

19. The faithfulness of God

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All the worries of the believers originate from our doubts about God's faithfulness. Either we are worrying that God may not do the things that He promised which is unbelief or the ways we want that shows our pride – thinking that we know better than God.

Unbelievers don't have a whole lot of choices. Because they don't have anything or anyone to depend on except themselves and the stock market that is worse than a schizophrenic patient. But for the believers of Christ, we should not worry. Jesus told us not to worry for tomorrow in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke for 7 times.

If I may remind ourselves, the Israelites wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years because they didn't believe God and worried about their future so much that all 2 million people with the exception of 2, Joshua and Caleb, died there. It is not that God killed them in the wilderness, but their unbelief and worry did. Worry is a sin. Those who worry will never enjoy the fullness of God's faithfulness. It is our choice.

Our God remains faithful while we are unfaithful. He always keeps His promises no matter what, even though we very often fail to keep our promises to Him and to each other. Over 7,700 promises of God are recorded in the Bible. He kept the majority of them and He will keep the rest.

Let's study the faithfulness of God this morning.

A. STARTING ALL OVER AGAIN

Genesis 9:1-7 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. 5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. 7 And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it."

In this portion, God addressed the 8 survivors of the flood. Though given initially to Noah and his family, these instructions apply to all people of all ages and all places. They are permanent ordinances from God for all humanity, and they must not be ignored or altered.

Since man is now allowed to eat animals, God would help the animals. For their protection, God put in them a fear of mankind. Additionally, God forbids a man from the consuming of the blood of animals.

The life is in the blood, and that life comes from God and should be respected. Furthermore, the blood of animals would be important in most of the Mosaic sacrifices, so the blood must be treated with respect.

Some of you guys are good hunters. More power to you. I, too, have a great spot where I can get the meat every time I go there – Costco.

For the first time in the Bible, capital punishment is ordered by God as a form of punishment against murderers.

In its original languages, the Bible makes a clear distinction between killing and murder. Not all killing is murder because there are cases where there is just cause for killing, such as self-defense or soldiers' killings during the time of war. And there are other instances where killing is accidental which is manslaughter.

The Bible also consistently teaches God gives the government the right to capital punishment.

I am amazed at how the attitude of the present generation has gotten away from the Bible. America has not been a Christian nation since 1960. Her people are almost totally ignorant of the Word of God. As a result, we find many liberal judges, crooked lawyers, and liberal corrupt politicians all wanting to get rid of capital punishment, while they are anxious to kill over 1.6 million unborn babies a year with abortion. They have succeeded in many cases. At the same time, we have a tremendous increase in crime. I don't understand their logic.

Some of the criminals could care less about murdering people. To them, it is nothing more than collateral damage to their own criminal activities. If a criminal knows that when he takes a life, he will be executed justly and promptly, then he'll think twice before he commits a murder. The same liberal people who are against capital punishment want to take away guns from law-abiding citizens. Criminals don't obey the gun laws no matter what. The problem is not with the gun in the hand, it is with the heart inside the man. By the way, the best gun control is using a two-handed Isosceles Stance.

B. GOD'S FIRST COVENANT AND A SIGN

Genesis 9:8-17 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15 and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." 17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

This section is what theologians call "The Noahic Covenant." Though God spoke especially to Noah and his sons, this covenant includes all of Noah's descendants and all generations to come.

God used the rainbow as a sign to Noah and all generations including us that He would be faithful to His covenant. His purpose is that He will not again destroy the earth with a flood. The next time His judgment of the earth will be by fire. We find that stated in 2 Peter:

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Every time we see a rainbow, we should remember the faithfulness of God and all the His promises He has kept. He even says His covenant of peace with us is just as sure as His covenant with Noah and all generations.

If the promise of God to mankind is not good enough, we find that the Lord put His rainbow very close to Himself as well. We find evidence in the Book of Revelation:

Revelation 4:3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

However, the rainbow is not for God to remember His promise with us, because our God never forgets anything. But it is a reminder to mankind as a sign of God's faithfulness.

C. THE PROPHECIES FOR NOAH'S DESCENDENTS

Genesis 9:18-29 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. 20 And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." 26 And he said: "Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant." 28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29 So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

Speaking of foolishness of drunkenness, there was a false teacher within the ranks of Christian leaders who claimed God's desire is to make people "drunk in the spirit" through the work of a "Holy Ghost Bartender" which is himself. The verse they often quoted was completely misquoted and out of contexts.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

Alcohol is a depressant. It "loosens" people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance, and judgment. The filling of the Holy Spirit has an exactly opposite effect. The Holy Spirit who is God Himself is a stimulant, and He influences every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance. He brings glory to the Father in heaven through us when we are obedient to Him.

Both Noah's drunkenness and his nakedness were disgraceful because the brain is affected by alcohol, the person loses self-control. At least Noah was in his own tent when this happened and not out in public. The Bible doesn't excuse the sins of the believers but mentions them as warnings to us not to do what they did. I love what Charles Spurgeon said, "God never allows His children to sin successfully." There's always a price to pay.

Ham was having some spiritual perverse satisfaction that made him enjoy in his father's sins. Literally, the ancient Hebrew says that Ham "told with delight" what he saw in his father's tent. He determined to mock his father and undermine his authority as a man of God. How people respond to the sin and embarrassment of others is an indication of their character.

Instead of laughing with Ham and going to see the humiliating sight, Shem and Japheth showed their love for their father by practicing Proverbs 17:

Proverbs 17:9a He who covers a transgression seeks love

Love doesn't cleanse sin, because only the blood of Christ can do that; nor does love condone sin, because love wants God's very best for others. But love does cover sin and doesn't go around gossiping about other's sin and encouraging others to spread the bad news.

When Noah awakened from his drunken stupor, he was probably ashamed of what he had done, but he was also surprised to find himself covered by a garment. This was followed by a family prophecy that affects all of us:

1) Ham - Canaan

Noah predicted 3 times that the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, would become the lowest of servants. It's difficult to describe the moral decay of the Canaanite society and their religious practices, but the laws given in Leviticus 18 will give us some idea of how they lived. God warned the Jews not to compromise with the Canaanite way of life and to destroy everything that would tempt them in that direction.

Some prejudiced people regarded the descendants of Canaan as black people from Africa though they were not, and they used the curse on Canaan from this verse to justify slavery and racial prejudice. When it comes to the colors of the skin, God is absolutely color blind. He is a God of all races and loves them all equally.

2) Shem

Noah didn't bless Shem; rather he stated, "*Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem.*" In so doing, Noah gave glory to God for what He will do with the descendants of Shem. Shem, of course, is the ancestor of Abraham who is the founder of the Hebrew nation; so Noah was talking about the Jewish people. It's through Israel that we have the knowledge of the true God, the written Word of God, and the Savior, Jesus Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah. In the Hebrew, "Shem" means "name," and it's the people of Israel who have preserved the name of the Lord.

Shem was Noah's second-born son, but wherever the three sons are listed, Shem's name is first.

3) Japheth - Enlargement

Japheth was the ancestor of what we generally call the "Gentile nations." The descendants of Japheth spread out much farther than their relatives and even reached

what we know as Asia Minor and Europe. They were the people who multiplied and moved into the new territory. Though the descendants of Japheth were successful in their conquests, but when it came to things spiritual, they would have to depend on Shem.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) God never forgets us even though the circumstances seem to tell us that He is not with us.

2) Do you feel that you have spiritual pride and perverse satisfaction when you hear Christian leaders fall? We should not. We should pray for them and learn from their sins.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

3) If we think that we can handle sin, we are making a grave mistake.