



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

November 28, 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

Sermon Text: [Genesis 6:9-22, 7:11-23](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Genesis 6:9-22, 7:11-23](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 18](#)

Second Lesson: [Romans 13:11-14](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 24:36-44](#)

### **Learn How to Prepare from Noah**

Listen to God's Promises

Act on God's Promises

As we begin a new church year, we focus on Christ's coming. He comes to us through his Word and Sacrament. He comes to us in time at Bethlehem. Today we focus on his coming at the end of time and God's urgent pleadings with us to be ready and to keep watch. As we take a look at these words from Genesis and the account of Noah and the flood, we can learn from Noah what it means to be ready, to prepare, to prepare for God's judgment. In the actions of Noah, we see how faith reacts to God's warning. Faith listens to God's promises and faith acts on God's promises.

It sounds pretty simple, but put yourself in Noah's shoes. God comes to you and says, "I'm going to destroy the whole world, so here is what I want you to do. I want you to build this...not a boat that you can sail...this large box you can float in for over a year. It is going to be over a football field long with both end zones and a little bit more tacked on to it. It's going to be twice the width of the parsonage next door. And it's going to be as high as a 3-4 story building. So get to it. Start building that." I can't begin to imagine what would be going through Noah's mind.

God tells us to do certain things and we have a hard enough time doing them...like, love one another, be devoted to one another, honor one another above yourself. We have a hard enough time doing that. Go and build something that big because the world is going to be destroyed with water. How in the world could Noah go and do that? Not just physically how could he do all that. He didn't have a rechargeable drill anywhere. He had to do it all by hand. How in the world could he do all this. But how in the world could he spend all this time doing this knowing that everyone he was looking at was going to die? Can you imagine what that would be like?

Sure, you should be able to because all the people you see in your daily life that don't have faith in Jesus as their Savior, you're looking at people that are going to die, not just physically, but they are going to go to hell. They are going to be destroyed because of their sin, just like the people of Noah's day were destroyed because of their sin. So in reality, you and I should be able to relate a little bit to that, shouldn't we? But we pass our days probably not thinking about it a whole lot. Whereas Noah had to pass his days focused on it as he built this incredibly huge box.

Noah heard these promises of God and listened to them in the sense that Jesus said, "He who has ears, let him hear, let him listen." This means to believe them, take them to heart. How do you know that? Not only because of what he did, but because of how Noah is described. He is described as a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time. And he walked with God. That doesn't mean he was without sin. If you've read the chapters after Chapter 9, after the end of the flood, you can just see what a wretched pitiful sinner Noah was. He wasn't that different from you or me. He was a sinner. So how was he righteous before God?

If you read in the Great Heroes of Faith chapter, Hebrews 11, it says that by faith Noah built this ark and he was shown to have the righteousness that comes by faith. So Noah heard God's promises of the Savior to come, that had been passed down, from the offspring of the woman that would crush the serpent's head, and he believed in it. Not only did he believe it, but he acted on it in other ways besides just building an ark. We are told in 2 Peter 2 that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. By his actions, we are told in Hebrews 7, he called people to repentance when he was building the ark. He acted on it in such a way that we often speak about his ridicule that he would have endured for doing all of this. Scripture doesn't tell us that, but it only stands to reason when you consider the people around him, their wickedness and their sinful nature, and you see a guy building this huge, huge box. And he's telling you that righteousness and being right with God comes only through faith in God's promises. The people had to think of him as being a little bit odd at the very least. Yet he listened to those promises. He believed those promises. And he acted on those promises.

He heard God say to him that the world was going to be destroyed and even though day after day he woke up and he built the ark some more and little by little he saw progress on that ark, there were no other indications that this flood was coming. He simply had to act in faith in believing what God had said to him, and that's what he did. Noah did everything just as God commanded him. And in so doing, believing what God had said, Noah was delivered and he was saved by the waters that destroyed everyone else. Those waters raised that box above the waves and he and his family were saved and the animals and all these other things. Then God had a whole new world so to speak, in a very real sense, a different world than the one before the flood that came about because of what Noah had done and how he believed God.

I can't imagine the strength of faith it takes to do what Noah did. I say this because we live in a society that is so impatient. We aren't told how long it took him to build the ark, but I have to think it was more than two weeks, don't you? I have to think this took quite a long time. We are so impatient today. We are so conditioned to have a new thing in the news, or a new thing comes up every couple of days and it's this new big thing that everyone focuses on and then we move onto the next thing and we forget about what had happened. We don't really do well at staying focused on something for any length of time. Can you imagine the amount of time it took for him to do this? Can you imagine what he had to go through? I don't think I can. I can't begin to imagine what he went through.

The stern preaching of the Law that is the flood that God punishes sin is something that a lot of people don't like to think about, so what they do is simply deny this as history. They say it's just a story God tells to show what he thinks about sin. Well it certainly shows us what he thinks about sin, but it's fact. God did all of this. Noah did all of this. God destroyed the earth because he was sick and tired of mankind's wickedness. And he says after the flood that didn't change. Mankind is still wicked. He said though that he was never going to destroy it again by a flood. He tells us in Scripture that next time it's going to be by fire and then he'll have a new heaven and a new earth for the home of righteousness for his people, which will be heaven, and the unbelievers will be in hell. That's what is coming.

He tells us to keep watch and to be ready and to be prepared and to take steps to be prepared, just like Noah took steps to build the ark. For us that means living with this focus in mind that this world is temporary. It's going to be destroyed. The day is coming when it will be destroyed. Just because you hear this year after year and it hasn't happened yet doesn't mean it's not coming. Week after week Noah got up and kept building the ark, and nothing had changed. But eventually everything changed.

We don't have a promise from God that it'll be in our lifetime, but we have God's Word that it might be in our lifetime. He tells us, "Since you don't know when it's going to be, always be ready." Live with this as your primary focus. Am I ready if God returns today to meet my maker? Am I living in faith that Jesus is my Savior? Am I walking with God as Noah did, believing God's promises and knowing those promises? Or, am I letting everything else in the world crowd those promises out? There's a danger of that, isn't there? There's a danger that the day-to-day concerns of our life become so important to us that we forget about God and God becomes something that we just put in a little cubicle and we take him out when we think we need his help, but we forget about him the rest of the time because we figure we can handle everything on our own. If that's our approach to life, we are going to be in trouble. We are going to be like that person that leaves the keys in the door in the car and leaves the doors unlocked and the car running and then we wonder how our car got stolen.

God tells us to be ready, take steps, stay close to him. Know the forgiveness that is yours only through God. I suppose part of keeping watch is to look and see what wretched sinners we are. We are no different than the people that were destroyed at the time of the flood. The only different in us is that God has worked faith in our hearts so that we see our sins and see Jesus as the only answer to our sins. But by nature and on our own, we are no different than those wretches that were destroyed. That's what we are.

So we live in God's grace, knowing that he loves us and has forgiven us in spite of who we are, not because of who we are, in spite of who we are. And we live close to him, with Word and the Sacraments, rejoicing in the forgiveness he gives us, rejoicing in the purpose he gives us of living for him and getting to know him better and rejoicing in the promises of heaven that he has given to us.

That's a struggle. That's a struggle day after day to remind ourselves that's what we are here for, not the things that we are going to be busy doing that day, but we're here as God's people to serve God in those things that we do. We are here to be prepared so that we are ready when Christ returns.

When the flood waters came, it was too late. Those people were doing everything just as they always had done, right up until the day when the heavens opened and the springs of the deep burst forth. Then it was too late.

When the trumpet call comes of the Archangel and God gathers us all together, you and I can't be rushing then to tell someone we love that Jesus is the only answer. Then it's too late. The time to get ourselves ready and get them ready is now.