

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

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[0 : 00] Well, please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to Genesis chapter 8. If you're using the Pew Bibles there in front of you, if you don't have a copy of God's Word yourself, you can find this all the way on page 5 of the Pew Bible there in front of you.

We haven't made too much progress. Genesis chapter 8, page 5 of the Pew Bible in front of you. And when you found it, let's stand in honor of the preaching of God's Word.

We end at chapter 7 with the bad news of the flood coming down and we begin chapter 8. But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark.

And God made a wind blow over the earth and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed. The rains from the heavens were restrained and the waters receded from the earth continually.

At the end of 150 days, the waters had abated. And in the seventh month, on the 17th day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters continued to abate until the 10th month.

[1 : 09] In the 10th month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. At the end of 40 days, Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent forth a raven.

It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove found no place to set her foot.

And she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. He waited another seven days.

And again, he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening. And behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.

Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove. And she did not return to him anymore. In the 601st year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth.

[2 : 11] And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked. And behold, the face of the ground was dry. In the second month, on the 27th day of the month, the earth had dried out.

Then God said to Noah, Go out from the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

So Noah went out and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every beast, every creeping thing and every bird, everything that moves on the earth went out by families from the ark. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

[3 : 27] The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Let's pray once more. Father, we praise you for your word. We praise you for your faithfulness.

And now we pray, God, would you speak to us again through your word. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Well, I'm excited to jump back into the book of Genesis this morning.

You know, we took a brief break over the past several weeks to focus in on the resurrection of Jesus. But now we get to come back and pick up where we left off in Genesis. You know, back in the days before streaming television and the ability to just watch seasons of television over a one or two day span, we used to actually have to wait week by week for a new edition, a new episode to come out.

And sometimes even longer than that. You'd have to wait months until a new season came out with a new episode of the show. And sometimes they would leave you with a cliffhanger on the edge of your seat wondering what in the world is going to happen next.

And you would have to wait. Well, we left Noah here at the end of chapter 7, sort of a little bit on a cliffhanger. Chapter 7 ended with the floodwaters coming down on the earth, wiping out all of mankind.

[4 : 46] All that is, with the exception of Noah and his family. Just eight people out of all the world. Noah and his family and the animals with him there on the ark.

Everything else by the end of chapter 7 is completely wiped away. God is here judging the sin of the world. That's where we left off last time, several weeks ago.

And you might remember as you think back, as we've walked through this story and the account of the flood, we've seen several attributes of God on display in this story. Now, of course, we've seen his holiness.

In contrast to the pervasive wickedness of man, we've seen that our God is holy, holy, holy. He is completely pure. We've seen his wrath against sin.

We've seen his justice on full display. As the waters come down and wipe away sin from the earth, we've seen his justice. We've seen his power and his sovereignty on full display as he simply speaks and the waters come and accomplish his will.

[5 : 52] But at the same time, we've seen his heart of mercy towards sinners. As Noah and his family are spared from the judgment that they deserve, we see God's heart of mercy towards sinners.

We see his grace towards sinners on full display. As Noah alone, Noah and his family are chosen out of all the families of the earth to be preserved. We've seen his wisdom on full display.

As he preserves his promise to crush the head of the serpent through the line now of Noah. This morning, as we turn our attention to chapter 8, we get to see another attribute of God on display.

This morning, we get to see God's faithfulness on display. Our God is faithful. Amen?

Our God is faithful to all his promises. We often sing of the faithfulness of God. We'll sing later on this morning. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father.

[6 : 57] There is no shadow of turning with thee. As thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not. As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be. Great is thy faithfulness.

The big idea for us this morning as we look to Genesis chapter 8 is this. God is faithful to all his promises. And because God is faithful, God's people respond to the faithfulness of God in two ways.

It's by waiting on him and worshiping him. It's the big idea this morning. Because God is faithful, God's people wait on him and worship him.

So let's look there to our text first. Starting here with verse 1. First, we see our God is faithful. This is the main theme here in the passage. We see it in the very first two words of the chapter, don't we?

But God. But God. And those that know your Bible, you know, those are two very powerful words, aren't they? Again, we end at chapter 7 with destruction and devastation.

[8 : 04] But now with these two words. Those two words change everything, don't they? Everything that came before, all the wrath and all the judgment, all the destruction, all the devastating waters of the flood, all the bad news is now overcome.

It's wiped away by some very good news. But God. Those two words, but God, are the hinge here. Between the destruction of chapter 7 and now the deliverance of chapter 8. God here intervenes on behalf of Noah. And what does God do? It says, but God remembered Noah.

Now what does that mean? God remembered Noah. Well, you might remember just a couple of chapters earlier. Just a few chapters here at the beginning of the flood story.

God delivered Noah the bad news in chapter 6, verse 17. He said, behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven.

[9:07] Everything that is on the earth shall die. But, here's the good news. But, I will establish my covenant with you. And you shall come into the ark.

You, your sons, your wife, your sons' wives with you. This is a promise. God has now spoken a promise to Noah. Yes, I will destroy all things because of the wickedness of the earth. But, I make you a promise, Noah. I will deliver you. Now, as the waters begin to come down, just as God promised. Noah, he's here waiting for God to make good on the second half of the promise. He's waiting on the ark for God to show himself faithful. You know, that phrase, God remembered. Of course, it doesn't mean that God forgot. God forgot. And now, he's just now calling to mind something that he forgot.

You and I are forgetful. You know, we go to the grocery store and we forget our list. You know, we look around. We don't remember why we came. And maybe it'll come to us and say, oh, I remember what I was supposed to do here.

[10:12] That's not what's happening here. God did not forget that Noah was on the ark. And now, he's got to do something about it. That's not what's happening. An all-knowing, eternal, sovereign God doesn't forget anything.

This remembering is not language of forgetting. This remembering is language of covenant faithfulness. Covenant faithfulness.

And we see it all throughout the scriptures. As we continue to go through Genesis, we'll see it again in chapter 19. God remembered Abraham. So, he rescued Lot as he destroys Sodom and Gomorrah.

In chapter 30, God remembers Rachel and opens up her womb. Exodus chapter 2. As we look ahead to Exodus, God hears the groans of his people as they cry out to him in slavery.

And God remembers the covenant that he made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. As God remembers throughout the scriptures, what he's doing is he's thinking of his people.

[11:13] He is seeing their need. And he is determining to take action on their behalf. This is covenant faithfulness. And church, this ought to absolutely just stun us.

Our God. Who reigns and rules over all creation. Our God who created all things and who reigns as king over it all.

Who sees all and knows all and is greater than all. This great God is not too distant to remember each and every one of his children.

He is not too busy to know you personally. He is not too preoccupied to know your needs. He is not too busy to know your condition.

He is not too busy to hear your prayers. It is absolutely amazing when you think about it. Our God is faithful and ready to act in faithfulness. Not just to all his people generally.

[12:18] But to each and every individual one of his children specifically. Here, out of all the people of the earth. God in covenant faithfulness remembers Noah.

And what does God do? Look there again to verse 2. God remembers Noah. And so he now sovereignly causes the wind to pass over the earth.

And as he does, now we see the waters. They begin to peel back. The waters begin to recede. And so we see here not only that God is faithful. But God is powerful.

And he is capable. He is sovereign. He is able to accomplish his plans. You know, it is interesting. And we will see this over the next couple of weeks. Lord willing. We ought to think about this event with Noah.

Sort of as a second creation account. Sort of a new creation. God wiped the slate clean of his first creation. And is now in a sense. It is like he is starting over new.

[13:19] And so now in this second creation account. There is echoes of the first creation account. That we ought to take note of. Here again. Just as he did at the beginning. God is bringing order out of chaos.

You remember that from Genesis chapter 1. Here again. Just as at the beginning. He is starting over with a new representative. No longer Adam. But now Noah.

And here again. It is interesting. The word here for wind in the Hebrew. Is the same word for spirit. There is an intentional echo here.

So again. Here again. Just as at the beginning. Just as the spirit. Hovered over the face of the waters. In chapter 1. So now here. At the command of God. The wind.

Spirit. It blows the waters away. This is a new beginning. And so here. Just as we were reminded in chapter 1.

[14:15] Here again. We should be reminded. That just as we saw at the beginning. That our God is creator. And ruler of all. He is king of all creation. So now.

Don't pass by this. Notice it. The waters obey him. The wind obeys him. He speaks. And it happens. Every inch of his creation. Is submissive to him as king. He stands above everything. In heaven. And on earth. And all things move.

According to his sovereign command. This is how the Bible talks about our God. He is powerful. Faithful. He is sovereign. He is good.

You may know that. Other cultures also have flood stories. You may know this. This flood story. It's not really unique to the Bible.

[15:11] We believe this is the truth. But other cultures also record a similar event. Non-believers sometimes use this kind of as an attack on the story by the way.

But really what does that tell you if multiple cultures in multiple places are all talking about the same thing? It probably tells you it actually happened. Right? Well listen to this from the epic of Gilgamesh.

And listen to what it says. Listen to how different it is describing the gods. It says the gods were frightened by the deluge. Shrinking back. The gods ascended to the heaven of Anu.

It says the gods cowered like dogs. Crouched against the outer wall. The gods all humbled sit and weep. Do you hear the difference? John Currid.

In his commentary. He points out that these deities are at the mercy of nature. But Yahweh on the other hand. He governs nature. Our God is the sovereign ruler of all creation.

[16:14] And here God moves heaven and earth. To demonstrate his faithfulness to his promises. And to rescue his chosen people.

So now. How does Noah respond? Let's look here and see how Noah responds. Because his response ought to be our response as well to the faithfulness of God.

So second. Because God is faithful. God's people wait on him. Because God is faithful. God's people wait on him.

Samuel Saldivar. He takes a stab at defining the faithfulness of God. And he says it like this. He says the faithfulness of God means God is unchanging in his nature.

True to his word. Has promised salvation to his people. And will keep his promises forever. He is worthy of eternal trust.

[17:13] No matter how unlikely his promises seem. Nothing in heaven and on earth can prevent God from accomplishing all that he has promised his people through Jesus Christ.

I want to read that second sentence again. Because here's where we often feel the most tension. Okay. So again. Second sentence. He says again. He is worthy of eternal trust.

No matter how unlikely his promises seem. Or I would add. In light of Genesis chapter 8. No matter how long it takes for his promises to come to pass.

We all know. I could go around this room and every single one of us would have a story. We all know by experience. That often God's promises don't come quickly to pass.

Do they? Often he tends to work in ways where it seems unlikely that his promise will be fulfilled. That's just the way that God seems to work. Isn't it?

[18:13] But it's in this period of waiting that both his faithfulness is demonstrated and our faith is tested. Look there to verse 4.

And I want you to notice how long Noah was on this boat. Because this hope, his confidence in the Lord, it wasn't quickly vindicated, was it? I mean the promise was still there.

But it was not quickly brought to fulfillment. Verse 4, it tells us the waters were on the earth 150 days. And then they abated. Finally the storm stopped.

But just think 150 days. When's the last time you waited on something for 150 days? Y'all, I can barely wait for the 30 seconds on the microwave to go off.

We don't like to wait that long. What were you doing 150 days ago? That was December 12th. And we had just finished decorating here for Christmas.

[19:11] Miss Gail was about to celebrate a birthday. We were walking together through the book of Philippians. That's a long time ago, isn't it? 150 days. But the whole ordeal, it says, was longer than that.

Verses 4 and 5 tells us it was about three months, 73 days, in between the time that the ark sat still on the top of the mountains of Ararat and when the other tops of the other mountains were able to be seen.

But even then, still, he's not done waiting. Verse 6 says, now the tops of the mountains are seen, but now he waits another 40 days. He opens the window of the ark and he sends out a raven. He begins this sort of testing. Noah wants to see if the ground is dry and safe before he exits the ark with him and his family. So he sends out this raven and apparently it comes back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

It's still not ready yet. So seven more days. Another week on the boat. Another week stuck there with just these same seven people on the boat.

[20 : 13] Y'all, I love my family. Y'all know I love my wife. Y'all know I love my children. I love my in-laws. I love my parents. I could not imagine being on a boat for this long with any of them.

Think about it. And so another week goes by waiting and hoping stuck there on the boat. He sends out another dove and the dove comes back empty.

And so he sends her back in and he says he waits another seven days. This is not instant gratification, is it? You and I are so used to just instant, quick gratification.

The Christian life is not always instant gratification. Yes, praise God, we enjoy many of the blessing of his promises now, right now, right now in Christ.

But many of the promises of God await their full fulfillment at his return. The Christian life is often marked by waiting on the promises of God.

[21 : 14] After seven days, he sends the dove out again. This time the dove comes back. It waited until evening, but it comes back. And verse 11 tells us that in the dove's mouth was now a freshly plucked olive leaf.

Something green. Which means there's new growth here. It means there's life now. There's something fresh. Something out of the ground here. Finally, after all this waiting, finally, Noah gets a clear sign that the waters of judgment have begun to recede.

And the renewed land was ready to be inhabited again. So now, finally, he can come out of the ark, right? Wrong. Verse 12 says, even then, he still doesn't come out of the boat.

Verse 12 says, he waited another seven days. And then he sent forth the dove. And now she did not return to him anymore. Which means she found somewhere to live.

So he takes off the covering of the ark. He sees the dry ground for himself. But notice this. It is not until the Lord himself commands Noah to come out of the ark.

[22 : 21] That Noah takes one step out onto dry land. You notice that? Noah is demonstrating for us what it looks like to trust that God is faithful.

And to cling to his word in obedience. And to wait on him in faith. You can do the math here. In chapter 7, it tells us Noah was 600 years old when the waters started coming down.

And now, verse 13 of chapter 8, it tells us in the 600th and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth.

In other words, he added all up, he has waited in the ark for over a year for this promise to be fulfilled. His problem was not quickly resolved, but Noah himself was resolved, wasn't he?

And to wait and to trust in the Lord. I wonder if you and I share this same level of resolve. Do you? I wonder if we are willing to wait on the Lord.

[23 : 29] Are you willing to wait on him in times of trial? If you think about the trials in your life, Christian, I know they're unlikely to be as dramatic and as big as this, what Noah's going through, but we still go through trials.

What do you think about in your own life as your world is tossed upside down? What do you do?

When your children are going wayward, what do you do?

When your source of income has gone away, your provision has gone away, when people around you are lying and cursing you and trying to tear you down, what do you do?

Where do you turn? How do you respond? Noah shows us here, God's people wait on the Lord to fulfill every promise of his word.

Ken Matthews, he says, When troubles come, they often advance swiftly and retreat slowly. Amen?

Amen. Are we content to wait on him when his promises seem unlikely or slow to come to pass?

[24 : 35] Because God is faithful, God's people wait on him, but not only this. Third, because God is faithful, God's people worship him.

God's people worship him. Look there to verse 13 with me. Finally, after all this waiting, Noah, it says, Remove the covering of the ark and looked and behold, the face of the ground was dry. Can you imagine the relief that he felt? God had done it exactly as he promised. And now Noah gets to lay eyes on it and see God has been faithful to his word.

God has come through on his promise. God has rescued me and my family out of all the people of the earth. I mean, you have to imagine how undeserving Noah felt. Why me, God?

How could you choose me? What's worthy about me? And just as God had done in the beginning with Adam and Eve, so now God gives Noah his word.

[25 : 35] He says, Go out from the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living creature, every living thing that is with you of all flesh, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.

Again, this is a new beginning. So Noah went out with his family and all the animals with their families, and he steps foot on dry ground for the first time in over a year.

And what is the very first thing Noah does? Verse 20. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird, and he worships the Lord.

He offered burnt offerings on the altar. This is an act of worship. Worship. And of course it is. What else should we expect Noah to do?

What's the right response of somebody who's experienced the mercy and the grace and the faithfulness of God? It's worship. What's the right response of somebody who's waited on the Lord, waited on Him, trusted His word, and now seen Him come through exactly as He's promised?

[26 : 55] It's worship. Worship. What's the right response of somebody who's been delivered from the judgment that they know they deserve and brought through the waters of judgment to new life?

What's the response? It's worship. Church, when God demonstrates His faithfulness, those who have waited on Him, worship Him.

Well, this ought to be the response of every single Christian. Why? Because we have, in Christ, experienced a much greater salvation even than this.

Those in Christ have been rescued from the wrath of God by the grace of God. God has been gracious and merciful to us in Christ.

We have been saved from our judgment owed to us for our sin. And in Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Ephesians chapter 2.

[27 : 55] Paul read it this morning. I'll read it again. It says, You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

But God, you hear that? But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. Amen. How do we respond to such a salvation? Well, if you're not a believer, your response is to come to Christ in faith.

Because it's in Christ that we see the faithfulness of God most clearly displayed. All the promises of God. Find their yes and amen in Christ. It's in Christ that we see the wrath of God against sin most clearly displayed as He pours His wrath out on Him as a substitute in the place of sinners.

It's in Christ that we see the holiness of God most clearly displayed as He lives perfectly in our place. It's in Christ that the mercy of God is extended to sinners. It's in Christ that the grace of God is poured out on sinners like us.

[29 : 32] What keeps you from coming to Him in faith? And for those that have trusted in Him, what's our response? Church, daily, our response ought to be daily worship.

Now, of course, you and I, on this side of the cross, in the new covenant, we don't build an altar and offer up animal sacrifice and worship to God. Praise God. Christ is the sacrifice once for all for the forgiveness of sins.

But you do realize, I hope, the Bible commands us to offer sacrifice in worship. You realize that?

Even here in the new covenant, we are commanded to offer up sacrifice to God in worship.

Romans 12, verse 1. Paul says, I appeal to you, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your

spiritual worship.

So here in response to the great faithfulness of the Lord, Noah offers up a sacrifice of worship. And as he does, verse 21 says, the Lord smells the pleasing aroma and says in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man.

[30 : 54] For the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

Did you notice this passage is bookended by two promises of God? God was faithful to his promise to preserve Noah and he will be faithful to his promise to preserve the earth until its appointed end. We see here, God will sustain this sinful world in order, we know, in order to redeem it by the sacrifice of his son Jesus.

So that any who are covered by his sacrifice, by faith, are also in him. Holy and pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God.

We are covered by his mercy and covered by his faithfulness. Church, because God is faithful, Christians, we walk by faith. We trust in his word.

[32 : 04] We cling to his promise even when it seems unlikely, even when it takes forever to come to pass. We wait on him and we worship him until the day when the Lord returns and finally brings to pass all of his promises in full.

I want to read one more passage to you as we close. We've come here a number of times as we've gone through this flood story. 2 Peter, and I'll point you there again as we close.

Peter tells us, scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires.

They will say, where is the promise of his coming? When's he going to come?

He said he's coming. We haven't seen him yet. Where's the promise of his coming? You Christians are fools for waiting on him. For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.

Summer, winter, seed time, and harvest. For they deliberately overlook this fact that the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God.

[33 : 16] And that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not overlook this fact beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you.

Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a roar and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for, waiting for, and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn.

But according to his promises, Christian, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish and at peace.

[34 : 52] Father, we praise you, God, for your faithfulness. Great is thy faithfulness, O God, my Father.

There is no shadow of turning with thee. You have spoken and you will fulfill every single promise of your word. Lord, we rejoice that in Christ we enjoy many of them now, but Lord, we wait for the day when Christ returns and we enjoy them in full at his return.

Lord, if there are any here who are outside of Christ, would you turn their hearts to you in faith? And Lord, as we wait on you, God, would you establish our hearts in faith?

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.