

From Pastor Mark ...

In a time of uncharted difficulty for ourselves and also for the whole world, we continue to trust in our God who is faithful in all that He does. This may be a first for us, however, let it be remembered that this is not a first for our God. What we walk through as all darkness is light to the Lord. **Ps.139:12-** *Even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.* We must remember that our God can see when we cannot, and that all that appears daunting to us is as clear as the noonday sun to our Living Lord. For this reason, it is helpful to consider those things that have gone before that we, *through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

When one picks up a Bible to read in the Book of Genesis, it isn't long before they come to the story of Noah. In this account we come face to face with the reality that what we are going through has been experienced in some way before. Also that God was faithful to His people then, so we can expect Him to be faithful now. In Genesis the whole world is inundated with the waters of the flood. God's people aren't removed from the world at this time but are made to go through the flood as well. However, they will be 'quarantined' in the ark, set apart by God to be protected from the torrential flood waters outside. God was teaching His children then and in succeeding generations what He would do for them in Christ. He hides us in His Son, we are safe from the ultimate calamity that is yet to come. We realize that though all the world were to be covered in the waters of a flood, yet God will be faithful to all in Christ. He will accomplish His will in His people, a people who are bound to Him in Christ, whose life is in heaven with the Father.

Yet, there are some practical lessons of Noah and his family that we can glean from their quarantine that may be helpful for us:

1) **Gen.6:8-** *But Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord.*

This quarantine was an act of God's grace to His servant. It was not a punishment of him but a protection for him. In that light may we face this time not as some sort of punishment but as God's protection for us. Noah would have been foolish to abandon the place of safety that God had given him. We too must, in the practical realities that we face, not become impatient and abandon those places of safety that our God has provided to us. But rejoice in His goodness and provision.

2) **Gen.6:21-** *Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.*

Secondly, we must remember that God provided for the physical needs of His people. Noah and his family didn't have to panic and rush out to find provisions, their God was faithful to instruct them and to provide for them. We must trust that He will prove Himself to be equally faithful to us in this regard. In light of that we would ask that if any find themselves in need, please let us know. We will seek to offer assistance where we can. This will mean that those who can continue to worship God through giving, we would encourage to do so. In this way we can continue to meet our obligations, but also to have on hand so that we can help where needed.

3) **Gen.7:5-** *And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.*

Thirdly, this time was a time for explicit obedience to the Lord. No time for compromise, no time for walking the fence. God must be obeyed and that without deviation. Let us be mindful of our obligation to obey God in the privacy of our homes, when the world is not watching. **Ps.101:2-** *I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh, when will you come to me? I will walk with integrity of heart within my house.* This is no time to let down our guard as David when alone on the rooftop. It is a time for vigilance in our faith. Read your Bibles, pray and seek the face of God in the private of your homes.

4) **Gen.7:7-** *And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.*

Lastly, this was a time for fellowship. They were isolated but they were not to be separated. They were all in this together. We implore you to remember this now. For those with others in their home, spend time in fellowship with one another and with God. For those without that kind of home life, never forget that you are a part of a family of believers. In light of this I would urge you all to pick up your phones, make calls, keep in contact with each other. You need the fellowship of the saints and they need yours. God has made us a family and now more than ever that should show itself. Commit to calling at least one member of the family everyday. Let's encourage one another in Christ and remind each other that we are in this together. Let us look forward to that day, hopefully sooner rather than later, when we will be able to stand side by side and praise our God together in assembly. My love to you all.