

Let Faith Arise: The Will of God Triumphs Over Darkness

INTRODUCTION

- We are looking at what it means to Let Faith Arise.
- We have noted that Hebrews defines faith as: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
- Hebrews also describes faith as acting and achieving; suffering and triumphing; waiting and receiving the reward.
- And, Hebrews defends faith by giving examples of great people of faith who acted and achieved, suffered and triumphed and waited and received a reward.

NOAH AND THE BOOK OF GENESIS

- Last week we visited the story of Cain and Abel – Abel gave an offering that showed his belief in God as the author and Lord of life, while Cain did not.
- Abel's offering was acceptable, Cain's was not.
- It was Abel's faith that pleased God – he believed God was author and creator of life and he acted in accordance with what he believed – this pleased God.

- Today, we are going to look at the familiar story of Noah and amongst other things, notice that it is through suffering that God triumphs.
- To help us understand this story better, let's look at the purpose of the book of Genesis.
- The book of Genesis is more than a bunch of stories about the patriarchs of faith. Genesis introduces us to profound themes that are woven into every biblical story.
- Eg. Light and life in the midst of darkness and chaos. The life giving and cleansing nature of water – the water of life. God delivering His people out of captivity. Every biblical story contains these themes. It all starts here.
- When we consider the story of Noah and the flood, let us understand that there are other flood accounts:
- The Israelites lived in a world in which there was a common currency of ideas, traditions, customs, perceptions and stories.
- They each had their own version that suited their culture, religion and beliefs.
- The flood story is one of those narratives that is found in all near eastern cultures, the only difference is how they viewed the God, or deity that caused the flood.
- One culture believed that one of the gods rebelled from the others and saved a family. Another culture believed Noah and

his family were saved so that they could continue to serve the gods by doing their bidding on earth.

- The Israelite culture believed that the flood was righteous judgment from a righteous God.
- It can be challenging for us to understand how a loving God could wipe out the entire earth, sparing only 1 family.
- I want to share some information which may or may not shed light on this story.

ENOCH

- Noah's great grandfather Enoch:

"When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. ²² Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him."

(Genesis 4:21-24)

- Enoch, like Elijah, did not die. He was taken by God, signifying that he was a righteous and obedient man, like Jesus.
- It is believed that Enoch wrote a book – or compiled many writings, that were later made into a book, possibly by the priest Ezra after Israel's return from captivity in Babylon.

The Book of Enoch:

- Enoch contains unique material on the origins of demons (watchers/originally called sons of God) and giants, why some angels fell from heaven, and an explanation of why the Great Flood was necessary.
- The first part of the Book of Enoch describes the fall of the Watchers, the angels who fathered the Nephilim. The remainder of the book describes Enoch's visits to heaven in the form of travels, visions and dreams, and his revelations.
- It is part of the Canon of Holy Scriptures in Ethiopian Orthodox churches. It is valued and read in many churches and is used in worship regularly.

Quoted in The Book of Jude 1:14-15:

“It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones,¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”¹⁶ These are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.”

- Enoch was asked of God to prophesy for 300 years to the sons of God (watchers/angels) and command them to repent, or God will flood the earth and destroy them.

- It makes sense of Genesis 6:1-4

“When people began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all that they chose. ³ Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.” ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown”

- If we accept the writings of Enoch as valid, it might shed light on the flood not only as an act of judgment, but as an act of mercy.
- Judgment upon the sons of God (fallen angels/watchers), and mercy upon humanity.
- Either way, God gave plenty of warning to repent of their rebellion, but they did not. Therefore, God called Noah to prepare the ark for the coming flood.
- Through Noah, God was preparing the way for triumph over the darkness.

NOAH’S ACT OF FAITH

- Hebrews reminds us of Noah’s faith or assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

“By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.” (Hebrews 11:7 TPT)

- Noah, believed God’s warning, heeded God’s call and stepped out to do what God had called him to do – build an ark, even though he had no earthly evidence for what God said would happen.
- Faith is more than what we believe about God, faith is **stepping out in reverent obedience to God.**
- **And as a result, God triumphs over darkness.**
- Noah had faith that God would do as God said, so he built the ark that he was commanded to build.
- Faith requires an action, it’s not passive, it’s active.
- Faith is believing that God can heal, then, praying for healing.
- Faith is believing that when our earthly life ends, we are resurrected with Christ for eternity, then, we live our earthly life with peace and joy aware that this is just chapter 1; and we become passionate about telling others this good news.
- Noah would have experienced ridicule, persecution, perhaps being shamed by family and community, yet he persevered in faith even though he experienced hardships.

- Because Noah acted in faith, God triumphed over the darkness that had cloaked humanity.
- From the time of Abel onwards, the people of God have put their faith in the promises of God.
- Examples of when Christian faith gives birth to creative human activity.

EXAMPLES OF FAITH

Catherine Booth – persevered when it was tough, and she triumphed.

John Wycliffe (1320-1384) an English theologian and Pastor, strongly condemned the Roman church for their deficient theology and corrupt practices. He was the first person to translate the Bible into English. He was burned at the stake for being a heretic. Through his suffering there was triumph. Even though he was executed for what he did, God's will and desire triumphed over the darkness.

100 years later Martin Luther was born. While studying law at university, he was troubled by many of the church's teachings. Upon further study of scripture and hearing of John Wycliffe's passionate plea to the church, he realized that the Church of Rome had profoundly incorrect theology and practices and he nailed the "95 Theses" to the church door in Wittenberg. This began, what we now call The Reformation. The church was shaken and reformed by people of faith, who believed and acted in accordance with their

beliefs. And because of them God's will and desire triumphed over the darkness of their day.

TRIUMPH

- The triumph isn't always personal victory and a nice feeling of security. Triumph is God's Plan and Will being accomplished through us.
- Triumph isn't always going to feel like we've 'won'. Triumph is declaring the victory of God over darkness.
- Jesus triumphed over death. Even though He died, God won the victory through His death. It was in death that the greatest triumph was achieved.
- God triumphed over the darkness in the world through Noah's act of faith.
- The will and purposes of God succeeded because of Noah.
- Like Catherine Booth, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther and many others, hardships, persecutions, and a lack of physical evidence was no deterrent. Because they stepped out in reverent obedience to God, the Will and Desire of God triumphed over the sin and darkness that had taken root in the world.

THIS IS THE CALL OF THE CHURCH

- We exist to live God's triumph over darkness by walking in faith.

- Where do we see sin and darkness taking root around us? War, terror, corruption...
- How might you let faith arise and act in accordance with the triumph of God that has already been accomplished?
- Jesus has won the victory; we are just telling the good news.
- Who has God placed on your heart? Who do you know who needs to hear the good news of God's triumph over darkness?
- Or, Is there something that God has placed on your heart, that just won't leave you, no matter how hard you try to ignore it?
- Perhaps, it's time to let faith arise, step out in faith believing that God will provide, protect, lead, guide, sustain, empower and strengthen you to do what He has called you to, so that others may come to know the power of God's love and mercy.