease to MARVEL at God's **amazing grace**. We have God's own Son as our PERSONAL Savior. Our Creator was born our **brother to be** our **substitute** and to MAKE THINGS RIGHT between a **world** of guilty sinners and our **holy** God. God never took back His **commandments** or His **call for us** to LIVE LIVES HOLY in **every way**. Jesus actually lived that life for us and gives us all the credit for it. God doesn't ignore or excuse our sins but He did take all our sins OFF of us – put them all on Jesus and punished Jesus in our place. Jesus endured the **death** and **hell** we had coming and solely because of Jesus God HAS FORGIVEN **all** our sins. WHAT GRACE! Like Noah BE THANKFUL for that grace.

There's even more grace! We see the devastation and judgment of the **universal flood**. You DON'T MESS around with God. There's a limit to God's **patience**. We hear God promise, "**as long as the earth endures**" and we know the day is coming when God will say, "ENOUGH! THAT'S IT!" Yet because of God's grace and trusting in Jesus we can ACTUALLY LOOK FORWARD to **Judgment Day**. Washed clean in Jesus' blood and clothed by faith with Jesus' perfect life THE END of **this world** will mean the coming of the "**new heaven and new earth**" – that grand Christian reunion "**before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb**" - eternal life AT Jesus side basking in His glory. WHAT GRACE! Like Noah BE THANKFUL for that grace.

"Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it." CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING like Noah – THANKFUL for God's grace and...

II. Thankful for God's faithfulness.

Noah and family leave the ark having experienced God's FAITHFULNESS. God had provided for them – protected them – and now they could safely leave the ark. I'm sure life on the ark wasn't ALWAYS EASY. The ark wasn't a FIRST-CLASS **luxury liner** with all the **amenities**. It was basically a BIG BOX BOBBING on the top of the water. During the "**forty days and forty nights**" of the flood rising it wasn't SMOOTH SAILING with **clear skies**. NO DOUBT doubts and **fear** – worries and **questions** – AROSE in their **minds** and TROUBLED their **hearts**. They were believers but **no believer** has a PERFECT faith. But after living in the NARROW CONFINES of that **smelly ark** for OVER A YEAR they leave it. The ground is dry – the trees and plants are **budding**. GOD PROVED once again His **faithfulness** - AND Noah was thankful.

We **too** have personally experienced God's faithfulness in COUNTLESS WAYS. As He did for Noah God has provided for us – protected us – brought us safely to **another** Thanksgiving. We HAVE SO MANY, **many blessings to count** today and THANK GOD for. COOPED UP in that ark I'm sure Noah and family at times got on EACH OTHER'S NERVES. They no doubt had their DISAGREEMENTS and **differences**. We do too and we haven't BEEN STUCK in an ark! But OH BE THANKFUL for that special person who actually loves you with **all your flaws** and wants to spend the rest of their life with you. BE THANKFUL for God-fearing parents and godly children EVEN THOUGH they're not perfect parents or children. WHAT BLESSINGS and joys God showers on us **through them**. THANK GOD for them and thank them for **being in** your life!

But let's be careful NOT TO THANK God ONLY FOR what we would call the "**good**" things. Paul wrote, "**Always giving thanks to God the Father for EVERYTHING in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**" That everything includes – EVERYTHING! – including all those **times/things** we would RATHER NOT have had to deal with or **go through**. Maybe it was an unexpected HEALTH issue – a marital crisis – financial setback. Maybe it was the unexpected loss of a loved one, etc. God never promised us an EASY or FAIR life here on earth. But He has promised to "**be with us always**" – to "**never leave or forsake us**" – to "**work all things for the good of those who love Him.**" We don't ask God to PUT US THROUGH the wringer of **pains** and **problems** but BE THANKFUL that when He

does He **does so** IN LOVE – NOT to get back at us but to purify and strengthen our faith and draw us EVEN CLOSER to Him. Like Noah BE THANKFUL for God's **faithfulness**.

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it.” CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING like Noah WITH...

III. A thankfulness shown in actions.

We need to be careful that our **thankfulness today** is NOT JUST a one-day gratitude or a QUICKLY RATTLED off, ***“O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.”*** The words – this day – are IMPORTANT - but they must be backed up with ACTIONS and ATTITUDE.

Celebrate Thanksgiving LIKE NOAH. Noah had plenty to do as they left the ark. They were basically starting FROM SCRATCH **rebuilding** their lives. But before getting busy with all that Noah took time to **build** that altar and **offer** those sacrifices. Considering the limited number of animals alive at the time this had to be one of the MOST LAVISH and GENEROUS sacrifices **ever offered**. There weren't animals TO SPARE but that didn't make Noah CHEAP. Noah was grateful and his gratitude made him GENEROUS.

Noah offered what's called a WHOLE-BURNT offering. Unlike other sacrifices with this one NOTHING was held back – the whole animal was **burned up** on the altar. The whole animal was TOTALLY GIVEN OVER to God.

Do you see the picture in that? It's **the picture** of our whole life TOTALLY GIVEN OVER to God – not one part or minute of our lives HELD BACK from God. It pictures the hymn, “TAKE MY LIFE and let it be, **consecrated** Lord to Thee, ...Take myself and I will be, EVER, ONLY ALL for Thee.” It's the opposite of GOD GETS an hour a week and the rest is ours – God gets our offering and **the rest** is MINE! – the **attitude** that I can exempt certain parts of my life FROM GOD'S CONTROL. That's not gratitude – that's STUBBORN SELFISHNESS! Paul tells us, ***“I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercies to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.”***

On ***“the twenty-seventh day of the second month of his six hundred and first year”*** Noah left the ark and gratefully offered those sacrifices. On this fourth Thursday of November, 2018, let's CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING **like Noah** – thankful for God's grace and faithfulness and showing our thankfulness IN ACTIONS. Amen.